



CALVARY
TUSCALOOSA

TEACHING PLAN
OCTOBER 18, 2020



SERVE

1 PETER 4:10-11

OCTOBER 11, 2020

TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying 1 Peter 4:10-11. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: Christians are saved to glorify the Lord. One means of doing this is serving others in the church and faithfully stewarding the gifts that have been given to them by the Father.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: All Christians are meant to serve one another for the building up of the church and the glory of God. Further, we should love our neighbors by serving them.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: Jesus has served us in the ultimate way by going to the cross in our place.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

- 1 When was the last time you had to take prescription medication?
- 2 What is the role of a doctor in prescribing medicine compared with a pharmacist?

The doctor certainly gives the orders and prescribes the medicines, but the provision of the medicine comes through a pharmacist. Can you imagine if a pharmacist decided to simply withhold the medicine from sick people who came with prescriptions?

Each and every Christian is like a pharmacist. The Bible says that Christians have been given gifts from God for the purpose of serving fellow Christians. They are called to dispense this medicine to bring healing and life and help to others. Furthermore, Christians will be held accountable before the Lord for how they steward these gifts.

When Christians serve others, they glorify God, bless others, and provide a beautiful illustration of the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's consider what it means for each and every Christian to serve others.

ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

Do you prefer restaurants that have servers or are self-serve? Why?

Have you ever worked as a server? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

What is the main job of the server?

No one goes to a restaurant primarily because they have great servers there. Rather, people go to restaurants for the food. The servers aren't the main event, though they do play an extremely important role.

Just so, Christians are the servers of God's grace in its various forms to others. The most important thing is God and His grace, but He has chosen to use His children to be servers of that grace. The reason that Christians have this privilege is because of God's grace that came to them in Christ Jesus. Christians know how to serve others because Jesus Christ has sacrificially served them by bearing their sin on the cross.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Notes:

Peter identified himself in the introduction of 1 Peter as the author. He wrote to “God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.” Peter was the disciple who received the vision recorded in Acts 10 in which God made clear to him that he was saving people not only out of Israel, but all nations. Later, Peter affirmed in Acts 15 Paul’s ministry to the Gentile world.

It was God’s plan from the beginning to redeem people from every tribe tongue and nation, but some Jewish people who placed their faith in Christ still had a difficult time accepting this truth once Gentile people began to be converted. Most of us in the West are not descendants of Abraham. Had God not included people outside of the nation of Israel, many of us would be without hope. But God, in his infinite mercy and kindness, saves people from all ethnicities, tribes, and languages who will gather around the throne for eternity praising the Lamb that was slain.

So, when Peter wrote this letter, it wasn’t a Jew writing to Gentiles but a rescued sinner writing to rescued sinners from another culture. He gave them the same encouragement and instruction that all Christians need, including those reading his words today. Today, we are specifically going to consider Peter’s command to Christians to serve one another.

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 4:10.

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

In this one verse, tucked in to various other exhortations for followers of Christ, Peter gave an excellent explanation of the daily work of those who profess to follow Christ. Each Christian receives gifts to faithfully steward in service to others by which both parties experience God's grace. We may say it like this: All God's people should use God's gifts to serve God's people for God's glory.

Notes:

- According to 1 Peter 4:10, who receives gifts from God?

The key word here is "each." Peter made it clear that all of his readers received gifts. He knew that to be true because he was writing to Christians who were indwelt with the Holy Spirit and given gifts by which they may build up the body of Christ.

Similarly, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). This truth is important because the reason that God gives these gifts to each person who is redeemed is for the "common good." It is helpful to note that the reason for the gifts is the basis for the distribution of the gifts. God is so concerned about the spiritual well being of His children that He equipped each one with means by which they may help each other along in their faith.

No child of God is exempt from spiritual growth, and no child of God is exempt from the responsibility to help their brothers and sisters to grow. God gives gifts to His children, not only for the building up of the church, but also as a blessing to those outside of the church who interact with Christians.

- What is a spiritual gift? How does one obtain a spiritual gift?

In the New Testament, there are three locations where specific gifts are listed: 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and 1 Peter 4. Most complete lists of spiritual gifts contain about 20. Spiritual gifts are just that, gifts. Thus spiritual gifts can't be earned or bought. They can't be exchanged or rejected. Christians don't have the right or ability to walk up to some sort of heavenly buffet of spiritual gifts and pick and choose which gifts they'd like to exercise.

