Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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June 15, 2008 by Steve Brandon

Serve One Another

1 Peter 4:10-11

1. Use Your Gift (verse 10).
2. Give God Glory (verse 11).

As most of you know, we have been working our way through Peter's epistle to the scattered churches in Asia Minor verse by verse. Through our study, we have identified Peter's theme to be, "Suffer Now, Glory Later."

We have seen Peter's continual emphasis upon suffering. These people have "been distressed by various trials" (1:6). These trials have come at the hands of Gentiles who have slandered them (2:12). They have come through the governmental authorities, who have oppressed them (2:13-17). They have come through masters, who have dominated them (2:18-20). They have come through disobedient, unbelieving husbands (3:1-6). They have been on the receiving end of evil and insult (3:9). They have been intimidated and reviled (3:13, 19). They have suffered greatly (3:17).

Through it all, Peter has exhorted them to look to Jesus as they await their great inheritance (1:7). Peter said in chapter 2, verse 21, "You have been called for this purpose [of suffering], since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (2:21). In chapter 3, verse 18, Peter again brings forth the example of Christ, "For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God" (3:18). Also, chapter 4 verse 1 calls us again to look to the sufferings of Christ, "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose" (4:1).

Of all chapters that talk about the suffering that is coming upon these people, chapter 4 is probably the strongest, with the most direct reference to suffering. A few weeks ago, we looked at verses 1-6 and saw the call to be prepared to suffer. In verse 12, Peter will again address the topic head on. He will say, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you." Then, through the end of the chapter, Peter will give instructions on how to deal appropriately with suffering.

But, here, in our text this morning, we have a bit of a parenthesis. Verses 7-11 are in the middle of this chapter that is talking about suffering. And in these words are some very practical ways for us to live through all of this suffering.

Last week, we saw the exhortation to pray (in verse 7). In verse 8 we saw the exhortation to love. In verse 9 we saw the exhortation to love strangers. One of the things that I find so interesting in these words is that they are so "others-centered." Our natural response in the midst of suffering is to protect ourselves and to look out for ourselves. We want to get rid of the suffering, so that then you can do some good to others. But, Peter's antidote to suffering is to focus upon others. Pray for them. Love them. Love those who you don't even know.

Peter's theme continues in verses 10-11. You might easily sum up the entire application with this moving one word: serve. These words are an exhortation to serve. Appropriately, my message this morning is entitled, "Serve One Another." Let's consider our text. Peter writes, ...

> 1 Peter 4:10-11
> As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Here's my first point this morning:
1. Use Your Gift (verse 10).

I trust that you can see how my point flows from verse 10, where Peter writes, "As each one has received a special gift, **employ it** in serving one another."

The picture that Peter paints here is one of God giving gifts to people. And then, these people turning around and giving them to other people. See, the gifts that God gives to His people are not to be used on those who received them. Rather, they are to be used to serve other people.

As you reflect upon your life, I'm sure that you can think of the many gifts that God has given you. First of all, he has given you the gift of life. He has given you the gift of health. He has given you the gift of time. Perhaps God has given you a

spouse. Perhaps God has given you children! All of these gifts flow from the kind hand of God.

On top of that, God has given you the gift of an assortments of talents and abilities. Also, He has given you various resources at your disposal. All of these things are God's gift to you.

But, beyond this, God has given you His Son. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is the greatest gift of all. Paul calls Jesus, "The indescribable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

God has given us many gifts through His Son. He has given us eternal life. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). He has given us salvation, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). He has given us His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to those who repent of their sins and trust in Christ (Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17). "Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

But, beyond all these gifts, God has also given us what are called spiritual gifts as well. These are specific talents and abilities that are empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish spiritual purposes in the process of building up the body of Christ. These gifts are what Peter mentions in verse 10 of our text. Look there, once again. "As **each one** has received a special gift."

