

Step Up

FOR317 Sunday

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Week 1

1 Peter 4:10

God has given gifts—powerful, purposeful, life-changing gifts. But sometimes instead of using them, we store them away. We admire them... We talk about them... We compare them... But we don't *use* them.

And in 1 Peter 4:10, the apostle Peter gives us a clear, compelling command that cuts through our complacency: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10, NIV)

This verse is not complicated—but it is deeply challenging. Because it reminds us of a simple truth: You were not saved to sit—you were saved to serve. Notice the verse begins with the affirmation that: Every believer is gifted: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received..." (1 Peter 4:10a, NIV). Not some. Not the pastors. Not the "super spiritual." Each and every single believer has been given a gift by God.

That means:

- If you are in Christ—you are gifted.
- If you are saved—you are sent.
- If you are part of the body—you have a role to play.

1. In what ways have you seen how gifts play a role in the body of Christ?

Paul echoes this in Romans 12:6: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:6, ESV). And in 1 Corinthians 12:7: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7, ESV).

This is not optional Christianity--this is normal Christianity. Yet many believers live as if spiritual gifts are like optional add-ons—nice for some, unnecessary for others. But God doesn't give gifts randomly or wastefully. He gives them intentionally. A.W. Tozer once said, *"It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular—it is why he does it."* (A. W. Tozer)

God has wired you uniquely:

- Your personality
- Your experiences
- Your abilities
- Your passions

All of it comes together under His sovereignty. You are not an accident—you are an assignment.

2. Name one thing about how you are wired that you've never thought of as being from God. What could it mean if that part of you was intentionally given by Him?

So, if we all have gifts with a purpose, what is that purpose? Peter tells us that purpose is "...to serve others..." (1 Peter 4:10b, NIV). Gifts are not given for self-promotion—they are given for service.

The word "serve" here is where we get the word *deacon*—it carries the idea of humble, practical ministry.

This flips our cultural mindset. We often think:

- "What do I get out of this?"
- "How does this benefit me?"
- "Is this fulfilling *for me*?"

But Scripture asks:

- "Who can I serve?"
- "Where can I give?"
- "How can I help?"

Jesus Himself said in Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...” (Mark 10:45, ESV). If Jesus—God in the flesh—came to serve, how can we justify sitting on the sidelines?

Serving is a hand-lifting, joy-sharing opportunity to come alongside and serve. The Christian life is not a spectator sport. There are no bleachers in the Kingdom of God.

3. If you feel like you have been on the sideline, what might be something that God is inviting you to “step up” and serve in the Kingdom?

When we roll up our sleeves and serve, we’re demonstrating, according to Peter...good stewardship or *management* of what God has provided. Every gift is a stewardship: “...as faithful stewards of God’s grace....” (1 Peter 4:10c, NIV)

This is where it gets serious. *A steward is someone entrusted with something that belongs to someone else.*

Your gift is not yours—it’s God’s and you are managing it on His behalf. And one day, you will give an account. This echoes the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, where servants are entrusted with resources and expected to invest them. The one who buried his talent wasn’t condemned for losing it—but for not using it. That’s sobering.

The issue is not: “Did you have a big gift?” “Were you the most talented?”

The issue is: “Were you faithful with what you were given?”

John Wesley famously said, “*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can.*” (John Wesley). That’s stewardship. But notice the last phrase of 1 Peter 4:10 “...God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10c, NIV). This phrase is beautiful. “Various forms” means multi-colored, diverse, manifold. God’s grace shows up in different ways through different people.

Some serve:

- Behind the scenes
 - In quiet ways
 - Without recognition
-

Others serve:

- Publicly
- Vocally
- Visibly

But all of it matters! Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:22, “The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” (1 Corinthians 12:22, ESV) That means the gift you think is small... may be essential.

4. Faithful serving doesn’t have to be big or visible. What are some examples of serving where the small things matter?

What we struggle with, though, at times, is stepping out, leaning in, taking a risk. In fact, there’s a danger of sitting still.

Let’s be honest—Why don’t we use our gifts?

- Fear: “What if I fail?”
- Insecurity: “I’m not good enough.”
- Comparison: “They’re better than me.”
- Comfort: “I just don’t feel like it.”

But unused gifts don’t stay neutral—they become wasted opportunities.

Imagine standing before God and realizing:

- The lives you could have impacted...
- The people you could have served...
- The difference you could have made...But didn’t.

That’s not meant to produce guilt, but to awaken urgency. C.S. Lewis wrote, “*The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important*” (C.S. Lewis). If this is true, if the gospel is real, then our response cannot be passive.

The early church didn't grow because people attended services. It grew because people lived on mission.

Acts 2:47 says: "And the Lord added to their number day by day..." Why? Because believers were: Serving, Sharing, Loving, Giving. Not just gathered—but scattered—out in the world! Following Jesus was never meant to be comfortable—it was meant to be transformational!

5. What changes when you see your gifts not just as a way to serve the church, but to reach the world?

So, practically speaking, what does it look like to use your gifts?

- Start Where You Are. You don't need a platform—you need availability.
- Serve IN the Church--Children's ministry, hospitality, outreach, discipleship.
- Serve THROUGH the Church--Food banks, schools, neighborhoods.
- Speak the Gospel--Your words matter.
- Live Generously--Time, energy, resources.
- Be Intentional--Don't wait for perfect conditions—act now.

Never underestimate what God can do through simple obedience. Listen, God is not looking for perfection. He's looking for availability. D.L. Moody said, *"The world has yet to see what God can do with someone fully consecrated to Him."*

Imagine if that were true of us. Not just one person—but a whole church.

A church where: Every member serves--Every gift is used--Every opportunity is taken. That kind of church doesn't just gather—it moves. It doesn't just exist—it impacts.

6. What are you doing with what God has given you? Are you ignoring it, burying it, or are you using it?

1 Peter 4:10 is clear--You have a gift. You have a responsibility. You have a mission!