

1 Peter 4:7-11

Of all the things we can do with our lives as followers of Jesus, what should our priorities be as we relate to other believers in the church? What a treat it is to study 1 Peter 4:7-11. In summary fashion and very succinct language, we have before us our priorities in the extraordinary times in which we live. Peter makes it clear to us that whether we live in biblical times or today, the end of our life or the return of Jesus is closer than any one of us might think.

We should, then, give ourselves to what will last for eternity—what is essential, important. Thus far we have seen four priorities for the extraordinary times in which we live.

The first priority (for extraordinary times) is to pray. v. 7—*"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."*

The second priority is to love one another deeply. 1 Peter 4:8—*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

The third priority is to offer hospitality. *"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling"* —1 Pet. 4:9.

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Written by Bob Stone

1 Peter 4:10 introduced us to our 4th priority in these extraordinary times. In the last two studies we have focused on this fourth priority.

The fourth priority called for us to faithfully administer and use our gifts in serving others. v. 10—*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

It is important we faithfully administrate our spiritual and financial grace gifts so they can in some measure be used in serving others. From this passage, therefore, we have seen **four priorities** and been given **five challenges** thus far:

The first challenge was the BOB Challenge —v. 7. This was a challenge to pray every day for six months for Hillcrest Chapel. The challenges have never been greater. Thank you for praying; already we see God doing some extraordinary things.

The second challenge was the LOVE challenge —v. 8.

L—Love others deeply (1 Pet. 4:8).

O—Open wide your hearts to others. Risk! (2 Cor. 6:13)

V—Verbalize your love with encouraging and uplifting words that show you value the

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one you love (Ephesians 4:29).

E—Engage others in small groups and other relational circles on a regular basis (Acts 2:46).

The follow-up was for all of us to join a small group of some kind. We're doing so well at this; over 70 percent of our church community is attending a small group, yet we know that many haven't found a place to belong yet. We encourage you to let us know of your desire to be in a small group.

Next we moved to v. 9.

[The third challenge was the hospitality challenge](#) —v. 9.

In summary, hospitality means provision, protection and connection—Rom. 12:9-13; Heb. 13:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:9-10; Acts 2:42-47. We asked us all to be hospitable people in the church gathered and scattered by taking the hospitality challenge. We handed out a sheet with some very specific opportunities listed on it and asked you to prayerfully consider how you would respond to those opportunities. We had a wonderful response to the challenge, as over 500 sheets were filled out.

[The fourth challenge was the tithing challenge](#) —v. 10; Malachi 3:8-10. As we studied Malachi 3:8-10, we saw how we can become even more "blessable." The challenge is to put God to the test and begin tithing.

The fifth challenge continued on the theme of faithfully administering our gifts, a presentation of our Legacy challenge. I am so proud of you who are already giving faithfully to Legacy and for those of you who joined us last week. Thank you for your faithfulness. I believe we will see significant blessings and outreach for many years because of what will happen in our church in this year.

For our sixth and last challenge I want to return to 1 Peter 4:10. The last priority called for us to faithfully administer and use our gifts in serving others. v. 10—

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11] If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

The reception of spiritual gifts

Peter indicates that we have all "received" gifts. I don't think we're all as aware as we should be of how many gifts we have received, so let's review: What gifts have we received? Here's just a partial list, but it will be a good start. If we're followers of Jesus Christ, this is what the Scripture says we have received:

- **All good and perfect gifts.** James 1:17—*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18] He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."*

- **The gift of eternal life.** v. 18—*"He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created"*
(also John 3:16). No gift has ever cost more than our salvation!

- **The gift of the Scriptures—the word of truth.** v. 18—*"He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."*
The Scriptures are a treasure that is to be received and recognized as a great

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expression of God's love and grace. Do you value the gift?

- **All things that pertain to life and to godliness**—2 Peter 1:3.

- **Every spiritual blessing in Christ**—Ephesians 1:3-14.