The sense here is that each and every one of us has been given a gift. The New American Standard translation of the Bible calls it a "special" gift. The idea here is that God's gift to you is a unique gift. He had gifted each of us in a unique way.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, know that He has empowered you for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ. Without exception, each and every one of us has been given a gift by God. Paul mentioned the same idea in 1 Corinthians 12:7, where he wrote, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

In 1 Corinthians 12, he continues by giving a list of the gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit, "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by

the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues." Later on in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul again mentions several other gifts that are given to the church, "... gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:29). It's beyond the scope of my message this morning to talk about whether or not all of these gifts are still active and working in the church today. Let me simply say that I believe that some are and that some aren't.

We know that the lists of gifts given in 1 Corinthians 12 aren't an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives, because Paul later gives a list to those in Rome, which is a bit different. Consider what Paul said in Romans 12:6-8, "Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

The variance of the lists of gifts (from 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12) ought to demonstrate that the lists of these gifts are not exhaustive. Otherwise, each of the churches (in Rome and in Corinth), who initially received these letters would have been deficient in their understanding of the church.

Furthermore, I believe that the Holy Spirit gives more gifts to the church than are mentioned here in these two passages (1 Corinthians 12 and Roman 12). Some have the gift of encouragement, such as Joseph, who was nicknamed by the apostles as Barnabas, which means, "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). It was a God given gift to him to be so encouraging to others. Some have the gift of prayer, like Epaphras, who Paul said was "always laboring earnestly" for the churches in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4:12-13). Some have the gift of hospitality, like Nympha, who hosted a church in her house (Col. 4:15), playing hostess to many strangers over the years. Some have the gift of writing, such as Luke, who carefully investigated and studied the life of Christ and the life of the early church, so that we might have the book of Luke and Acts. Some have the gift of compassion, like Epaphroditus, who was distressed because of the feelings of concern that he had for those in Philippi who heard that he was sick (Phi. 2:25-26).

I believe that the gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit abound in variety and in measure and ought not to be limited simply to the ones that are listed in the Bible. Furthermore, I think that it's foolish merely to limit one gift to each person. The

apostle Paul definitely had the gift of wisdom (2 Peter 3:15). But, he also spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 14:18) and performed miracles (Acts 20:10).

Although we are all gifted uniquely in the body, it's not by chance. Rather, it's by design. In Ephesians 4, Paul wrote, "To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift... [and] we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the entire body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according toe the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:7, 15, 16). So, as you fail to use you gift, the body fails to function properly. And those who are suffering gain little strength and comfort.

In many ways, it is difficult to nail down exactly what gift God has given each of us, because He has gifted each of us uniquely. Some have attempted through the use of spiritual gift inventories. Perhaps you are familiar with such tools. These inventories are worksheets meant to help you discover your spiritual gift. They come up with a list of the twelve or so spiritual gifts that are specifically identified in the Bible. And then, they list a bunch of questions for you to evaluate yourself. Each of these questions are meant to be characteristic of a particular spiritual gift. If you consistently rate yourself positively on questions relating to theology, then you have the gift of teaching. If you consistently rate yourself positively on questions relating to care for others, then you have the gift of mercy.

These inventories do help in that they raise awareness into ways in which spiritual gifts manifest themselves in the life of the church. However, there are difficulties, especially, if the lists aren't exhaustive. Once you identify one spiritual gift that isn't on the inventory, then the entire worksheet is invalidated, as it doesn't take into account that particular gift. For, those who have that gift will never come to realize it through the inventory.

Perhaps, however, one of the greatest difficulties of such inventories is that they draw you inward, rather than drawing you outward. By this, I simply mean that people can come to be more interested in the gift that they have, rather than in the using the gift. But, gifts are given to be used.

Think about Peter's readers. He mentions nothing about any particular gifts of the Spirit. He mentions nothing about discovering your particular gift. He simply says, "As each one has received a gift, employ it in serving one another." Or, as I have said (1) Use Your Gift (verse 10).

