

Ln 10 ... Preparing for the End

1 Peter 4:7-11

In the beginning, God created everything. As surely as God started it all, He will end it all. God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, but He is also the Terminator of all things. Peter writes: *But the end of all things is at hand* ([4:7a](#)). History is rapidly heading toward *the end*. No one—not the *angels* or even *the Son*—just *the Father*, knows the exact date ([Mk 13:32](#)). However, we are to live expecting Christ to return at any time. The last words of Jesus are recorded in the next to last verse in the Bible.

What does our Lord say in [Revelation 22:20b](#)?

Every day we should live with the anticipation of the coming of our Lord. Our Lord could come at any time; therefore, Peter gives us **four** ways to prepare for *the end* ...

Think Clearly and Pray Biblically (4:7b-c)

The nearness of *the end* should motivate us to be **sober** ([4:7b](#)). This means being disciplined and clear-headed. We shouldn't make emotional decisions based on our uncontrolled passions. This is so we can *watch unto prayer* ([4:7c](#)). **We can't pray biblically if we don't think clearly.**

Two of the most powerful weapons God has given us in the world are the **Bible and prayer**. However, one is not of much use without the other. The Bible tells us how to pray. Our prayers are powerful only if biblically based.

Therefore, what does [1 John 5:14](#) declare?

Our prayers are not to be based on emotion, passion, or selfishness. We must think clearly so we can pray biblically. This is often hard to do in panic situations, as with Peter's original readers who were facing severe persecution and martyrdom.

Peter and John are wonderful examples of how to think clearly and pray biblically. After they heal the lame man at the temple gate, the Sanhedrin wants to stop their powerful ministry. Therefore, they order them *not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus* and threaten them with punishment if they do ([Acts 4:18-21](#)). After they are released, they go to their fellow believers and report what happened. Then, they lift their voices in prayer.

How do they begin their prayer ([Acts 4:24b](#))?

The word translated **Lord** (*despota*, des-pot'-uh) is the word from which we get our word "despot." It means "master" or "absolute ruler." When we think clearly as we pray biblically, we are keenly aware we

are speaking to the Master of the universe, who simply spoke and by the power of His awesome voice *made heaven, and earth* ([Acts 4:24c](#)).

In panic and pressure situations, remember God has absolute power.

To prepare for the end, **think clearly and pray biblically**, and ...

Love Earnestly (4:8)

Peter puts it like this: *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves* ([4:8a](#)). This means *charity*, or love, must have first priority. The first component of the fruit of the Spirit is love ([Gal. 5:22](#)). It is listed first because it is the foundation of all the other components, or virtues. We are to have *fervent* love.

The word translated **fervent** (*ektenēs*, ek-ten-ace´) means earnestly, or without ceasing. It refers to love that doesn't stop loving. When we love earnestly, we always willingly forgive rather than taking offense and harboring hurt. That's why Peter writes: *for charity shall cover the multitude of sins* ([4:8b](#)).

When we love earnestly, we will not gossip and tell all our friends how someone has hurt us in an attempt to make the offender look bad. Also, when we love earnestly, we will not broadcast the sins of others.

Instead, we will lovingly and discreetly obey what command in [Galatians 6:1a-b](#)?

However, we must watch ourselves, so we will not be *tempted* to act holier-than-thou or fall into the same sin ([Gal. 6:1c](#)). To prepare for the end, **think clearly and pray biblically, love earnestly**, and ...

Show Hospitality Cheerfully (4:9)

Peter puts it like this: *Use hospitality one to another without grudging* ([4:9](#)).

The word translated **hospitality** means lover of strangers, or fond of guests. There is no place where this command needs to be heeded more than in a local church. Every church thinks it is friendly because many people don't understand the word *hospitality* in the Bible. Every Sunday at church, most people greet the same people, talk to the same people, and sit with the same people.

That's not being friendly; that's being cliquish.

Hospitality means every Sunday intentionally greeting strangers—people you don't know—talking to them and even sitting with them. **Nothing will encourage visitors to return to a church like biblical hospitality.**

Showing *hospitality* cheerfully is obeying what command in [2 Corinthians 13:12](#)?

In our culture that means everyone should be greeted with kind words and a warm handshake or holy hug. **Everyone**, not just friends and relatives!

Hospitality is also a great way to use our homes as places of ministry.

Hospitality is not the same as entertaining. When we entertain, the focus is on the place, not the people.

We spend our time and efforts on having a spotless house and great food.

However, *hospitality* focuses on people, so the cleanliness of the home and the food are not the primary concern. *Hospitality* sometimes takes place eating old crackers and cheese in a messy house, because there is a climate of love, acceptance, and a compassionate ear. Don't wait until your house is clean enough and you have a well-prepared meal to show *hospitality*!

This week, invite someone into your home—not to entertain them but to show *hospitality*.

A spontaneous invitation to a messy house is a million times better than an invitation perpetually delayed.

When it comes to our homes, we especially need to remember what truth about God in the last phrase of [1 Timothy 6:17](#)?

Few things can help us *enjoy* our homes and feel God's pleasure like using them to *show hospitality*. All *hospitality* should be done *without grudging*, or grumbling. Therefore, it must be done with kindness and cheerfulness.

To prepare for the end, **think clearly and pray biblically, love earnestly, show hospitality cheerfully**, and ...

Minister Unselfishly (4:10-11)

God has equipped every believer to minister. Peter writes: *As every man hath received the gift* ([4:10a](#)).

The word translated **gift** (*charisma*, kar'-is-mah) refers to a spiritual endowment or enablement.

Every believer has at least one spiritual *gift*.

How does [1 Corinthians 7:7b](#) verify this?

Many spiritual gifts are mentioned in the New Testament ([Rom. 12:6-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:28-30](#); [Eph. 4:11-12](#)).

These are categories of gifts rather than exhaustive lists. A spiritual *gift* is an ability empowered by the Holy Spirit for serving others. Whatever *gift* we have, we are to use it to *minister ... one to another* ([4:10b](#)).

Our gifts must never be used for selfish reasons.

We are to use our spiritual gifts as *good stewards* ([4:10c](#)). A steward has no wealth of his own but serves as a manager, distributing his master's wealth according to his master's will. A spiritual gift is also called a *manifestation of the Spirit* ([1 Cor. 12:7a](#)).

What does [1 Corinthians 12:7b](#) reveal is the purpose of all spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are given to strengthen and build up the church, not for personal edification or glory. Spiritual gifts are given according to *the manifold grace of God* ([4:10d](#)).

The word **manifold** means “various forms.” Just as every fingerprint is unique, so are spiritual gifts when mixed with personalities, backgrounds, and passions.

This means **you** are the only one who can do exactly what God wants **you** to do.

There are two basic kinds of spiritual gifts: **speaking and serving**. Therefore, Peter writes: *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God* ([4:11a](#)). Everything a Bible teacher or preacher says must be based on the *oracles of God*, the Bible, not human opinions. Also, *if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth* ([4:11b](#)).

People with serving gifts minister primarily by what they do, rather than by what they say. They also serve with supernatural energy, or *ability*.

According to [1 Peter 4:11c](#), what is the ultimate purpose for all spiritual gifts?

This is because to Him *be praise and dominion for ever and ever* ([4:11d](#)). When you use your spiritual gift for the glory of God, others will see the love of Jesus in you and will glorify Him for the loving help or ministry they receive from you.

To prepare for the end,

THINK CLEARLY AND PRAY BIBLICALLY,

LOVE EARNESTLY,

SHOW HOSPITALITY CHEERFULLY, AND

MINISTER UNSELFISHLY.