

## **The Stewardship of Gifts**

### **1 Peter 4:10, 11; Romans 12:1-13**

**1 Peter 4:10, 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 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. <sup>1</sup>

It's important that we see our gifts as a means to serve others. God has blessed us and we should in turn bless others. This is a stewardship principle. And as such, we have an obligation, a responsibility to invest in our gifts, to work hard, to develop ourselves to serve in the highest capacity possible. And if we do, God's abundant blessings are sure to follow.

**Romans 12:3-8** - Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

<sup>4</sup> Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, <sup>5</sup> so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

<sup>6</sup> In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. <sup>7</sup> If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. <sup>8</sup> If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. (NLT)

### **The Context – 1 Peter 1:3-7; 22; 3:14-15; 4:1, 7, 12**

Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”

- **Richard Foster**

Everything in us avoids pain.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture is from *The Holy Bible: English standard version*. 2001. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

But to be transformed into the image of Christ will bring pain.

To study, to really study is painful

To use your gifts, to develop your gifts, to give yourself away is to risk amazing levels of pain.

**Philippians 3:10-11** - I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death,<sup>11</sup> so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

### **The Investment**

**Romans 12:1-2** - And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

<sup>2</sup> Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

Are you being transformed? Or is your Christianity superficial?

We need to re-learn how to dig deeply into Scripture, dig deeply in prayer and dig deeply within ourselves to see Christ formed in us and give our lives to developing the gifts that God has given us.

**Romans 12:9-13** - Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.<sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.<sup>11</sup> Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.<sup>13</sup> When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. (NLT)

What's the danger of education?

The danger is that we do not go deep enough. We receive just enough knowledge that we think we know and therefore remain superficial and are therefore never changed.

## The Return on Investment

**Luke 6:38** - Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

**1 Peter 4:10, 11** - whoever speaks, 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.

Peter says we are speaking as from God and serving with God's strength

**Luke 10:16** - "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

What is not often appreciated is the **unbreakable link** Jesus places between himself and his messengers. They are commissioned in such a way that **they represent Him**. For people to hear them is to hear Jesus; for people to reject them is to reject Jesus. People cannot separate Jesus from those who bear His message.<sup>2</sup>

So we are to imitate our Master. And we have the ability to do so with the same power of the Holy Spirit under which He worked, and the authority He has given us to use that power: As Jesus obeyed the Father, receiving the Holy Spirit and launching out into ministry, so we are to obey the Jesus' command by being filled with the same Holy Spirit who empowered our Lord. Then we, too, can be launched into a ministry of love; power and authority like His and actually do what He did. What He did we are to do, and even more.

There is an overwhelming call to selflessness in this passage. We are to act and act now for the sake of others. And we are to do so in such a way that God is glorified.

**Look at things differently** – transformation is not easy or pleasant  
**Invest yourself** – study, serve, experiment, grow, give, make hard decisions, and pursue discipline & accountability  
**Reap the benefits**

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<sup>2</sup> Darrell L. Bock, LUKE - The NIV Application Commentary; From Biblical text...To contemporary life (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996) pg. 293