Peter's exhortation here is very useful for us, as it helps to gets our eyes off of ourselves and onto other people, which is the entire purpose of spiritual gifts in the first place. Paul said that the Holy Spirit gave these gifts, "for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7) That is, the gifts that God gives to us are intended for building up the entire body of Christ.

This is true of the lists that are given. The gift of knowledge isn't given to puff you up. Rather, it's given so that you can teach others of the ways of God. The gift of faith isn't given so that you can build your empire. Rather, it's given so that the work of God can be accomplished through you for the good of others. The gift of exhortation is given to encourage others in holy living. The gift of giving is for the advancement of the gospel. The gift of mercy is for the help of those in distress. This is why Paul concludes his discussion on the proper use of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 14 with the simple instruction.. "Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor. 14:26).

So, as you have received a gift, employ it in serving one another.

At this point, I want to illustrate this for you this morning. I have here in my hands a bunch of envelopes. I want to give each of you an envelope. It doesn't matter who you are this morning, parents, grandparents, children, visitors. If you are in the service this morning, I want to give you an envelope.

Now, in this envelope, you will find a gift from me to you. (Actually, it's more from my wife, Yvonne, than from me). In your envelope, you will find a thank you note card, which Yvonne has made. She calligraphied some verses on the front of the card. The inside of the card is available for you to write any sort of note that you would want to write. There is even space for you to spill over onto the back. Some of you may recognize the particular card that is in your envelope, because, from time to time, I seek to encourage those in the church body with cards. I prefer to use these homemade cards that display my wife's talents.

Anyway, here's what I want you to do with that envelope. "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another." I want for you to take that card and write a note of encouragement and send it to somebody this week.

Perhaps there is someone in the church, who you want to encourage in a special way. Tell them of the ways that you see God working in their life. Write them a

note and send it off this week. Perhaps you have some other friends or family members outside of this church that you want to send a note to. Feel free to write a note to them this week.

With this assignment, I'm not excluding the children or the teenagers, either. Today is Father's Day. You children could use it to write a note to your daddy. Write it sometime in a free moment that you have after church today and you can give it to him before dinner tonight. For some of you really small children, a note to one of your friends might be very special, perhaps your parents might need to help you with postage and addresses.

I want for you to do this as an illustration of Peter's point. Peter said, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another." The card in your hand has been graciously given to you. So, likewise, I want for you to graciously use it and give it to others. I've not given this gift to you for you to enjoy. I've not given this gift to you to remain with you, this card shouldn't be used as a bookmark or framed. I've given you this card, so that you can give it away.

So, write a note of encouragement and send it in the mail this week. If you want to save on postage, you can always take a trip and deliver the card a plateful of cookies. You can go beyond what I'm asking you to do. But, I don't want for you to fall short. In so doing, I want for you to illustrate for yourself the truth found in the last half of verse 10, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

When God gives gifts to His people, in some sense, He doesn't transfer ownership. In many ways, we don't own the gifts that God has given to us. The money that you have in the bank isn't yours. It's God's money, that He has given to you to manage. The house you own isn't yours. It's God's house, that he has given you to manage. The car you drive, the clothes you wear,...they aren't yours, they are God's. The same is true of you giftedness. Your time, your talents, and your treasure, are all God's gifts to you, that you are to use for His purpose. You are stewards of these things.

I trust that you know what a steward is. He is a household servant, who is responsible and accountable to his master for those things that are under his oversight. In the same way, we are responsible for the gifts that God has given to us. Several times throughout the Scriptures, Jesus illustrates this fact by telling a parable of a steward who ultimately gives account for his management of his master's possessions (Luke 12:41-48; 16:1-13; 19:11-27; Matt. 25:14-30).

This morning, I want for you to consider a parable that Jesus told about those who were stewards of a gift given to them. It comes from Matthew 25:14-30 and is often called, "The Parable of the Talents." In the days of Jesus, a talent was a unit of money. But, the application of this word for us in terms of our "talents" is equally applicable.

