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GROWTH GROUP FALL 2019  
STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: FINDING HOPE IN 1ST PETER  
WEEK 8 – NOVEMBER 3, 2019 - 1 PETER 4:7-11

### SETTING THE CONTEXT

In the first part of chapter 4, Peter wrote about the change that happens in the lifestyle of those who choose to follow Jesus. They turn away from their pagan lifestyles and embrace a new ethic for their lives. As we pick up our text for this week, Peter begins to explain more fully what this Christian lifestyle looks like.

Believers are to be alert and sober minded because the end of things is near. Clear mindedness has to do with wisdom, that comes from the knowledge of God. End of times conversations should not incite people or cause panic. Instead, believers should recall the words of Jesus, from Luke 12:35, when he noted that the faithful servant should be dressed and ready for service as he or she awaited the return of Christ. Our calling is to live into the promises that have been given to us, as we wait for the second coming.

Our new life in Christ is revealed in loving service to one another. We are to love each other deeply, or more literally, constantly. This word used here for love has the connotation of being stretched or extended. Our love and care of another continues to grow in depth and endurance. In 1 Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul wrote that love does not envy or dishonor others, but instead seeks to build others up. Peter quotes Proverbs 10:12, when he says that love covers over a multitude of sins. Love can help us with the forgiveness of sins.

Peter does not present a list of the gifts of the Spirit, like the apostle Paul does. Instead, he mentions two fairly broad areas of ministry; speaking and serving. It seems as though Peter wants to focus on “spiritual gifts” as opposed to “natural gifts”, to keep the focus on God rather than ourselves. As we look to God, we discover the gifts that we need to serve and love others.

Peter says we are to be stewards or administrators of the grace given to us by God. A faithful steward is accountable to their master, while at the same time the steward must make decisions and exercise authority in the master’s name. When it comes to spiritual gifts, we are to recognize this concept of stewardship. We are to see that these gifts come from God and we must utilize our gifts in a way that honors God and brings glory to God.



# EXPLORING THE TEXT

## Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

*7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. 10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.*

- 1) Can you think about a time when a friend stopped by your home unexpectedly? How did you respond? Or have you ever showed up to a friend's house unexpectedly? How did they respond?
- 2) What were the "end of the world" stories or narratives when you were growing up? What are some of the "end of the world" stories or narratives that are told today? How can the church respond?
- 3) What does "love covers a multitude of sins" mean to you? Does that imply that certain sins are not covered?
- 4) Verse 9 talks about hospitality. What are some tangible ways that you have shown hospitality to others? How have you been encouraged by the hospitality of others?
- 5) There are three lists of spiritual gifts in the writings of the apostle Paul. You can find them in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and Ephesians 4:11-16. The gifts from these verses include: administration, apostle, discernment, evangelism, exhortation, faith, giving, healing, helping, knowledge, leadership, mercy, miracles, pastor, prophecy, service, teaching, tongues, tongues interpretation, and wisdom.  
  
How would you define what a spiritual gift is? Are "spiritual" gifts different than regular or "natural" gifts? Are there more spiritual gifts than what we find in the writings of the apostle Paul?
- 6) Out of all the gifts that Peter could have chosen from, why do you think he uses examples of speaking and serving in verse 11?
- 7) What are some tangible ways that our lives bring glory and honor to God? Is there something you can think of that you have done recently that helped to bring glory to God?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Can you think of ways that you use or could use your spiritual gifts at LJPC or in your community?