

Receiving Gifts

Life Group Discussion Guide on 1 Peter 4:1-11

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

We have spent the past couple of months focusing on the topic of serving. This should naturally lead us to think about how we give of ourselves to one another. Serving others is part of the spiritual DNA of every child of God.

Given all of the previous weeks of sermons, how do you know that living a Christian life is synonymous with serving?

I am fortunate to have always been part of a family where serving and giving were seen as normal parts of life. There are often times when I didn’t look forward to those things, but I have always reaped the blessings of being able to look backward and reflect on them.

Paul’s quotation of Jesus in Acts 20:35 has rung true for everybody who has tested it: “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

This truth should not lead us to neglect the fact there is blessing in receiving. We are only able to give because of what we have already received.

But receiving gifts makes many good Christian people uncomfortable even though it is an equally vital part of the Christian life.

How are we supposed to receive gifts?

1 Peter 1:1 raises some difficult questions at first glance.

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

What does it mean that “everyone who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin?”

I know people who have suffered from all manner of physical problems who are not free from sin. In fact, sometimes when we suffer, we open ourselves up to even greater sin because it takes advantage of weakness in our physical and mental states.

The answer to these questions lies not in our suffering, but in Christ’s suffering. His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave has completely freed us from any bondage that sin might have over our lives.

- Does a Christian have to sin?

- If we are free from sin, why then do we still do it?

I strongly believe that it is a fallacy to say that sin has to be part of a Christian's life.

Now, I don't know a single person who is still alive who can say that they have completely eliminated sin. But I also know that there is not a single reason that any of us have to sin.

There is always a door of escape for the Christian. Our fundamental problem every time we sin is that we have chosen to not receive some gift that God has given us to avoid sin.

We're not talking about ordinary human gifts, but the gifts we receive from God. Christian service is not at all about what we give, but about passing on that which we have received.

Think about it:

1. How did you come to find out that the things that the world does are wrong (see 1 Peter 4:3, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, lawless idolatry)?
2. What role did you play in awakening yourself to the reality of sin in your life?
3. What role did you play in your own salvation?
4. What do you bring to the table that allows you to conquer sin in your own life?
5. Why were you not able to conquer sin before Christ lived inside of you?
6. What gifts has God placed in your life to hold you accountable and allow you to gain victory over sin?

1 Peter 4:7-9 tells us in perspective of everything that God has done for us to live a certain way toward one another.

- What are the commands in 1 Peter 4:7-9?
- "The end is at hand" simply refers to the fact that nothing else has to take place for Jesus to return. How should that change our perspectives on daily living?
- How can being self-controlled, sober-minded, loving, and hospitable change your relationships?