

Two Ways To Live For God's Glory

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[0 : 00] Verse 7, Peter writes, As one who speaks oracles of God, whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Well, perhaps you've heard this question before. Maybe you've entertained it.

In your mind at some point along the way. But if you knew that you only had a short term left to live, what would you do?

Who would you spend the rest of that time with? What would you spend the rest of your time doing? It's a common question, isn't it? We hear it all the time. We perhaps have asked that question before.

And a lot of people, most people maybe even, have something of a bucket list mindset when they come to that question. And they think, well, I've got all of these things that I would like to do in my life, things that I would like to enjoy in my life.

[1 : 36] And I guess if I knew that I only had a little bit of time left, that the end of my existence here was drawing to a close, I guess I'd start checking off the list, right?

Finding all the things that I've really wanted to enjoy in this life, trying to get them done before it's too late. Some may take maybe an opportunistic view of that, which is I'm just going to make the most of my time here.

You only have one life, right? Only one life to live. I'm just going to make the most of it and do all the things that make me happy. So an opportunistic view. Some might take a philanthropic view.

You may say, you know, I only have a short time here. I don't know why I'm here. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. But I know that at least when my life comes to an end, I want to have left the world better than it was when I came into it, perhaps.

And maybe you just give the rest of your time to philanthropy. You're just trying to help people, right? Trying to leave the world a better place. Some might take what we might call it a militaristic view.

[2 : 46] We say, well, I recognize I only have a short time left to live, and I'm going to be the one that beats it. I'm going to be the one that beats it. Everybody else may die. Everybody else may have 70, 80 years, whatever it is.

I'm going to have a longer lifespan than that. And so you spend your life doing everything that you can to beat the odds, right? Maybe you're spending your time focused on hyperhealth living, right? Very careful about the way that you're eating. Very careful about the way you're treating your body, so on and so forth. Just thinking, if anybody's going to beat the odds, I'm going to beat the odds.

Now, all of us would probably come to those three scenarios.

Maybe there's more of them that we would have. And we'd say, you know, it's not entirely bad, is it? And surely we want to enjoy the life that God has given us. Isn't that what Solomon instructs us in Ecclesiastes?

Eat your cake. Enjoy it, right? God has given you a particular lot. Make the most of it and enjoy it in God's blessings, right? We might say, well, yeah, there's a sense in which we'd want to do that.

[3 : 51] Surely all of us want to make some kind of significant impact on the world around us, or at least the community in which we live. Surely we wouldn't come to that and say, well, no, that's a problem.

You shouldn't be living that way. No, we'd say, no, that's pretty good. Surely most of us would say, yeah, you know, we need to be good stewards of our bodies. Maybe we can't completely beat the odds, but maybe we can make things a little bit better than the average person.

We'd say, well, that's not necessarily a poor pursuit either. The problem is most people, when they're thinking of that question and they're answering it in those ways, the one thing that they do have in common is that they believe that this life is really all that there is. And that all that really matters in this life is just doing what makes you happy. Just checking off that list. Do the things that you want to do.

Help the people that you want to help. Live the way that you want to live, because this is it. You only live once, and once it's gone, it's gone. And we would say, well, you know, that's where the problem really lies, isn't it?

[4 : 59] This isn't all that there is. What if there is more than this life? What if death isn't really the end?

What if your existence here really isn't as purposeless and as meaningless as our culture tends to make it seem? What if your life really isn't about you at the end of the day?

What if it's about something greater than you? What if it's about someone greater than you? And, of course, Christians would say, no, that's it. The Bible tells us that all of this, everything that we see around us, this life that we have now, it's all going somewhere, right?

We're not here by accident. We're not purposeless beings who are just here, and then we're gone, and then that's it. No, the Bible tells us this is all going somewhere.

And the next big event on God's calendar is, of course, the return of Christ. And we'd say that leads to the final judgment. The final judgment where each and every one of us are going to stand before a holy God.

