

## Topic 28: Service *Laying Down Your Life for Others*

*"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*



### **Disciples are called and equipped to serve**

### **Explore the Text**

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "minister"? Write down any words, phrases, images or other thoughts that come to mind.

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Look at the Apostle Paul's description of how Jesus designed his church to function in Ephesians 4:11-12. *"<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people (the saints) for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up".*

2. In an examination of these verses, what is church leaders? What is the role of the Christ's disciples (His saints, His people)?

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Our responsibilities as Christ's disciples, the saints, members of the body of Christ, church members as stewards in God's kingdom can be summarized with three words: *gifts, goods, and gospel*. Every disciple of Christ is a steward of spiritual gifts and material goods given to us to make sure that we can share the Gospel of Christ with all we meet.

As each one has received a special gift,  
employ it in serving one another as



good stewards of the  
manifold grace  
of God.

1 Peter 4:10

1 Peter 4:10 provides clear instructions on this topic of Peter that was directed to Christ-followers exiled throughout the Roman Empire by saying: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” This statement helped early church Christians know how to live so that their lives (both individually and collectively) would glorify God. It also offers at least three insights for us today.

3. When you think about gifts, what comes to mind?

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4. What do you already know about “grace” and “the grace of God”?

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- **1. God has spiritually gifted each and every follower of Christ.**

The word for “gift” here reveals that Peter believes these are spiritual gifts or reflections of God’s “grace”. Matthew Henry notes in his commentary on this verse, “whatever ability we have of doing good we must own it to be the gift of God and ascribe it to His grace.”

What matters to Peter (and to us) is not what gift each person has received but that each and every follower of Christ has received a gift from God that reflects His grace.

5. Do you think that some members of the Body of Christ find it difficult to serve others? Why or why not?

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- **2. Faithful disciples of Christ use their gifts to serve others.**

Peter also emphasizes what to do with whatever gift we have received. We must use it to serve others. Peter echoes the instructions of Jesus to the twelve disciples. He desires that disciples follow His example and are known for their service (cf. Luke 22:24-27).

From 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:4-8, the Apostle Paul gives us lists of these gifts of grace.

- **(3) God’s grace is revealed through our faithfulness.**

When we use our various spiritual gifts to serve others, God’s grace is illustrated in various ways. When we don’t use our gifts, which have been given to us for the common good, God’s work is not thwarted, but rather, we miss out on the privilege of participating.

Let us celebrate the good news that God has given each of us a gift, a spiritual gift, that is rooted in His grace. Let us resolve to use the gifts we have received to serve others.