Speaking about the kingdom of heaven, Jesus says, ...

> Matthew 25:14-30
> For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This parable isn't too difficult to understand. God is the business man who goes on a journey. We are the slaves. The talents that the master of the slaves gave are like the gifts that God has given to us. Just as the master gave his stewards various amount of money, so also has God given to each of us varying gifts. Just as the master called his slaves to give account for the talents that he had given them, so also will God hold us accountable for the gifts that He has given to us. Just as the usage of the gifts had consequences so also will your usage of the gifts that God gave you have eternal consequences.

Notice how the master gave his slaves various amounts of money to each of the slaves. To one slave he gave five talents. To another slave he gave two talents. To another slave he gave one talent. The parallel comes directly to us as well in our text this morning. Peter said that we are to use the gifts that God has given to us, "as good stewards of the **manifold grace** of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

God's grace is a varied grace. God's grace isn't cookie cutter. To some, God gives greater gifts. Some are born into a Christian family. Some experience salvation at a young age. Some have many worldly resources at your disposal. These are all great gifts from God. To others, God gives lesser gifts. Some are born into a wicked home. For some, they are saved late in life. Some have little to offer by way of the financial resources.

And yet, God's grace is manifold, because the ones who have received less, in some ways have received more. It is the poor who are rich in faith (James 2:5). It is those who have been saved from great sin who are rich in love (Luke 7:36-49). On the other hand, those who have received more, in some ways have receive less. Those in righteous families often don't see their need for a Savior (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners (Luke 19:10). "It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23). See, God's grace is a manifold grace. As the ESV says, God's grace is a "varied" grace. As the Greek text implies, it is a "multi-colored" grace.

In this parable, Jesus demonstrates this by assigning this with some slaves receiving more talents than other slaves. And with these cards that I have given you, I have sought to do the same thing. In some of the cards that I passed out, I slipped a five dollar bill into them. In other cards, I slipped a two dollar bill into them. In others, I slipped a one dollar bill as well.

If you found these things in your envelope, know that this is my manifold grace to you. Not only did I give you a nice card to use, I also gave you some cold hard

cash that I want for you to use as well. But, here's the challenge. This money isn't for you. I want for you to be a steward of this money. I don't want you to use this money for yourself. I want you to spend this money in such a way that you serve others in the process.

I admit, you can't do much for a dollar (or two or five). You might have to be a bit creative. Perhaps it's purchasing a dessert for your child off of the dollar menu at McDonalds. Perhaps it's purchasing a scented candle at the dollar store for your mother. Perhaps it's putting an extra dollar into your tip at the restaurant you visit this afternoon. Perhaps it's placing it in the offering plate. Perhaps it's sending it to support an orphan in Nepal. Perhaps it's as simple as giving it to the cashier at Wal-Mart saying, "Thank you for serving me so well. This is a gift to you in the name of Jesus."

I don't know how you are going to spend it. But, I want for you to spend it in such a way that you are serving others in the process. It's a gift to you to help illustrate for you how God's gifts work.

One last thing about the gifts that I gave you. I'm not going to know how it is that everyone of you use the gifts that I have given to you. (I'm sure that I'll be asking a few of you over the next week or so.) But God does know how you are using the gifts that He has given to you, and you will be fully accountable to Him for the stewardship that He has given you.

So, ... "How are you doing on using your gifts?" Are you using them? Peter tells us to "employ them in serving one another." Here this. The call of God upon your life is to serve others.

Now, at Rock Valley Bible Church, there are many people who have given themselves to serve you to make this service happen. Last night, we had a crew here setting up the chairs and tables and nursery. Throughout the week, we had some prepare, copy and fold the bulletins. Music has been planned, prayed through, and practiced. Some people brought refreshments for us to enjoy after the church service. As I speak, there are workers now in the Nursery and in the Children's Church, serving us right now. Others have gone to some length to help you enjoy the service. You have been welcomed. -You have been greeted. All this takes place so that you can enjoy a worship service this morning. All of these things are opportunities for you to step in and use you gifts to help build the body.