[6 : 16] Shane helped us to think about that so briefly this morning as we look to God in our call to worship. We see his grandeur. We see God calling us to lift our voices in worship.

And then Shane said it. He said, now that we've seen our holy God, we must now humble ourselves before him. Now, why would we do that? Because he really is a holy God.

Because he really is a great judge. Because all of our lives are really to be lived for his glory and for his purposes. And each one of us will stand before him.

And there's only one of two responses that you can have to that. One is to be utterly terrified of it.

And there's a sense in which all of us should tremble to know that this life is not all that there is.

And I'm going to have to answer to God for it. And maybe that's you. Maybe when you think of the prospect that after death comes a judgment, maybe what that does is it just scares you.

[7 : 25] Because you're not exactly sure how you're going to stand when that judgment comes. But of course, it's a comfort for those of us who know the Lord Jesus, isn't it?

We stand in fear and in reverence and in awe of our great God. But we do so also with the tremendous comfort of knowing that Christ has redeemed us.

That he has paid on the cross for those things that would cause us to be judged by God in eternal hell. And it brings us great comfort to know that actually this is not all there is.

Because this life is hard. And while there's so many ways we'd like to live it, none of those ways ever really fully satisfy our flesh, does it? There must be something better to this.

And of course, Christians know there is something better. There's a great comfort that comes to us when we think that, oh, this is actually going somewhere. There's a purpose here.

[8 : 22] And much of Peter's letter has been setting our minds on that, hasn't it? From the very beginning, he speaks to these Christians who are suffering, who are in this existence that he has referred to as exile.

And what is it that he begins with at the very beginning? He says, hey, bless God because he has a great inheritance prepared for you. An inheritance that's unfading and imperishable.

It's undefiled. He is keeping it for you. What is Peter doing there? He's saying there's something better. And it's coming. Surely, it is almost here.

Jesus is about to come back. And now we're at this point in the letter where he's taking all of those wonderful truths and now he's practically applying them to the way that we're supposed to live.

It's almost as if Peter has in his mind this idea that, okay, we do only have a short time to live. How are we going to use that time? And he's instructing us on how to do that.

[9 : 26] That's what he's on about in this paragraph. It begins at verse 7. He opens it up. We talked about this at great length two weeks ago. He opens it up. The end of all things is at hand.

What does that mean? Well, it means that we're in the final stage. We're in the final stage of God's plan and redemptive plan in human history.

Jesus has come. The kingdom was inaugurated in his first coming. It's going to be consummated in his second coming. And that time in between is where we are. The Bible calls that the last days or the final days, or as Peter refers to it here, the end of all things.

Peter says, look, you're in the final days. The final countdown has begun to God's eternal plan. Jesus will return. Therefore, he says, as God's people, there's some things that need to mark your life now.

The Bible tells us often, it's not shy about telling us, that the reality of the return of Christ and of our eternal home in heaven is supposed to shape the way that we live now.

[10:32] Here from Hebrews chapter 10, verses 24 and 25, you probably know this verse well. Let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.

Why? All the more as you see the day approaching, the day, the final day, the judgment, the return of Christ. What's the author of Hebrews getting at there?

He's saying, listen, the day is approaching, so let's live in light of it. And if we're gonna live faithfully in light of it, we're gonna seek to stir one another up and we're gonna meet together as God's people.

We're gonna encourage one another. We're not gonna neglect the church, so on and so forth. Let me give you another one. 1 John chapter three, verses two and three. John says, beloved, we are God's children now.

And what we will be, that is what we will be in eternity, has not yet appeared. We don't know exactly what our existence is gonna be like then. But we know that when Christ appears, we're gonna be like him because we shall see him as he is.

[11:48] And then John says this, everyone who thus hopes, everyone who sets their minds on that, everyone who sets their focus on what is coming, purifies himself now as Christ is pure.

We could go to many more. The New Testament constantly telling us to live in light of the end, live in light of the coming of Christ, live in light of what will be true of us in eternity if we're God's people. And of course, that's what Peter is on about here. And he gives us four exhortations here, four marks of what our lives should look like as God's people as we're living in light of the end of all things.