- **Our breath**—Acts 17:25.

- **Grace gifts**—*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."* The words "grace" and "received" are significant. Grace reminds us that all the gifts we have are unmerited; we don't deserve these gifts, nor could we earn them; they are given to us by grace. The word received also reminds us that what we have has come from God. So the main thought of this reference in 1 Peter is that the spiritual gifts we have all received as believers are because of His wonderful grace.

This verse reminds us of the instruction of Paul to the Romans in chapter 12.

1] *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual [or reasonable] act of worship.*
2] *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* 3] *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with*

sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4] Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5] so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6] We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his [or in agreement with the] faith. 7] If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8] if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

What are the spiritual gifts? What is the instruction regarding our spiritual gifts? This is what [Race 300](#) is all about; to help us discover, develop and deploy our spiritual gifts.

So what are we to do with all we have received?

The responsibility of spiritual gifts

is threefold. Whatever gift we have received, we are:

To use it

*"Each one should **use whatever gift he has received...**"*

What does that say to us? We really don't have an option to allow our gifts to lay dormant because of our laziness, or lack of knowledge of what they are. Whatever it is that God has gifted us with, we are to use it.

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Now with such a clear command, why wouldn't we use the gifts we have received? Do these pictures give us any clues?

A beached boat: Sometimes we don't use our gifts because we have become what the Scripture graphically calls castaways, or shipwrecked. That could be because of our sin, discouragement, or because of someone else's mistreatment. Many of us are not using our gifts/our boats because of what we or someone else has done to us. Other times we have beached our boats because we think we have done enough and someone else needs to bear the load or use their boats. That could be the very faithful who took a break because they were tired or stressed, and now that break has stretched into years.

A dry docked boat: That volunteer beaching of our boats could be because we think we are too old to keep up; we have retired from service.

A boat on a trailer: Others have brand new boats that are still on the trailer; they haven't launched them yet because they haven't had the training, or think this isn't the time to serve.

A yacht that is docked: Others are not using their boats in service because they are using them for their own purposes and have no time for anything else.

A tug boat: It should be obvious that Scripture calls us to use our gifts. All our excuses, reasons for misuse, lack of use, or underuse is acceptable.

This last picture of one of the boats used at Dunkirk in the rescue of soldiers illustrates how we are to use our gifts. We are to use them:

To serve others

1 Pet. 4:10—*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

This verse can help us to focus on how our gifts should be used.

Gifts are not so we can be kept busy. Gifts are for service. This word "service" in its narrowest sense means "to wait on tables, to do service," but it doesn't mean "to be subject to." It's a reference to work done and service rendered—Matt. 20:28; 25:14; 27:55; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:18; Philemon 13; Heb. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:2. Gifts used in service bring fulfillment and purpose, and affect others so they can grow.

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Gifts used in service bring salvation to others, e.g., Dunkirk; all types of boats were used and the result saved people. It fills the hole in our hearts and gives meaning to our lives that we won't realize unless we serve. It brings spiritual growth to the church; it produces growth in others. Eph. 4:16— *"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

Many people say, "I use my gifts outside the church," but this passage makes it clear our gifts must also be applied in the church so we all might grow! If we look back at 1 Peter 4:10, we see there is also another responsibility Peter mentions in relationship to our service. It is:

To faithfully administer God's grace in its various forms

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, **faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms**."*

The definition of faithfully administering is helpful to us. Here we have the picture of a house manager, one who is a slave, and yet manages all the affairs and accounts of the household. Joseph in the Old Testament typifies this—Gen. 39:4.

In relation to our gifts, this means we all have to administrate/facilitate their use. If we have resources, if we have homes, if we have the skill of being able to work with our hands, what does that mean? **Faithfully administer.** Peter gives us two examples of what it means to "faithfully administer" in 1 Pet. 4:11.

"If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves he should do it with the strength God provides."

