

LESSON 3

SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROPERTY

1 PETER 4:10-11

Reading before class: 1 Peter 4 and Romans 12.

I want to start this one somewhere other than church.

1. Somebody hands you the keys to his truck for the weekend. Write down three things you would do differently with that truck than you would with your own.

2. Now write your own definition of a spiritual gift. Whatever comes to mind. We will come back to this at the end, so do not skip it.

THE WORD PETER PICKED

I told you last week to watch for what Peter calls a Christian who has received something. Let us go get it.

3. Read 1 Peter 4:10. Write out the word Peter uses for the person doing the serving.

4. That is not a word about talent and it is not a word about ability. What does that word actually describe? Say it in your own words.

5. Read Luke 16:1-2. A man with the same job title gets called in. What is he asked to produce, and what happens to him?

6. Put those two passages together. If a Christian is a steward, then two things follow that do not follow from the word "talent." Name both.

LET'S SUMMARIZE HERE

1. Peter does not call you gifted. He calls you a steward.
2. A talent is something you have. A stewardship is something you answer for.
3. Therefore the question is never whether you are gifted enough. The question is what you are doing with property that is not yours.

WHOSE IT IS, AND HOW MUCH OF IT THERE IS

7. Read 1 Peter 4:10 again, the last phrase. Whose grace are these gifts called?

8. Peter puts one word in front of "grace" that describes how much variety is in it. What is that word, and what would be lost if he had left it out?

9. Read 1 Peter 4:10 once more and find the two words that tell you who received something. How many people in this congregation are left out by those two words?

EVERYTHING FITS IN ONE OF TWO BUCKETS

10. Read 1 Peter 4:11. Peter sorts every possible service into two kinds. Name them.

11. He puts a standard on each one. Write both standards down.

The one who speaks: _____

The one who serves: _____

12. Look hard at the second standard. Whose strength is the servant working out of? What does that do to the excuse "I do not have it in me"?
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13. Read the last part of verse 11. When a steward speaks and serves that way, who ends up getting the credit?
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LET'S SUMMARIZE HERE

1. There are two kinds of service and everybody is doing one of them.
2. Speaking is measured against God's own utterances, not against how it went over.
3. Serving runs on strength God supplies, so being out of strength is not the disqualification we treat it as.
4. Therefore the whole arrangement is built to send the glory somewhere other than the servant.

THINK SOUNDLY ABOUT YOURSELF

14. Read Romans 12:3. Paul warns against one kind of thinking and commands another. Write both.

Do not think: _____

Do think: _____

15. Most of us read that verse as being about pride only. Look at it again. Is thinking LESS of yourself than you ought also a failure of sound judgment? Give your reasons.
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16. Go back to Lesson 1 for a second. The foot said "I am not a part of the body." Was the foot's problem humility, or was it bad arithmetic?
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17. Read Romans 12:4-5. Paul says the members do not all have the same what?
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SEVEN JOBS, AND EACH ONE COMES WITH A MANNER

- 18.** Read Romans 12:6-8 slowly. List the seven items Paul names.

- 19.** Now go back through and notice that Paul does not just name the job. He attaches something to each one. What does he attach to giving, to leading and to showing mercy?

Giving:

Leading:

Showing mercy:

- 20.** Those three are not descriptions of the work. They are descriptions of the worker. Why would God care about the manner and not only the deed?

- 21.** In your opinion, which is worse in a congregation: mercy that never gets shown, or mercy shown without cheerfulness? Why or why not?

TAKE THE INVENTORY

This part is not a test and there is no score. Work it honestly and be ready to compare notes in class.

- 22.** List three things you are actually good at. Any three. They do not have to sound spiritual.

- 23.** List three things this congregation needs done that you have watched somebody else do.

24. Draw a line between any item in question 22 and any item in question 23 that could match up. How many lines did you draw?

25. Now the hard one. If you drew no lines at all, is that because there is no match, or because you have never looked for one?

WORD STUDY · STEWARD

The word: *oikonomos* is a compound, and you can see both halves in it. One half is the word for a house. The other is the word for law, in the sense of managing or ordering something. It is where our word economy comes from.

What it describes: the man who ran another man's household, or estate, or accounts. Not the owner. The owner is somewhere else and this man answers to him. Luke uses the word three times in two chapters, and in Luke 16:2 the owner walks in and asks the steward for an accounting.

Which sense is in our verse. The New Testament uses the word two main ways: the household manager, and a broader one, somebody who supervises or has charge and direction of something. 1 Peter 4:10 carries the broader one. Peter is not making you a butler. He is putting you in charge of something.

And the verse says out loud whose something it is. Stewards of the manifold grace of God. You do not have to get that out of the Greek. It's there in your English Bible.

Source: Logos, 4 Aug. 2026. Lemma *οἰκονόμος*, 10 occurrences, listed under both roots *οἶκος* "house" and *νομος* "law"; senses administrator or supervisor 6, household manager 4, city treasurer 1. Lexicons consulted: Kittel et al.; Strong, whose gloss runs "house-distributor; manager; overseer; agent; treasurer." Full entries in Works Cited.

And note this: the argument of this lesson survives without a word of Greek. Read Luke 16:1-2 and you will see exactly what a steward is. A man who gets asked for an accounting.

BUT SOMEONE MAY ASK...

"Are the gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4 the miraculous kind, and are they still around today?"

Somebody is going to ask it, so let us have it out in the open.

Brethren who love the Bible have different views here, and I am not going to pretend otherwise. Some hold that the lists in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are entirely miraculous and confirmatory, given while the New Testament was being delivered and ceasing when it was complete. Others hold that the lists mix the miraculous with the ordinary, pointing out that giving, leading and showing mercy do not look miraculous in any age. Both groups are reading the same texts carefully.

Here is what does not depend on that question. Whichever way a person views, 1 Peter 4:10 still says each one has received something, still calls him a steward of it and still tells him to employ it in serving. The command in front of you this morning does not wait on the answer.

This is one of those places I told you about in the Forward. I will lay the case out in class as fairly as I know how and tell you where I lean, and then it stays yours. My understanding of Romans 14 will not let me bind my conclusion on you as though it were the doctrine of God.

FOR YOUR LIFE

- 26.** Look back at your answer to question 2. Would you change your definition now? What changed?
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- 27.** In Lesson 1 we left a question open. We said verse 18 answers the man who thinks he does not belong, and that it says nothing about the man who belongs and does nothing. Answer it now from 1 Peter 4:10. What does this passage say to that man?
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- 28.** A steward can fail two ways: he can waste what he was given, or he can bury it and hand it back untouched. In your opinion, which failure is more common among us?
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- 29.** Read Matthew 25:14-15. Note that the master handed out different amounts. Does the size of the stewardship change the standard the steward is held to?
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THIS WEEK

- 30.** Go back to the lines you drew in question 24. Pick one.
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- 31.** Write down who you will talk to this week about doing it, and put a day on it. If you drew no lines, write down one person you will ask "what needs doing around here that nobody sees."
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Bring this workbook back next week. This is the one I am most likely to ask about out loud.

NEXT WEEK. Lesson 4: Three Men You Have Never Heard Of.

Read before class: 1 Corinthians 16:15-18, Philippians 2:25-30 and the whole of 3 John. It is short.

One thing to watch for: all three of those passages tell a congregation to do something about a worker. Find the command in each one. They are not the same command.