We covered the first two, two weeks ago, and that was sober prayer. We saw that in verse seven. And sacrificial love, which we saw in verse eight. And we're gonna cover the second two this morning.

The next one that we come to is what we might call sincere hospitality. Sincere hospitality. So we've had sober prayer. We've had sacrificial love.

[12:58] Now we have sincere hospitality. We find that in verse nine, this third imperative. Peter says, show hospitality to one another without grumbling. And remember, this is flowing out of that opening indicative in verse seven.

Because we're in the last days, because Jesus is coming back, show hospitality to one another without grumbling. Of course, hospitality is one of the marks of the early Christian community. And it might surprise you to know that the New Testament repeatedly instructs believers to participate in this. And we might not always think about this. We're thinking about, well, what does it look like to be a Christian?

Lots of things may come to our minds. We may be surprised how often the New Testament answers that question by saying something in relationship to this idea of hospitality. One of the biblical qualifications for elders in the church is that they are hospitable.

Why? Not because it's more important for pastors than for everyone else, but because elders in the church are to be examples of what every Christian under their care is to be and to do.

[14:14] It's that important. That God would say, those who are going to lead my people and shepherd my people need to have this as a key characteristic of their life because everybody else in their charge needs to look at them and say, that's how I need to live my life.

That's how I need to follow in the footsteps of Christ just as my pastors do. And here, Peter exhorts Christians in exile to focus on showing hospitality as we seek to live in light of Christ's return.

Think about that. In context here, he's putting hospitality on the same plane as our sincere prayer life, as the sacrificial love that covers a multitude of sins, as we'll see in a few moments, a servant-hearted stewardship in our lives as well.

In other words, we are to understand hospitality as a significant and vital pursuit as we seek to be faithful to Jesus in this life. So here's the question.

What exactly is hospitality? And how is it that we are to show it if we're going to be obedient to the Lord? Well, the term, it literally means love for outsiders, love for strangers.

[15 : 31] And there's a cultural context to this in Peter's day. There's no Holiday Inns or Marriott's or Hilton's just around town, right, for people and travelers to come into.

A traveler would come into a town, they'd make their way to the town square, and that's where they'd camp out for the night unless some hospitable person comes along the way and says, why don't you come and stay with me tonight or the next few nights?

There's a cultural context to that. So using this word hospitality literally in their context means loving strangers in that way, right? Peter adds something here that helps us refine the idea.

He says that we are to show hospitality to one another, which means when Peter uses this term for loving outsiders, and yet it's one another, it's those in the church, what he's really getting at is opening your heart, opening your life, opening your home to those who are outside of your family, outside of those who are already closest to you.

That's the idea here. And of course, it's an overflow of this love that we're to keep pursuing in verse 8. Hospitality then is not just hosting parties, it's not planning events, it's fundamentally just loving other people.

[16 : 54] It's loving others. It's opening your life to them, to outsiders for their good. Peter says this needs to mark our lives now.

So then love not only covers a multitude of sins, it also produces this sincere hospitality. And of course, in this case, it's referring especially to those who are in the church.

Peter has believers foremost in his mind. hospitality then means opening your life to one another, opening your home to one another. It is to open your heart to all who need a place of refuge, a place of friendship, a place to receive love.

The hospitable heart rejoices at the prospect of helping someone else or providing a place for them to belong. And Christian hospitality does that all because of the radical love that has been shown to us in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

We just simply want to do for others what Christ has done for us and we can't help but welcome other believers into our lives for fellowship and discipleship.

[18 : 13] That's at the heart of what Peter is saying here. As we are approaching the end, as we are living out this time of exile, be hospitable with one another.

Open your lives to one another. Open your homes to one another. But of course, sincere hospitality comes at a tremendous cost, doesn't it? Isn't it interesting how everything Peter says here is costly? All four of these exhortations are costly. Showing hospitality is going to cost you time and energy that you might otherwise have used for pleasure or maybe just productivity, getting things done. It's going to cost you that. It's going to cost you energy often leaving you physically, emotionally drained.