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This seems to be a condensed list of the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8, a summary representing the speaking gifts and the serving gifts. Because we all fit into one of these categories in our gift orientation, Peter has a strong word to say to all of us. If you are a speaker (one who prophesies, teaches, or exhorts) then he has instruction for you. If you are a server (one who serves, gives to the needs of others, leads, or shows mercy), Peter has a word for you.

The one who speaks, the one who teaches or proclaims the Scripture should remember that these are the very words of God. Peter is not talking about every word a teacher, a prophet, or an exhorter uses in every conversation. This is a reference only to those words found in Scripture. If that wasn't the case, I would be adding to the Scripture every time I spoke. The point is that speakers are not to forget that the Scripture is God's Word and must be treated that way.

The simple implications are,

- The words used should not be altered, because they are God's.
- The words are not to be added to, because what God said is enough.
- The words are not to be treated lightly, because we are responsible to God for them. That's why James 3:1 says, *"Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."*

The one who serves can learn from this verse, too. If we're serving and have no strength, we either have the wrong motivation, we're doing something God doesn't want to be done, or we simply need a rest. Strength can be an indication, then, of God's blessing and direction.

The one who serves, therefore, should recognize that his strength comes not from his own desire to meet needs, or because of the requests from others. His strength and motivation should come from that which God provides.

- What do you have the grace to do?
- What do you have the strength to do?
- Why should we use our gifts and faithfully administer them?

The reason for our spiritual gifts

Peter concludes with the reason for all this instruction, introduced by two words. Listen to the last part of v. 11—"*...so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever, and ever. Amen.*"

By the way, this purpose applies to all the priorities listed here.

1. Why should we pray with clear minds and self-control?

So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

2. Why should we love each other deeply?

So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

3. Why should we offer hospitality to each other without grumbling?

So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

4. Why should we use whatever gift we have received to serve others?

So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Peter has shown us the need for our involvement in this community of believers. It's something that can't be overemphasized. Think about it; what is our highest goal and purpose? The answer to that question was made clear to me about 21 years ago! During the time of my mom's illness she talked about hearing from God. She said she heard Him say to her: "I will show forth my glory in your life." (We interpreted that to mean she was going to be healed. It didn't happen the way we thought.)

I don't know how much of what mom heard has influenced me, but for many years it has been my prayer, too, that I would be a catalyst to seeing God glorified. Today the chief purpose of my life is to make Jesus look good, to see Jesus glorified/receive the glory. In fact, often I hear the Spirit ask me, "What do you want, Bob"? My answer is always the same: "To see Jesus glorified." That's why 1 Peter 4:7-11 is so important to me.

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How will we know if this desire is fulfilled—that Jesus is glorified? I want us to understand what glorified means: it means to be uplifted. It can also mean to be present, or to feel God’s presence. Therefore, if Jesus is glorified, it means He will be praised and His presence will be felt; there will be an awareness of God’s presence.

With that understanding in mind, the question is, do you want to see God glorified in this church and in your life? Then we must pray, love, offer hospitality and use whatever gift we have received to serve others. If we want to be even more practical, I hope we will all look at the challenges in this series as very obvious ways to seeing God glorified.

So,

1. Take the B.O.B. challenge—the prayer challenge.
2. Take the L.O.V.E. challenge—and join a small group.
3. Take the hospitality challenge—and join with us in making hospitality a lifestyle.
4. Take the tithing challenge—put God to the test and begin tithing.
5. Take the Legacy challenge and make a Legacy pledge.
6. Take the spiritual gift challenge and commit yourself to faithfully use and administrate your gifts in service to others.

What more would God need to do to motivate you to live a life of prayer, love, hospitality and service to others? Hasn’t He done enough? I am convinced that the world has not seen Jesus in our culture because of the lack of these four priorities in our lives, so please take some time now and write out your prayer for each of these priorities. After you’ve done that, pray that God will enable you to do what you have prioritized.