

THE EDIFICATION COMPLEX OF THE SOUL

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.**” (John 3:16–18). “**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!**” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). **If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

I took this doctrine directly from the study of [Psalm 89 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)).

Introduction: It should be pointed out from the very beginning, that this whole concept of a structure being built within our souls as an illustration of spiritual growth comes from R. B. Thieme, Jr., who advanced Christianity in at least 4 fundamental ways: (1) Bob updated Christian vocabulary, which was important, as time and tradition had distorted much of our theological vocabulary; (2) Bob developed a number of new illustrations which clarify, illuminate and explain the Christian life; (3) he taught the mechanics of the Christian life; and (4) the thrust of his ministry was ICE teaching (isagogics, categories and exegesis). His ICE teaching approach was the basis for developing an updated and original vocabulary, some new and vibrant illustrations and the mechanics of the spiritual life.

We are born without a human spirit and separate from God. We have an existing structure. God takes this existing structure, which is often dilapidated and messed up, and rebuilds us from the inside out. We are not pod-people. We do not alter, modify, lose or disguise our personalities.¹ The end result is a structure which reflects God’s glory, yet, at the same time, we are who we are (minus our sinful traits while we are in fellowship).

The Edification Complex of the Soul is an illustration developed and named by R. B. Thieme, Jr. I’ve done some minor updating and changing of this doctrine. One of the most significant changes will be, I will also develop the edification complex as a two-sided building, which faces both east (toward God) and west (toward man).

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Typical one-story version of the edification complex

The God-ward and Man-ward Sides of the Edification Complex

Glenn’s 8-Story Version of the Edification Complex of the Soul

¹ That is not to say that our personalities do not change; everyone’s personality changes over time, and those aspects of our personality which are based upon various sins, will hopefully disappear after a time.

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Word Cloud for the Doctrine of the Edification Complex

In the New Testament, there are two interesting Greek words: *edify* (which means *to build up, to construct*; found 40 times in the NT) and *edification* (which means *a building up, something which is constructed*; found 18 times in the NT). Paul speaks of *building up* the Corinthian believers in 2Cor. 10:8 12:19 13:10. In Rom. 14:19, we are to pursue that which helps to *build up* one another. Bob Thieme Jr. taught this as a multi-leveled structure which is built within our human soul and spirit.

The illustration is, we develop a spiritual structure—a spiritual home, if you will—within us. It is this structure, which is built in the human spirit and soul, which goes with us into eternity. This dove-tails well with the idea of Jesus being *at home in our hearts* (Eph. 3:17). When the edification complex is built within the soul, Jesus does not just indwell us, but He is at home in our thinking.

In this doctrine below, you will actually start at the bottom of the doctrine (the foundation) and work your way up (that is how this chart ought to be viewed). This is because the edification complex is a structure, a building, which has a foundation which is laid first, and then stories will be built upon that. This is an illustration, not an actual building; but the concept is the same as a building—these floors begin at the bottom and one is laid on top of another—however, the basic framework occurs first, and then the building is filled in on each floor. In any case, the final result is, we reflect God's glory in our thinking and in our actions (right thinking results in right action).

The Edification Complex of the Soul

Explanation

The Floors of the Edification Complex

This is the top floor, where we reflect the glory of God through what is in our souls. **You were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body** (1Cor. 6:20). **To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ** (2Thess. 1:11–12). **To them** [the gentiles to whom God entrusted the responsibilities of this dispensation] **God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ** (Col. 1:27–28). **My children, I travail until Christ should be formed in you** (Gal. 4:19).

**Reflecting the glory
of God (or, *Christ
being formed in us*)**

As we grow spiritually, we become contented with all that God has given us, with our lot in life. We are happy with who we are, where we are, and how God is functioning in our lives. Whether we have a multitude of things or not is not an issue; we are happy and content with what we have. **Happiness to the man who finds wisdom and to the man who gains understanding** (Prov. 3:13). **Happinesses to those who listen to me** [Bible doctrine], **assembling daily at my gates** [the place where Bible doctrine was taught], **waiting** [mental attitude of eager anticipation] **at my doorpost** (Prov. 8:34).