Because hospitality isn't just for the extroverts that are energized by their time with people. No, it's even for those of us who are drained by our time with people. It costs us something.

[19 : 24] It's going to cost you money. It's going to cost you other resources as you make provision for those who you welcome into your home. It's going to cost you privacy as you open your life to others in ways that are often very difficult.

That's the cost associated here. And yet, Peter says, this needs to mark our lives. Not only is it commanded of us in the scriptures, but notice what he says about it.

Show hospitality to one another. How does he finish? Without grumbling or complaining. What does that tell us?

Well, it tells us that God not only cares that you do hospitality, God cares about how you feel about your hospitality.

He isn't interested or pleased in us merely performing hospitality as a duty. He actually cares that we delight to do all that we can to open our lives and our homes to other people.

[20 : 29] That's why Peter says that we are to keep loving one another earnestly above all things. Sincere hospitality flows out of that sacrificial love.

And this idea of God actually caring about the way we think about it is prevalent in the New Testament. We can just give you two other examples to help you wrap your mind around this.

Just set your eyes down on chapter five for just a moment. We get to it in a couple of weeks, he's going to address the elders in the church. Notice what he says in verse one. I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder, as a witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker in the glory that's going to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight. Now get this, not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you.

And what's he saying to the elders of the church? That God isn't just concerned that you fulfill the duty of an elder. He's concerned that you do it with a particular spirit about you, that you delight in it, that you delight in leading and shepherding his people.

[21 : 38] Perhaps we could think back to Paul's writings to the church in Corinth. Remember when he was writing about giving? He said that everyone was to lay aside something that they could give to a particular mission work and that they were to do so as God has prospered them.

But then he says, when the collection comes, they're to give that willingly, not under compulsion. Why? Because God loves what?

A cheerful giver. It's not that he just cares that we give. He cares that we give cheerfully. It's not that he just cares that pastors shepherd the flock. He cares that pastors shepherd the flock has a delight and has a joy to serve the Lord by serving his people.

And when we get to hospitality, Peter's saying the same thing. God doesn't just care that you do it. He cares about how you feel when you do it. He cares that you delight in it, that you have joy in it. But what could possibly motivate us to live like this? This is asking a lot, isn't it? I thought my life was meant for me.

[22 : 49] You're telling me that I've got to give up so much of it for other people. Why would we do that? Well, because it's what Jesus did, isn't it? Will you turn with me to Matthew 25?

Jesus models this in so many ways, but I want to show you something that Jesus said in Matthew 25 that I think will help us be motivated by this very thing.

Matthew 25. Yeah, I want you to look at verse 35. We're parachuting in.

This is in the middle of some teaching. Jesus is giving a picture of the final judgment and how he's giving this illustration of the king who is going to judge the people that come and stand before him. Of course, Christ is the king here. And there are believers and unbelievers. We're looking at believers here in verse 35. Jesus says, for I was hungry and you gave me food.

[23 : 52] I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was an outsider and you brought me in. You opened your heart to me.

I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. And then the righteous whom he says this to will answer him in return and say, Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you?

When did we ever see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?

And the king will answer them, truly I say to you, as you did this to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me.

You've done it to me. Who are these the least of his brothers? Those are Christ's people. Those are the people that you can look around in this room and see sitting next to you worshipping alongside of you today.

[24 : 54] This is the church. And he says, as you have opened your heart and your life and sacrificed and love for the other people in the church, for other believers, you've done it to me.

Piper says, when we welcome fellow believers into our homes, it's as if we welcome Jesus himself into our homes. Now surely, what could give a genuine Christian more joy than to know that they are serving Christ as they expend themselves for others?

That's what Christ is calling us to here. He's calling us to that kind of radical, love, which by the way, he modeled perfectly. And he did it in so many ways.

