

Review

Peter has been telling us to live for the will of God, not the pursuit of the flesh. He wraps up that point by saying...

4:7 The End Is Near

This world is quickly passing away. So, we need to be praying, not partying.

4:8 Above All, Fervent Love

The Greek word "**DZEH-o**" means "to boil with heat." It is used to describe boiling water. That's how Peter tells us our love for one another is supposed to be. And, it's supposed to be "above all," or literally, "before every single other thing" (Gk: "**pro pas**").

Why is it to be above all? Because love covers a multitude of sins.

Col. 3:14 (NLT) And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony.

If we can be loving, then there's no relationship challenge that we can't overcome. Your spouse's failures, your friends' betrayal... it call all be conquered by love.

4:9 Hospitality Without Complaint

We are also to be hospitable to one another without complaint. Interestingly, the word "hospitable" in Greek is "**fil-OX-en-os**." The word comes from combining "**FEE-los**" with "**XEN-os**." "FEE-los" means "friend," and "XEN-os" means "stranger." So to be hospitable means to be a friend to strangers.

He's telling us to be hospitable to one another - to other Christians. Even ones that are strangers. To believers that you just met in church today.

Too often, visitors to a church don't feel welcomed, don't feel loved or part of the crowd. I challenge you to show hospitality to one another. To find a total stranger and treat them like a friend. And before you take issue with that challenge, remember: Peter said to be hospitable without

complaint...

4:10-11 Gifts

Every person in God's church has received a special gift. What gift? It's different for every person, but it will always be a mixture of the spiritual gifts that are listed.

We often think of the miraculous gifts like Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Prophecy, the Word of Knowledge, Distinguishing of Spirits, Word of Wisdom, Gifts of Healing, and Effecting of Miracles. However, there are lots more gifts that are much more common among the body of Christ. Paul said,

1Cor. 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

Here is the list of the more "common" (but no less miraculous) gifts:

Faith: The gift of faith enables you to step out and do things for the kingdom of God that might make no earthly sense.

Teaching: The ability to take the deep things of God and make them understandable to others is a spiritual gift.

Exhortation: A gift that helps us strongly urge people to good deeds, or warn them against evil deeds.

Giving: We're all called to give, but some people manifested the gift of faith by giving abundantly and generously.

Leading: The gift of leading is given to those that God calls to lead the body of Christ.

Serving: We're all called to serve one another, but some are gifted supernaturally to serve either by their ability or their availability.

Mercy: We're all commanded to be merciful to one another, but the gift of mercy is the supernatural ability to show unexpected and abundant kindness to the undeserving.

Your Gift

If you are born again, then you have at least one of the gifts. More than likely, you actually have a mix of more than one of them. Do you know what your gifts are?

Some people won't point out their gifts, because think that they're trying to be humble. But that's not humility - it's robbing God. You see, He has given you a gift. To hide it robs Him of the glory that He would receive by your using this gift. Demonstrating your gifts is not a lack of humility, because it's not a skill - it's a gift!

So find out what gifts God has given to you, and use them in the proper way.

Employ It In Serving One Another

What is the proper way to use your gifts? The reason they have been given to each of us is for the purpose which Peter is telling us here:

1Pet. 4:10 ...employ it in serving one another...

This is where I ultimately determine my success or failure as a pastor. Some pastors look at the size of Sunday attendance. Others look at how many letters come in from their radio show. Still others look at the number of books they've sold. But I see that Scripturally, Pastor/Teachers have been assigned by God...

Eph. 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ

I determine my success in the ministry by how well I've equipped the saints for the work of service.

Unfortunately, I will never be able to determine my ultimate success in this area, because no matter how well I have equipped some of you, there's no work of service happening. God has given you gifts. And the longer you sit under the teaching of the Word, the more you've been equipped for the work of service.

This morning, it is time for me to ask you, "How are you using those gifts to bless the body of Christ? Where are you using your gifts to serve others in the church?"

If you don't have an answer, let me help you out with some ideas. Some of the ministries in our church are:

- Childrens Ministry and Nursery
- Servants of Christ
- Intercessory Prayer

- Sound Ministry
- Slide/Video Ministry
- Media Ministry
- Parking Lot Ministry
- Greeters Ministry
- Meals Ministry
- Coffee/Hospitality Ministry
- Worship Ministry
- Physical service for work parties, road cleanup, landscaping, etc.

While these are certainly not the only ministries in our church, every one of these listed exists for the sole purpose of serving the church body here.

Unfortunately, every one of these ministries often finds themselves short-handed to perform the work of service. Why? Because not everyone who has been equipped for the work of service is doing the work of service.

Paul told the Corinthians,

1Cor. 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1Cor. 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1Cor. 12:11-12 ...distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

These spiritual gifts have been given to each of us for the common good. God gave them to us for the edification, the building up, of the entire church. Peter knew, and I know, and those who are currently serving have learned that when you serve to build up the body of Christ, the person who gets built up the most is you.