

Using Your God-given Talents

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) says “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Peter wrote to the exiles, encouraging them and teaching them how to live as Christians. Perhaps it would be wise to begin with 1 Peter 4:8-9, which instructs to love one another and to show hospitality without grumbling. These words represent the humility of Christian life. Loving and serving others. But how do we do this? What part do we play as individuals? Let’s break down 1 Peter 4:10 to understand more.

EACH HAS RECEIVED A GIFT

Read Romans 12:3-8.

Who receives these gifts from God? _____

Are these gifts the same for everyone? _____

What is a gift? A gift is a talent or ability from God. Our talents aren’t by accident! We are instructed to use them to serve one another. *Read James 1:17.*

Fill in the blanks: _____ Gift is from _____

We get a glimpse into these gifts in the Third Article of The Apostles’ Creed. Luther would say ‘was ist das’ (What does this mean). The Small Catechism says about this article, “....But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, **enlightened me with his gifts**, and sanctified and kept me in true faith.”

What are some examples of gifts? _____

Who is called to use these gifts? _____

USE IT TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER

What does it mean “to serve”? The Lutheran Bible Companion (p.461) about 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14 says that Paul tells of “God, who is one, unified and blessed the Corinthian congregation through His Spirit and gifts”. He stresses that God provides for the needs of the congregation by using one’s gifts to help one another.

The Lutheran Bible Companion talks about being “moved to service” (p. 1934). “Once the gospel transforms us, God calls us to greater service. We serve the Lord as He enables us. Each member of the body of Christ serves with his or her particular gifts.

Paul describes these gifts for service in Romans 12, with a focus on their use in the community as well as in the church.

Read Matthew 25:14-30. In this parable, the master gives his servant gifts, entrusting them according to their abilities. This master/servant relationship relates God as master and us as servants.

What does it mean to be a servant? *See Colossians 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 3:2.* Note what loving terms are used to describe the servants sent: _____

How did Jesus view and treat servants? Jesus was kind to servants. *Read Matthew 8:5-13.*

What does this passage tell us about the relationship between the officer and his servant? _____

How did Jesus respond to the plea from the Roman officer? _____

How did the Roman view Jesus? _____

Read Matthew 18:23-35.

What does this passage say about how we should treat our own servants? _____

Read 2 Timothy 3:17.

What types of servant are we instructed to be? What does it tell us about our qualifications? _____

AS GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD'S VARIED GRACE

To be a good steward means to humbly accept and use for God's purpose.

The Lutheran Study Bible (p.1935 footnote re: Romans 12:6-8) mentions that "the key is to receive all gifts humbly in faith and to use them to serve others."

Read Matthew 25:14-30. What does this parable tell us about how we are to handle gifts trusted to us? _____

God wants us to add value to his gifts...to multiply them to use in service to others.

Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16. To be a good steward, we should believe in God, not ourselves.

Discuss: What do find to be the most notable & impactful instruction in this passage, and why? _____


What prevents us from using our talents (gifts) to their full potential? Name a few things that are limiting your service in our own life: _____

The Lutheran Study Bible (p. 1934) says, "An unfortunate concern that plagues many churches is that a handful of people usually end up doing much of the work. Three problems contribute to this situation.

First, many people fail to recognize that God wants them to actively serve in the congregation. Second, pride and impatience on the part of some congregation members easily discourages others from serving. People stay at home because they feel their service is neither needed nor appreciated. Third, most of us keep ourselves too busy. We fill our time with things that do not encourage us or anyone else in the faith. How easily we slip back into the ruts!"

IDENTIFY OUR GIFTS

Now take a few moments to consider your own talents.

		How can I use these to serve the church or community? How is this service a ministry?
What are your strengths?		
What are you passionate about?		
What do others see as your strengths? (ask the group)		

Discuss with the group how you might use your skills & talents to serve others.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for these gracious gifts which are as unique as we are individually unique. We ask you to guide us, mold us and grow us, that we may use our talents to serve you and to share your unending love with those around us in our church and in our community. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.