Notes:

Rather, God, in His infinite wisdom and power, bestows spiritual gifts upon His children according to His own good pleasure. Having a proper perspective on the spiritual gifts will assist Christians in ordering their hearts concerning them. Spiritual gifts aren't primarily about the one who exercises them. Christians are servants carrying out orders, being faithful to steward that which the Master has entrusted to them. Christians have no grounds for boasting in the use of their gifts.

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 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, 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.

Every Christian is given spiritual gifts by God to put to use for the good of God's people and the glory of God's name. Though they are in possession of these gifts, Christians are not free to use them as they please according to their own wisdom or whims. A foot soldier bravely marches into battle with several weapons at his disposal, but his greatest asset is the oversight and direction of his commanding officer. Though he may have excellent tools at his disposal, to use them in a way that is independent of his authority is foolhardy and disastrous. Just so, Christians answer to their commanding officer and go into battle under His authority, direction, and oversight.

- Peter wrote that Christians should use their gifts as “faithful stewards.” What did he mean?

Notes:

Let's take that description one word at a time. He used the adjective *faithful*, which means “loyal, steadfast, and constant.” Something that is faithful is true to the original. In the context of Christian service, faithfulness describes someone who is loyal to God, steadfast in their convictions, and constant in the discharge of their duties. Being faithful means that they are true to the original intention, purpose, and calling of God in their lives. A faithful person doesn't take matters into their own hands. They don't lean on their own understanding or trust in their own abilities. Rather, faithful Christians walk in stubborn obedience to the Word of God day in and day out.

The second word is *steward*. Peter said that Christians are stewards. This term is critical to a proper understanding of the meaning of this text. A steward is “someone to whom something is entrusted to a specific end.” For example, someone who stewards a household performs the duties of the overseer of the household in his or her place. The steward carries out the desires of the overseer in the manner that the overseer would have done so. They act on behalf of the overseer and under their authority. So it is with Christians. Each Christian is a steward of the spiritual gifts that God has entrusted to them. The gifts are God's and are to be utilized to carry out the original purposes of God in the manner of God.

- According to this verse, how are Christians to serve?

In verse 11, Peter further clarified how Christians should use their gifts to serve others. He said that they “should do so with the strength that God provides.”

Why did Peter say that? Remember Christ's words, "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We would do well to remember that we are not only entirely dependent upon God for our justification, but also our sanctification. The psalmist wrote, "As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he shows us his mercy" (Ps. 123:2).

Notes:

Yes, Christians are given gifts, but we should never think that we are somehow powered by the might of our own strength.

- Why must we depend on God's strength as we exercise spiritual gifts to serve others?

We must depend on God's strength because we are weak, but we also must depend on God's strength because we were meant for His glory (Isa. 43:7). God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is worthy of all honor, praise, and glory. He alone is worthy of worship. It is good and fitting to worship and glorify God in all things. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Giving glory to God isn't only raising hands and hearts to God in formal times of worship, but doing all things in faith, according to His Word, unto Him. When Christians serve one another with their spiritual gifts by faith with His strength, according to His Word, then God is greatly glorified.

> Have a volunteer read Matthew 25:14-30.

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.¹⁵ To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another

one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' ²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²² "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' ²³ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²⁴ "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' ²⁶ "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Notes:

Pharmacists don't hoard medicine, but distribute it appropriately. Waiters don't take the plates of food out back to eat, but deliver them to the tables they are serving. Christians shouldn't withhold the grace of service to their brothers and sisters in Christ and their neighbors.

- What can we learn from this passage about God's intention for the spiritual gifts Christians steward?

Notes:

Spiritual gifts should not be hoarded or manipulated for self-exaltation. Their intended purpose was the building up of the church and blessing to neighbors. God's intention for His spiritual gifts is that they would be used not for the possessor's benefit, but for the good of others. Christians are to serve others with their spiritual gifts. If they do not, then they are not being faithful stewards.

Matthew 25:14-30 provides a potent illustration of this reality. In this passage, Jesus told the parable of the talents. Those who faithfully stewarded their talents to produce an increase were praised, the servant who did not steward his talents well was punished. We are to steward our talents by investing them in our local congregations for the good of our brothers and sisters and the glory of God.

- Thinking back to 1 Peter 4:10-11, why does God want Christians to serve others?

