

End Times Living

1 Peter 4:1-11

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1 Peter 4:1-11 (NIV)

*Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ²As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. ⁷**The end of all things is near.** Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so 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.*

v1 – With what should we arm ourselves?

Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind: The commitment God calls us to have is nothing greater than the commitment Jesus had in enduring suffering for our salvation. We must have a commitment to God that will endure through our struggles.

Matthew 16:24 – *Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

Taking up the cross means we're absolutely committed and not looking back.

What does absolute commitment to the cause of Christ look like?

Matthew 5:29 – *If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*

We are defeated in our battle against sin when we refuse to sacrifice anything in the battle. We only want victory if it comes easily to us.

- Jesus calls us to set aside our own agenda in order to embrace His.

How does our suffering cause us to be done with sin?

When a person suffers physical persecution for the sake of Jesus, it almost always profoundly changes their outlook regarding sin and the pursuit of the lusts of the flesh.

- That makes us more likely to live not **for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**
- Whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God, has made a clear break with sin.

What does it mean to be done with sin?

This refers to the spiritual state of the victorious sufferer... he has effectively broken with a life dominated by sin.

- It doesn't mean that he no longer sins, but his life is no longer dominated by the power of sin.

v2 – What is the result of being done with sin?

Peter gave us a couple of time references that are helpful in having the right attitude in our following Jesus Christ.

1. **No longer** should we live in sin; we should answer every temptation with the reply, "**no longer.**"
2. We should consider how to **live the rest of our time.** Each of us must answer to Him how we **live this time.**

v3 – How did we spend our time before we were saved?

We have all spent enough time living like the world. Now we are called to live like Christians.

- It is a profound and foolish waste of time for Christians to live like the world, and we must simply stop being double-minded and start living as Christians.

Why do Christians think they need to spend their time in ungodly pursuits?

They want to experience more of the world before they make a full commitment to godliness. This is a tragic mistake and is a path that leads *away* from eternal life.

What is *debauchery* (*lewdness*, NKJV)?

This word means to live without any sense of moral restraint, especially in regard to sexual immorality and violence.

- It denotes excesses of all kinds of evil involving a lack of personal self-restraint.
- The term pictures sin as an inordinate indulgence of appetites violating a sense of public decency.

Is this list of sins a problem today?

When we look at this list (**lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries**), we see just how little fallen man has progressed in the last 2,000 years.

v4 – What do worldly people think of our godly living?

When the world looks at our godly living, they **think it strange** that we do not follow them in their reckless, wild living.

1 Corinthians 15:32 – *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!*

Why do the ungodly heap abuse on Christians?

When we don't participate in the sin around us, we convict those who practice their sin, and they don't like that — so they speak evil of us.

- If you are like God, you will find your good deeds received with contempt and ingratitude.

v5 – What will abusers of Christians have to face?

They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge:

When this account is required, all who live in the sins Peter described will clearly see how foolish they have been. Even if one seems to live the “good life” living by the world's rules, his life will be a waste in the measure of eternity.

v6 – Why was the gospel preached to the dead?

The righteous **dead** know and live on in constant awareness of the reality of eternity — and are rewarded by this understanding as they **live according to God in the spirit**.

- Jesus preached to the *spirits in prison*, preaching a message of judgment (1 Peter 3:19).
- Apparently during this same time Jesus also preached a message of salvation to the faithful dead in Abraham's Bosom (Luke 16:22) who anticipated the work of the Messiah for them.

Jesus fulfilled the promise that He would lead *captivity captive* (Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8) and would “*proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound*” (Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18).

Was preaching to the dead a second chance for salvation?

This preaching **to those who are dead** was not the offer of a second chance, but the completion of the salvation of those who had been faithful to God under their first chance.

- To the ungodly dead, this proclamation of victory was a blast of reality dashing any hope of a reprieve (like Purgatory would be).

v7 – What does it mean *the end of all things is at hand*?

If we live in the last days, it is all the more appropriate that we give ourselves to prayer (**therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers**).

- The expectation that the end of the age could break in at any time was the view of the early church.

What should an expectation that Jesus could return soon cause Christians to do?

This should drive us to be more diligent in our prayers.

- We must give ourselves to **serious** prayer. As we see the weight of eternity rushing towards us, we dare not take the need for prayer lightly.

What does it mean to be *alert* (*watchful*, NKJV) in our prayers?

We must have our hearts and minds watching and ready for the return of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:42 – *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

This also means watching ourselves and watching this world, measuring our readiness for Jesus' coming.

v8 – What else should characterize Christians at the end of the Church Age?

have fervent love for one another: If these are the last days, then it is important for us to love those with whom we are going to spend eternity.

What does it mean that *love covers a multitude of sins*?

Love covers both the sins of the one loving and the sins of the one who is being loved.

- Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten.
- But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound — to Satan's perverse delight.

v9 – What else should characterize Christians at the end of the Church Age?

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling: Love will show itself in hospitality. Christians should often open their homes to others and doing it all **without grumbling**.

Why is hospitality “without grumbling” important?

Hospitality can be costly, burdensome, and irritating.

- The Greek term denotes a muttering or low speaking as a sign of displeasure. It depicts a spirit that is the opposite of cheerfulness.

v10 – How do we show love to one another?

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another: Love will show itself as we give to the church family what God has given us as gifts.

- As we do so, we are **good stewards** of the many-faceted (**manifold**) **grace of God** given to us.

What kind of gifts does God give us that we should use to bless others?

They are the “gifts of the Spirit,” aka spiritual gifts.

- Romans 12 lists prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, and mercy.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 includes the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues.
- 1 Corinthians 12:28 includes healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

v11 – How should our spiritual gifts be used?

Every role in the Body of Christ is important; each has its job to do.

- A man rebuilt his lawn mower engine, and when he finished, he had a small part left over, and he couldn't remember where it went. He started the engine and it ran great, so he figured that the part wasn't necessary — until he tried to stop the lawn mower, and it wouldn't stop!

Even the smallest, seemingly least important part of the body of Christ is important.

How do I identify my spiritual gift?

There is no magic formula or definitive test that can tell us exactly what our spiritual gifts are (it is usually not one, it is a mix of gifts).

- A common problem for Christians is to get so caught up in our spiritual gift that we only seek to serve God in the area we have been gifted.
- God calls us to obediently serve Him in all things. He will equip us with whatever gifts we need to accomplish the task He has called us to.

Identifying our spiritual giftedness can be accomplished in various ways.

- A quick indication is what we're good at and enjoy doing.
- Spiritual gift tests or inventories, while not to be fully relied upon, can help us understand where our gifting might be.
- Confirmation from others reveals our spiritual giftedness. Other people who see us serving the Lord can often identify a spiritual gift in us that we might take for granted or not recognize.
- Prayer is also important. The One who knows exactly how we are gifted is the gift-giver Himself—the Holy Spirit. Ask God to show us how we are gifted in order to better use our spiritual gifts for His glory.

Is it wrong to focus so much on spiritual gifts that we miss other opportunities to serve God?

Yes. If we are dedicated to being used by God, He will equip us with the spiritual gifts we need.

- So, our giftedness can change from time to time based on what God would have us do.

What does it mean we should serve in the strength of God rather than our own strength?

God should be involved in what we do through prayer and the application of His Word.

- The things we do in our own power and wisdom will fail because God wants to be involved in all we do.
- Also, so to Him **belongs the glory**

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- God wants us to be “all in” with following Him.
- God uses suffering to bring us closer to Him.
- End times living should cause us to be given to prayer, watchful, loving, and full of cheerful hospitality.
- We show love to one another when we bless others by using our spiritual gifts.