You say, well, I don't have a great place to live to have people into my home. Jesus didn't have any place to live. And yet, he still found ways to show perfect hospitality, didn't he?

He fed people who were hungry. He expended himself physically over and over and over again to be with people and to teach them and to provide some kind of good and care for them.

[26 : 09] He modeled how hospitality might be the most fruitful form of evangelism. Isn't that why the Pharisees hated him so much? Because every time they saw him, he was sitting down and

having a meal with the people that they wouldn't touch.

Jesus models this and then he says, as you do this for one another, it's like you're doing it for me. And of course, what greater love for outsiders has ever been known than the love of Jesus, the righteous one, as he hangs on a cross in the place of the unrighteous ones and then he says, now come to me.

Now come to me and find rest for your souls. That's what hospitality is. Hospitality is not by checking off a box or hosting a bunch of parties. Hospitality is about taking the gospel of Jesus and looking at other people, especially those in the church and saying, now come and find some rest. Come and find some refuge. Come and find some friendship. Come and find some love. Come and find Jesus here. That's what it means to show hospitality.

And why is it important? Because Peter's told us in this letter that we're living a kind of exile and that exile is hard.

[27 : 32] And you know what we need? Each other. We need each other. What do you do when you're struggling the faithfulness of your life is really only being met with ridicule or hardship in one way or another?

Boy, it'd be real nice to be able to have somebody else that understands to say, why don't you just come and spend some time with me? Why don't you come and sit in my home for a while and let's just be together a bit?

I just want you to know you're not alone. That I'm right there with you and we're going to go to heaven together and I'm going to help you get there. Isn't that what this is?

Isn't that what the church is? Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing? Peter says, yeah. And he says, as we think about the end of all things, we think about the return of Christ, this needs to mark our lives.

We're showing this kind of hospitality to one another. But then he gives us a fourth thing. Verses 10 and 11, we have what I think is helpfully understood as maybe servant-hearted stewardship.

[28 : 44] Servant-hearted stewardship. Let's just read the verses again. Verses 10 and 11, as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Whoever speaks as one who speaks the oracles of God. Whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies. in order that, in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. In this final exhortation, Peter is venturing into the realm of spiritual gifts, which might be a bit of a struggle for some of us to think about, isn't it? See, there are all kinds of views on this and all kinds of ideas about this.

I actually think what Peter does for us here is helpful. alongside of sober prayer and sacrificial love and sincere hospitality, we find that exercising our gifts in service to one another for the glory of God is actually essential to thriving in exile.

And Peter draws our attention to it. Because the end of all things is at hand, we must possess a special focus on serving Christ in the context of the church.

[29 : 56] Each one of us has been given a stewardship, Peter says. And it should be our desire for Christ to find us faithful at his return.

Let's just consider this for a moment. First, the nature of these gifts. What are they? And then maybe we'll look at the categories of gifts and how exactly do we display this kind of thing or how can we understand them?

The first thing we see here is that Peter affirms that each believer is equipped by God to do his work and serve his people. Do you see that?

Right in verse 10. As each has received a gift. In other words, all of you have it. All of you have a special endowment from God in the personal work of Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit in your life to serve him and to serve his people in a unique way.

And Peter affirms that for us here. A lot of people struggle to discern exactly what that is. What is that supposed to look like in their lives? And I don't mean to be offensive in any way with this but just to say that the answer is not in a Christian version of a Myers-Briggs test or an Enneagram survey.

[31 : 11] That's not where you're going to find the answer here. That's not what it's meant to do. In fact, that might be actually most unhelpful to us at this point. How God desires to use your life within the churches is not some great mystery.

It's really not. And Peter's approach helps us. Now there's a couple of perspectives here. If you don't get anything else from this, at least get this part. I get this from Piper. Notice the thing that we're serving in one another is not the gift itself.

Right? Sometimes we get that in our minds. We think, well, my spiritual gift is really some kind of uniqueness about me and I'm going to bless other people by serving them the gift, the gift that I have, putting it on display or impressing them in some way or whatever it may be.

