

# 1 Corinthians 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

## Analysis

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**He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort**—Paul defines prophecy by its three-fold effect:

1. oikodomē (οἰκοδομή, "edification, building up")
2. paraklēsis (παράκλησις, "exhortation, encouragement")
3. paramythia (παράμυθία, "comfort, consolation").

All three require intelligible speech directed toward human need.

The contrast with verse 2 is total: prophecy is horizontal (toward men), comprehensible, and constructive. The Greek verb *laleo* ("speak") appears in both verses, but prophecy's speech has purpose—it builds, encourages, comforts. This is the edification principle that governs the entire chapter: whatever doesn't build up the body fails love's test.

## Historical Context

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In a church fascinated with ecstatic phenomena, Paul redirects attention to gifts that actually serve the community. Prophecy in the NT church involved Spirit-prompted preaching, teaching, and exhortation (Acts 15:32).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How do edification, exhortation, and comfort work together in prophetic speech?
2. What modern church practices might prioritize personal experience over corporate edification?
3. Why does Paul make intelligibility central to prophetic effectiveness?

## Interlinear Text

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ὁ	δὲ	προφητεύων	ἀνθρώποις	λαλεῖ	οἰκοδομὴν	καὶ
G3588	<b>But</b>	<b>he that prophesieth</b>	<b>unto men</b>	<b>speaketh</b>	<b>to edification</b>	<b>and</b>
G1161		G4395	G444	G2980	G3619	G2532
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παράκλησιν	καὶ	παραμυθίαν				
<b>exhortation</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>comfort</b>				
G3874	G2532	G3889				

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 14:12** (Parallel theme): Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

**Ephesians 6:22** (Parallel theme): Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

**1 Timothy 4:13** (Parallel theme): Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

**Jude 1:20** (Parallel theme): But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

**2 Timothy 4:2** (Parallel theme): Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

**Titus 1:9** (Parallel theme): Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

**Acts 13:15** (Parallel theme): And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

**Romans 14:19** (Parallel theme): Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

**1 Corinthians 14:26** (Parallel theme): How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

**Titus 2:6** (Parallel theme): Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.