God is a good Father, and He is working out His plan and purposes in the lives of all people on earth. He has chosen to make those who have been redeemed by Christ an integral part of His plan on earth. First, Christians are meant to serve one another so that they may make progress in their sanctification. Sanctification is the process that every believer begins at conversion in which they are conformed to Christ's image. It involves the leaving behind of sin and growth in grace and godliness. In sanctification, the Christian depends more and more on God and His Word and less and less on their own strength and abilities. The spiritual gifts that Christians possess

are meant to be used in such a way that helps others to become more and more like Christ. In the case of unbelievers, Christians serve others as a sign of the greatness and veracity of God. It is a testimony of their faith and evidence of the reality of the object of their faith.

Notes:

Second, Christians faithfully steward their spiritual gifts by serving others so that God would be greatly glorified. When Christians who have been saved by God utilize the gifts of God by the strength of God, then God is made much of. God's glory is the ultimate purpose of all things, and Christians should seek His glory as they seek to take their next breath—reflexively, unceasingly, and with desperation if anything were to prohibit it.

- What does the command to serve others have to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The more that a Christian embraces and treasures the saving work of God on their behalf, the more they will embrace the good works for which God saved them (Eph. 2:8-10). As Christians grow in their love for and devotion to God, then they will find themselves saying with Christ, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (John 4:34). When Christians serve others with a gospel-motivation, then they are refreshed, blessed, and strengthened in their souls.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- 1 How have you been challenged today to recognize that if you are in Christ, then you have received spiritual gifts to be used for His glory?
- 2 How are you currently seeking to serve others? If you are not, how might you begin to think about this and take action toward obedience to Christ?
- 3 How can our service to others give opportunity to share the good news of Jesus?

PRAY

Pray for a renewed understanding of the distribution and purpose of spiritual gifts. Ask the Lord to help you and your brothers and sisters to be faithful stewards of them and to utilize them in God's strength for His glory. Finally, pray that the finished work of Christ on the cross would be the motivating factor for service to others within our church.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - What is something new you have learned about serving from this week's study?
 - How is God calling you to act according to what you've learned?
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- > The challenge to memorize 1 Peter 4:10.

1 PETER 4:10-11

4:10-11. One final priority remains for believers who live in the light of Christ's second coming and who wish to demonstrate agape love toward one another. This priority can best be summarized as intense serving. Every believer is to heed this injunction. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.

Notes:

Every believer in every church has received a spiritual gift from God for use in the life of the church. Within the body of Christ, love for each other finds expression in the use of spiritual gifts, not for self-advancement or as an attention-getter, but for the benefit of others. Every Christian, then, is capable of ministering to others within the body of Christ.

"Gift" (charisma) literally means "a gift of grace." When Christians receive God's grace in this way, we have the responsibility to share this gift with other Christians. Through such sharing we are faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. What has been given to the individual as a gift of grace has also been given for the benefit of the body as a whole. Believers are agents of God in passing on the benefits of his grace in our life. God does not grant us gifts of grace for our personal use; he gives them for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Verse 11 illustrates this point by dividing the many gifts of grace into two broad categories: speaking and serving. Speaking includes not simply preaching or teaching, but many kinds of gifts involving speech, such as evangelism, speaking in tongues, prophecy, encouragement, and leadership. Serving includes any type of assisting or encouraging ministry that directly targets the benefit of others within the body of Christ, such as contributing to the needs of others, healing, miraculous powers, showing mercy, and encouragement.

Believers are to take these gifts seriously and to exercise them with an attitude of dependence on God (speak the very words of God, do it with the strength of God). When the gifts of grace are applied in this way, the attention and praise shift from the individual believer to God, the one who has gifted the believer in the first place.

Notes:

MATTHEW 25:14-30

25:14-30. The man on the long journey symbolizes Jesus and the lengthy delay that will precede his second coming. The talents (whose value equaled six thousand days of wages) represent the financial resources, gifts, privileges, and opportunities that Jesus entrusts to his disciples. The faithful servants (true disciples) used their gifts and resources responsibly and were generously rewarded. The evil, lazy servant (a false disciple) failed to use the resources and was severely punished. He attempted to excuse his failure by assaulting the character of his master (v. 24). However, the master's treatment of the other servants demonstrates that the wicked servant's slander was unfair.