**+H (happiness,
contentment,
enjoyment of our
lives)**

The Edification Complex of the Soul

Explanation	The Floors of the Edification Complex
<p>We then demonstrate love toward all mankind; this is the agape love, where we treat everyone fairly and honestly, without mental attitude sins or feelings of superiority or without a desire for revenge. This is where our spiritual life begins to actually function. Until this point in our growth, we are just growing. We love because He first loved us (1John 4:19).</p>	<p>Functional Virtue (impersonal love toward mankind)</p>
<p>God loves us with a perfect love, which we begin to understand through the teaching of the Word of God. This gives us reason to proceed and function in our Christian lives. Furthermore, we have come to know and have believed this love that God keeps having toward us. God is love. In fact, the one who resides in the sphere of love continues in the [plan of] God, and God [the Holy Spirit] resides in him. By this, love [which motivates us and causes us to function honorably toward others] has been achieved by us (1John 4:16–17a).</p>	<p>Motivational Virtue (personal love toward God)</p>
<p>We begin to focus on Him Who has saved us, rather than upon ourselves, other people or on things (our possessions and the possessions of others). Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).</p>	<p>Occupation with Christ (which may include a relaxed mental attitude)</p>
<p>We begin to develop grace orientation, also known as true humility. Believers, just like anyone else, can be extremely arrogant. What often happens is, a new believer will cling to many of their views and values from their old manner of life, stop committing a few overt sins, figure out what passes for holy in their church and do that; and they think they are being spiritual. Grace orientation is recognizing Who and What God is and who and what we are, and not confusing the two. We understand that everything we are and everything we have is based upon the grace of God. We understand that our very spiritual growth is completely a grace function and that we can take upon ourselves no merit for our own spiritual growth. But He [God] gives more grace. Therefore He says: God opposes the arrogant and He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).</p>	<p>True Humility (which includes authority orientation and teachability)</p>

The Edification Complex of the Soul

Explanation	The Floors of the Edification Complex
<p>All believers grow using a grace system while learning Bible doctrine. God gives us the ability to understand spiritual information, and this ability is a grace system. We all have it and none of us earn or deserve it. What is required is, first the filling of the Holy Spirit accompanied with accurate Bible teaching from a pastor-teacher who has a clue as to what he is doing. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not enough on its own to spur our spiritual growth. And we [Paul and other believers with teaching gifts] impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person [the unbeliever] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. For who has knowledge of the mind of the Lord, so as to be his teacher? But we [Paul and other believers with teaching gifts] have the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:13–14, 16). [So that we—all believers in Jesus Christ] may be able to grasp with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the surpassing knowledge and love of Christ; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:18–19).</p>	<p>Bible doctrine absorbed into the soul and spirit by the function of ministry of God the Holy Spirit, Who makes truth known to us through a pastor-teacher (in most situations). R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls this gap.²</p>
<p>God has given every Church Age believer the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit must function in our lives in order for us to grow spiritually. This requires what is termed <i>the rebound technique</i>, which is simply naming your sins to God. Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18b). If we acknowledge our sins, then He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9).</p>	<p>Filling of the Holy Spirit</p>
<p>The foundation for the edification complex structure is Jesus Christ. No man can build upon a foundation other than Him. An unbeliever cannot build an edification complex in his soul. The best that he can do is to line up his thinking with divine establishment laws. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1Cor. 3:10–11).</p>	<p>Jesus Christ (salvation by faith in Him)</p>

² GAP = *grace apparatus for perception*. God has designed the believer so that, no matter what their I.Q. is, they are able to understand the plan of God for their lives through the teaching of Bible doctrine from an ICE pastor (a pastor who teaches using isagogics, categories and exegesis) and that they might reach spiritual maturity just like any other believer. .

Most of the time, the edification complex is presented as having 6 floors (throughout its various incarnations). We need to first have a foundation (which has always been assumed, but not stated as one of the floors) and we need to see this from God's perspective, which means that, the completion of the edification complex glorifies God, which is our overall purpose on this earth. We do not do much by way of glorifying God as baby believers. Understand this as a parallel to our own children. When you show your new baby off, there is limited accolades which can be heaped upon you ("He's got your eyes"). But, when a child enters into adulthood and begins making many series of good decisions, the perceptive person understand that this young adult was guided to this point by his parents. It is the same with believers; being saved is great, and it brings some glory to God. But then taking that person that you are, and building in your soul a structure of stability and grace, that especially glorifies God.

This spiritual growth does not just automatically happen. We grow in grace and knowledge of His Word. It is a grace system and it takes time for this to occur. A child does not develop automatically completely on his own. A child needs physical nourishment and mental stimulation. As we have found with wild children, you can feed a child and keep him or her locked in a closet, and they will *never* be able to overcome the lack of mental and emotional growth from their formative years. They will never develop a vocabulary of over a few words, if this part of the brain is not stimulated. This sort of thing will permanently stunt a person's intellectual and emotional growth. Such a child, even as an adult, will think and act like a 5 year-old.