After the service, there will be great opportunities for you to help in tearing down our meeting place. Chairs need to be stacked. Hymnals gathered. The stage wheeled away and put in the trailer. The nursery needs to be packed up. The floor needs to be mopped. Any work that you do will be appreciated. But, if you really want to help fill a need, consider being involved with setup, where there is a great need. If at all possible, I would encourage you to consider helping in this ministry. (One week a month would be a huge help to lighten the load).

Regarding the ministry opportunities at Rock Valley Bible Church, there are two sorts of ministries, formal ministries and informal ministries. By "formal ministries," I mean those ministries where we gather together specifically for a purpose of worship or prayer or teaching or fellowship. These ministries include our prayer meeting, our morning worship, our various Bible studies and Flocks. All of these gatherings are intended to equip you for informal ministries, where the life of the church really happens.

By "informal ministries," I mean the life on life interactions that take place among the body. This is the real life of the church.

- When a home is flooded and you help clean up the mess.
- When a family moves and you help to pack them up.
- When babies are born and you help ease the load of a mother by bringing over some meals.
- When marriages are having difficulty and you go talk with them, trying to see reconciliation happen.
- When your children are out of control, and you seek the counsel of other parents, who can help you in the discipline of your children.
- When sorrow strikes a home and you go over to their house and pray with them.
- When you have a household repair, and another brother comes by and helps you with the repair.
- When some ladies come over and clean your windows.
- When you drop off a bag of groceries to those who are struggling financially.
- When you give your old car to a family in need.
- When you help somebody with their child's tuition.
- When you introduce yourself to a visitor.
- When you ask about a difficult family situation and show your concern for the situation.

- When you pray for another family going through difficulties.
- When you continue in the discipline of your children, for the ten thousandth time.
- When you care for your aging parents.
- When you make a phone call to someone you missed at church.
- When you write a note of encouragement to somebody else.

That's the real life of the church. I believe that this is what Peter has in mind when he says, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another." In his day, there weren't a lot of programs going on at church. In his day, there weren't a lot of administrative work in the church to be done. But, in his day, there were many people suffering, who needed help from others who were willing to serve. Peter was talking about life on life service. And that's what we are all called to be.

Everything that we do formally as a church is a means to an end. When you are in difficulty and in need of help, who are you going to call? You will call those who know you well and have demonstrated their love to you over the years.

One instance of this is our family's celebration each year of the longest day of the year. Our plan is to picnic outside and stay outside until the sun goes down. Why do we do this? First of all, it's fun. Our family has always enjoyed this time together. But second, we do it for the future. As other join us, we are developing relationships, so that we can be poised to serve in the day of distress.

At this point, you might come up with all sorts of excuses for not serving others. You might be saying, "I don't have any useful gifts. ... I don't have time to do these things. ... I don't want to get too close to people. ... I don't know how to serve. ... I don't agree with what's going on. ... It's getting done anyway, without my help. ... What good will my little effort do?"

Let me tell you a story of what took place this past week to help put it in perspective. As some of you know, we are in the process of finishing our basement. We plan on placing a bedroom in our basement for our oldest son. In order to have a bedroom in the basement, we have needed to install an egress window, that is, a window large enough to escape in event of a fire.

The scope of this project was far too big to tackle alone, so we hired out this work. And so, there was a crew of guys at our house all week long. They dug this huge hole alongside our house. It was close to seven feet deep and seven feet wide and

four feet out from the house. Then, the concrete cutter came in and cut a huge hole in our foundation. Then, they installed a window in the opening. Then, they put a huge window well in the ground and put a cement floor on the bottom of the window well. The project is almost done. They plan on finishing the project on Monday.