Right? We don't mean to be prideful in that but sometimes that's the way it comes out. And that's not actually what we're serving. We're not serving people the gift, we're serving people grace. The grace of God.

Piper says it this way, grace is the food food. The gift is the way we're serving it which means that every one of us in the church has the same objective with our spiritual gifts.

[32 : 29] We're all doing the same thing. We are taking the grace of God and the goodness of God and the truth of God and the love of God and the provision of God and we're taking that and we're serving it to other people.

That's the objective. We're all doing the same thing. But what God does in his gracious work is he endows each of us with a unique capacity for doing that well for his glory.

Because if we all had the same thing it wouldn't work, would it? It'd be problematic. We need varied gifts and that's exactly what God does. How good of him to do that?

He sees there's some needs that we have in the church and he says, I'm going to endow different people with various capacities for serving my grace, for serving my love and my truth and my goodness to others.

And your capacity has a much broader application than a few options on a list. Your capacity may even shift or change.

[33 : 30] Not every gift needs to be thought of as a permanent gift. Maybe it's a uniqueness for a specific time in a specific situation with a specific group of people.

So the question that we're asking here in relationship to our gifts, we're not asking necessarily at least what is unique about me that I might lean into. What we're really asking is what personal capacity has God equipped me with to do his work in this season and with these people.

And that may change. That answer is going to be different for Kayla with a newborn than it's going to be for Miss Faye retired with a little more time and a little more sleep.

Ornery husbands, both, but still different, right? Those capacities are different. They may have still some of the same proclivities and some desires. That's great. Certainly that's good.

But their capacities are different. We're asking different questions here. How is it that God has equipped me now to serve his grace to others? And whatever that unique capacity is, Peter says it's a stewardship.

[34 : 44] It's a stewardship of God's grace. In other words, God equips his people to do his work and he expects that we steward that gift faithfully.

meaning the capacity that God gives us is fundamentally a responsibility for which we will give an account to him.

It's not about highlighting what's praiseworthy in us. That's what got the Corinthians in trouble, wasn't it, with Paul? Is they made it a prideful thing and of course we don't want to do that. What is it?

It's about serving the Lord faithfully. It's about being obedient to him and stewarding the capacity that he's giving. And that all starts to come together when we see that the function of these spiritual gifts is to serve one another.

Isn't that what Peter says? As each has received a gift, serve one another with it. As a steward, he says, a steward is a household manager authorized by the owner to give oversight to various parts of the household.

[35 : 55] And as we've seen in chapter 2, the church is God's house, isn't it? And God has now given each of us a stewardship for caring for that house, a stewardship for caring for his people.

And he's blessed each of us with the capacity for serving one another. And it's through that that he blesses his people. Do you see that? Do you understand yourself to be a conduit of God's grace to other people?

That's what you are. And how amazing that he would use us in that way. Before we start to ask, well, what does this actually look like in a practical way?

We need to stop and just consider before we get there, is this even on my radar? Not the gift, but the responsibility. Is this even on your radar today?

Is it on your radar that you've been given a particular capacity from God to serve his church? And are you using that capacity to do that or are you using it for your own good?

[37 : 00] Well, let's get into the categories here. That's what Peter gives us in verse 11, isn't it? There's places in the New Testament that give us lists. Let me just say those lists aren't meant to be exhaustive, I don't think.

They're meant to be representative. So I want you to be careful not to go to some of Paul's writings in Romans and to the Corinthians and say, okay, well, the unique way that God has gifted me must fit in this particular paradigm because what are you going to do when you get to the end of that list and you realize, I don't know that I really fit in any of these places.

Well, it's not meant to be exhaustive, right? It's representative. Peter understands that so it doesn't surprise us that Peter doesn't give us a list. What does he do? He gives us categories, two of them. Actually, the first is speaking gifts, gifts of communication. In verse 10, as each has received his gift, use it to serve one another. Whoever speaks as one who speaks the oracle of God, the truth of God, the word of God.

In other words, God gives some people a unique capacity for communicating well with others and whoever has that capacity needs to use it to speak the word of God, to speak the grace of God, to speak the truth of God because isn't that what the gifts are ultimately about?

[38 : 16] We are serving grace. We are serving God's goodness and truth and love to other people and some of us have been endowed with a unique capacity to do that by word, communication and that may look a lot of different ways.

Maybe it's public teaching and preaching in the church. Maybe it's writing. Maybe you're scared to death to be in front of people but man, you can really write to help Christians understand the love of God and maybe what you're using your gift for is to sit down week by week and write notes to people to minister grace and love and truth to them.

Maybe it's some type of visual communication where you have a unique giftedness and capacity for helping people see the truth of God. It's just, it's speaking gifts, right? It's word gifts.

It's, that's one category that Peter gives us and underneath that category there may be a lot of different ways that the Lord gifts us to use it but then there's a second category and it's the category of serving.

Serving gifts. So, whoever speaks as one who speaks the oracles of God, the truth of God but then he says a second category is whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.

[39 : 30] Now, in Paul's list this might be things like leading or mercy ministries or giving or helps and encouragement. Maybe it would all fall underneath this category of serving but we see the Bible often breaks this down in word and deed, doesn't it?

Word and deed and we see that in these categories. God uniquely gifts his people some with word gifts to communicate truth some with deed gifts to serve people in unique ways.

You have unique gifts that I don't have and the Lord seeks to use you in that way. Now, here's what all of those gifts and categories have in common. It's all for the glory of God.

Verse 11, if you're speaking, use your gift to speak God's truth not your own wisdom. We all think that our opinion and our wisdom is really going to be the thing that helps people and it won't.

That's not what you're called to do. God hasn't gifted you with word gifts in order that you might tell people your own thoughts. He's gifted you with word gifts so that you might deliver his word to others.

[40 : 44] And those of you with the serving gifts, it's not about you. It's not about doing things based on your own talent and your own skills and taking pride in the work that you do. No, it's serving in the strength that God supplies so that in everything Peter says, everything that we're doing, it is God who receives the glory.

We are serving fully on his truth and in reliance on his power, thinking nothing of ourselves but giving all the glory to the Lord who equips us each to do his work.

So not only are we serving one another, but we're to do so in such a way that in everything God is glorified through Jesus Christ. And so we see these four exhortations here.

Peter says, as we're looking toward the end, we recognize at what point in human history we're at, there's some things that need to mark us as God's people. Sober prayer, sacrificial love and then

flowing out of that love is this idea of hospitality and service to one another based on the unique giftings that God has given.

But then he closes in a unique way. He closes not with an exhortation but with a doxology, a praise. [41 : 55] Do you see it there in verse 11? To him, that is to God, belong glory and dominion forever and ever. To the triune God belongs all the glory now and evermore.

Which means that all of our lives are for his glory, to be lived for his glory. And isn't that what sets Christians apart from everyone else?

What makes a Christian husband a Christian husband? That he loves his wife and he leads his family for the glory of God? What makes a Christian worker a Christian worker?

That they serve their boss and their company with good ethics and morals for the glory of God?

What makes a Christian student a Christian student? That they work hard and they do their best so that they might glorify God.

What makes a Christian friend a Christian friend? So on and so forth. It's that all of our lives are being lived for the glory of God, not for ourselves. Peter reminds us of that here.

[43 : 07] Just think of the contrast of the last two paragraphs. Because of what Christ has done for us on the cross, verse 1 of chapter 4, we're no longer to live for human passions.

We're to cease from those things that non-Christians want to do. The things that we did before we came to know Christ. No, we're stopping with that. No more of that. Instead, we're to remember that we're in the end.

Christ is coming back and our hope is sure. Therefore, we're going to live the rest of our lives for God's will and for God's glory. And that looks like these four exhortations here in this passage, at least in part.

So let's get busy doing it.