We have parents today who do little or nothing to encourage the mental and emotional growth of their children. I have been in homes where there is not one book, not one magazine, and often, not even a coloring book. A child in some homes can go from age zero to age 5 before they are consistently exposed to the printed word (except on the back of cereal boxes). Such a child may observe hundreds of implied and actual sex scenes from tv and video as they grow up, and yet struggle with reading, because their parents do nothing to encourage them to read. There has been a great deal written about the educational gap between Blacks and others in the United States; this is the reason why this is true. Our schools cannot close this gap, no more than a wild child can be made to develop a normal vocabulary or normal thinking.

The believer can be the same way. If the believer is *not* filled with the Holy Spirit regularly and exposed to Bible teaching daily, their spiritual growth will be stunted as well. Their entire spiritual life will be devoted to sanding off the rough edges of their personality and hiding their sins as best as possible. The best possible outcome for society is that, such a believer begins to follow the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)), which are laws for believers and unbelievers alike. There are no eternal rewards for such a person, but he will lead a happier life and those around him will be happier.

The basic structure of this was taken from a little handout from Bible Doctrine Cassettes (now defunct, I assume), which are from Bob Thieme Jr.'s class notes. The same doctrine can be found in R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s *Edification Complex of the Soul*; ©1972 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Glen ? has posted this as an 8-story structure here:

<http://wisdomknowledge.wordpress.com/2009/11/29/the-edification-complex-of-the-soul/> (which will be reproduced **below** in the addendum).

While working on the doctrine above, I thought, at some point in the future, someone may want to redo this doctrine and show the man-ward (the soul) and the God-ward side (the spirit) of the edification complex. With this in mind, let me offer another approach to the edification complex: we have a soul, which governs our interaction with mankind (without a soul, we would kill those we do not like and we would have sex with those to whom we are attracted—hell, for all I know, some of you may think of that approach to life as being pretty rational). We also have a human spirit, which is where we store doctrinal norms and standards, a divine frame of reference, and those things which we learn about God. This governs our relationship before God.

So let's look at this structure as having an east and west facing; to the east, the edification complex is towards God; and to the west, the edification complex is towards man.

As before, these are floors built upon a foundation, and should be read from the bottom to the top.

The God-ward and Man-ward Sides of the Edification Complex

God-ward Side	Man-ward Side
Reflecting the glory of God (or, <i>Christ formed in us</i> —in the continuous sense, this phrase describes the building of the edification complex; in the completed sense, we are speaking of the top floor of the complex)	+H (happiness, contentment, enjoyment of our lives); friendships where there is no jealousy or inordinate competition; a marriage which fulfills the commands of Eph. 5:22–25 automatically and without an attitude
Motivational Virtue (personal love toward God)	Functional Virtue (impersonal love toward mankind)
Occupation with Christ (God, God's plan, viewing life from the viewpoint of eternity)	A relaxed mental attitude. We do not get involved in mental attitude sins against those around us.
True Humility (which includes grace orientation and teachability). We are willing and able to employ God's system of spiritual growth.	Authority Orientation; life without an attitude. The ability to relate to your boss or the policeman who just stopped you for speeding without being an ass.
Bible doctrine absorbed into the soul by the function of gap ³ (Eph. 3:18–19).	
Filling of the Holy Spirit	
The Foundation: Jesus Christ (salvation by faith in Him)	

This approach was something which I put together in a few minutes. It may require some tweaking. The foundation and the bottom two floors are foundational. You cannot build such a structure of the soul apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit and the daily intake of Bible doctrine.

³ GAP = *grace apparatus for perception*. God has designed the believer so that, no matter what their I.Q. is, they are able to understand the plan of God for their lives through the teaching of Bible doctrine from an ICE pastor (a pastor who teaches using isagogics, categories and exegesis) and that they might reach spiritual maturity just like any other believer. GAP is another doctrine originally developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Quite obviously, we fail at every level. We may reach maturity in this life, and then, one day, our boss ticks us off, and we tell everyone we know what an SOB he is, and email everyone that we don't know and inform them of the same. That would reflect failure on every level of the edification complex.

Jesus Christ perfectly moved to spiritual maturity as He began growing physically, and never failed at any point at any time. We possess the same spiritual assets which our Lord possessed, along with the completed canon of Scripture.

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Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

There are a lot of things which can be still worked on with the edification complex. What about the effect that certain sins have on one's spiritual growth? What about gaps in one's knowledge of God and God's plan? What about the interaction of scar tissue and spiritual growth?