Well, anyway, during the project, our kids became friends with the workers, as they watched them work. They came to know each of these guys on a first-name basis (Bobby, Nick, and Travis.) They had a great time bringing them water and lemonade and talking with them as they worked.

At one point, Travis was downstairs working on the drain for the window well. He was inside and the other workers were outside. Stephanie, my 4 year old, was downstairs watching him. As he was working, he realized that he needed to get something out of the truck. But, rather than going upstairs by himself, he turned to Stephanie and told her to go and talk with Nick and say, "Nick, I need a ninety!"

My four year old was clueless exactly what this meant, but went upstairs anyway and found Nick and said, "Nick, I need a ninety!" And so, Nick went into the truck and pulled out a 90 degree elbow for a PVC pipe and handed it to Stephanie. Stephanie turned around and headed downstairs and brought Travis a ninety! It's all that she could do. But, it was a help.

And I just say for you as well. Your ministry here at Rock Valley Bible Church may not be any more than retrieving a ninety. But, if God has given you only one talent, He will be pleased with your efforts.

This leads to my last point, which I will cover very quickly. Not only should you (1) Use Your Gift (verse 10), but, you should also ...

2. Give God Glory (verse 11).

Look at what Peter says in verse 11, "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

With these words, Peter demonstrates how little concerned he is with you identifying your particular gift. Rather, he's simply affirming that in whatever way you are particularly gifted by God, serve in that way.

On the one hand, Peter here is simply saying, "If you have a gift, use it!" If your gifts are in the realm of speaking, do so, as if you were speaking the utterances of God. If your gifts are more in the realm of serving, then do so, trusting the Lord to give you the strength to serve.

Yet, on the other hand, Peter is saying something deeper than this. He's talking about the particular way that you serve. You ought to serve in such way that God gets the glory. You can see this in the purpose clause of verse 11, "so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

So, if you speak, don't speak your own words, which would merely bring glory to your name. Rather, speak the utterances of God, so as to give Him glory. If you serve, don't serve in your own strength, which would merely bring glory to your name for the great sacrifices that you have made. Rather, serve in the strength which God supplies, so as to give Him the glory.

That's all that verse 11 is saying. In all you do, give God glory. In many ways, that's merely nice religious talk. But, how do you do these things? Try keeping two words in mind. I want to close this morning by giving you these two words to help your service be glorifying to God: humility and joy.

a. Humility

> For God to be glorified, you need to be humble. God gets no glory if your speaking if you have a arrogance in your demeanor. But, when you humbly share the truth of God with others, God is glorified.
>
> The story is told of a young, arrogant preacher who climbed into the pulpit with his "peacock feathers fying in the breeze". The sermon was colossal failure, and the young man was devastated. As he walked down form the pulpit, tears of shame filled his eyes. An old saint standing at the foot of the stairs said, not unkindly, "Son, if you had entered the pulpit the way you had left it, you might have left the pulpit the way you entered it." [1]

What's true in preaching and teaching is also time in counseling and everyday conversation. You can talk with other people in such a way that sets you and your mighty wisdom up high, and God won't be glorified. It's true in

Your serving can be the same way. The problem with the Pharisees was that they weren't humble. They stood and prayed for all to hear. They fasted and let everybody know how spirited they were. They tithed from everything they had and make sure that everyone knew about it. This doesn't give glory to God.

It's the humble servant that gives glory to God (Phil. 2:3-4). It's those who are focused upon others who most glorify God.

b. Joy

John Piper has made famous the phrase, "God's most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." This is absolutely true. When you find your delight and your joy in serving God, God is seen as glorious. He is seen a God worthy of our trust and obedience and commitment.

But, if you serve with a sour disposition on your face, God is viewed as an ogre, who demands our submission. God received no glory from such an attitude.

So, serve the Lord with joy, whether it be in your speaking or in your serving. Speak to others of God with a joy on your face. Serve others with a joy in your heart.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 15, 2008 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

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[1] Steve Brown, "What Was I Thinking," p. 142.