



**Series Title:** “Exiles: A Study of the First Letter of Peter”

**Date:** March 20, 2022

**Message Title:** “The End is Near—So Focus!”

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**Reference:** 1 Peter 4:7-11

Here are some key points from the passage:

- The next great event in human history will be the return of Jesus Christ at the end of this age (the “church age”), which began with the birth of the church in the first century.
- We are to be “self-controlled,” following Christ instead of our feelings and emotions.
- We are to be “sober-minded,” exercising discipline over our thoughts, capturing them for Christ.
- We can only do this through dedication to prayer and study of the Scriptures.
- This changes our relationships; we are to love each other earnestly. Hospitality is an example of such love.
- God gives his people gifts, which are for the benefit of the church and are to be used in service of one another and of the gospel mission.

**Message Notes:**

Peter continually reminds us that as exiles in a land which is not our own, we are to live differently from the culture around us. We have a great hope that strengthens us and conquers fear.

This “church age” will come to an end when Christ returns to establish the new heaven and new earth. Until that time, his followers need not live in fear; we have a great hope that awaits us. This means that we live with anticipation.

Rather than following the lead of culture, we are to follow our Lord—living with “self-control” and “sober-minded.” (v. 7)

Self-control means that I don’t “follow my heart” (feelings and emotions) as the world around us

does. We aren’t to be distracted from our gospel mission. Our feelings are real, and Jesus understands them fully. We can bring those feelings to Christ.

Sober-minded means that we exercise discipline over our thoughts, capturing them for Christ. When we are tempted to follow our feelings, we in our minds come up with logical reasons for giving in to those desires. We are on mission, and our hearts and minds must not be distracted.

The only way we can do this is through dedication to Scripture and to prayer. Our lives are transformed as we do so. Our thinking is changed and our prayers become more effective as we draw closer to the Father.

This changes our relationships within the household of faith. We are not just to love one another, but to do so *earnestly*. (vv. 8-9)

This doesn’t come naturally; it requires hard work and effort. If we need an example of this love, we need only look to Jesus and his cross. Like him, we are to love each other regardless of what they may do to us. Our reaction when offended is to be softened, even saddened.

One tangible way we show our love is hospitality. It builds connection. It also changes us as we celebrate together, suffer together and serve together.

We are to serve one another using the spiritual gifts that God has given each one of us (vv. 10-11). Each gift is for the benefit of God’s family—the church. Our gifts are not to be hoarded or withheld. They are also not to be trumpeted. They are to be used to serve one another out of our love for each other.

All of this points others to God. Everything is to be for God’s glory and his gospel mission. We pour ourselves out because he has done so for us.

- How do these verses speak to our theme of “Exiles: Set Apart?”
- Were you ever frightened by “end times” predictions, especially in movies and books?
- What does “the end is near” mean to you?
- How should the realities of judgement (v. 5-7) and Christ’s glory (v. 11) influence our daily behavior?
- Peter gives several commands in verses 7-11; which of these require your special attention right now?
- Consider these verses, and also Ephesians 4:11-16 and 1 Corinthians 12. What spiritual gifts do you believe God has given you? How are you using those gifts to serve others in love?
- What gifts do you see in the members of our leadership community?