Addendum: Glenn's Version of the edification complex structure:

Glenn's 8-Story Version of the Edification Complex of the Soul	
Floor	Description
Eighth Floor Confidence/Stability	<p>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13; passages quoted are the modified⁴ ESV).</p> <p>...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,... (Eph. 1:17-18).</p> <p>...if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister (Colossians 1:23).</p> <p>To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).</p>

⁴ I capitalize the pronouns which refer to God.

Floor	Description
<p>Seventh Floor Peace/Prosperity (This is not to be confused with the “prosperity gospel”)</p>	<p>King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! (Daniel 4:1).</p> <p>Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you." (Daniel 6:25)</p> <p>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:6).</p> <p>...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you (1Peter 1:2).</p> <p>May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2Peter 1:2).</p> <p>May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you (Jude 2).</p> <p>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philip. 4:7).</p> <p>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful (Col. 3:15).</p>
<p>Sixth Floor Mastery of the Details of Life (see bottom the of link for the explanation)</p>	<p>If you possess the details of life (food, clothing, pleasure, security, satisfaction, etc.) then you have the capacity to enjoy them. If you don't possess the details of life you still have Bible doctrine and the capacity to enjoy life.</p>
<p>Fifth Floor Capacity to Love</p>	<p>Capacity to Love:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God and Bible Doctrine - Your mate - Friends
<p>Fourth Floor Inner Happiness</p>	<p>Inner happiness regardless of circumstances. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Philip. 4:11–13).</p>

Floor	Description
<p>Third Floor Relaxed Mental Attitude/ Impersonal Love</p>	<p>There is another tool new Christians need to begin using pretty quickly in their lives, or they will find their spiritual growth derailed. The Relaxed Mental Attitude (RMA) is an outgrowth of claiming God’s promises (CGP) and resting in faith (RIF), but like resting in faith it must be consciously applied to situations, so we are treating it as one of the tools in the new Christian’s spiritual tool belt.</p> <p>A relaxed mental attitude (RMA) is the believer’s response to the circumstances of life that he encounters on a daily basis. It develops naturally in the Christian as he matures in the faith by the daily process of taking in the Word of God, metabolizing it spiritually (more on that soon in a future lesson), and applying it in his life. But like RIF the RMA does not just emerge full grown in the Christian; it is developed gradually.</p> <p>[Note: I copied the definition of the relaxed mental attitude only. If you would also like the definition of impersonal love then please follow the link at the left and read the entire article.]</p>
<p>Second Floor Grace Orientation</p>	<p>Grace orientation is being oriented to the grace policy of God through the inculcation of Bible doctrine under genuine humility and the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The grace-orientated believer does not judge others and always offers other believers privacy while minding his own business! Grace orientation offers to others the very grace that God offers to you!</p>
<p>First Floor Filling of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p>The filling of the Holy Spirit is the status quo of the believer when God the Holy Spirit controls his soul thus making him 100% spiritual (Eph. 5:18). To make it from salvation to spiritual maturity requires the filling of the Holy Spirit and the daily intake of Bible doctrine. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells the body of the believer permanently (John 14:16 1Cor. 3:16). Because the body is the headquarters of the old sin nature, the Holy Spirit sets up His headquarters in the body for counteraction. But while the indwelling of the Spirit is permanent, the filling of the Spirit is temporary. We lose the filling of the Spirit when we personally sin, whether willfully, unintentionally, knowingly or ignorantly. However, God has provided the problem solving device of rebound so that we can instantly regain the filling of the Holy Spirit (1John 1:9). When we name or cite our known sins to God we are instantly filled with the Spirit and 100% spiritual. Since the battlefield for the believer is in the soul it is vital that we use the rebound technique to give the Holy Spirit control of the soul whereby He may influence, control and mentor us.</p>
<p>Foundation Jesus Christ (salvation by faith in Him)</p>	<p>Salvation is the work of God in the saving of mankind from the power and effects of being born in sin and therefore spiritually dead, being separate from God. This has been accomplished by means of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Any member of the human race can acquire the grace gift of salvation by simply believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior (Acts 16:31).</p>

This chart was taken from:

<http://wisdomknowledge.wordpress.com/2009/11/29/the-edification-complex-of-the-soul/>
 accessed August 9, 2013.

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Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Kukis Homepage

Doctrines

Now and again, I like to do a **word-cloud** on this or that doctrine, just to see where the emphasis has been; this is the word-cloud for this doctrine:

