

## 1 Peter 4:10

**1Pe 4:10 (NKJV) As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

As I read this verse, I have to ask myself the simple question – “What makes people useful in God’s kingdom? What is it that separates one person from another person?” I think the answer is very simple. The people that God really uses is those people who use all of the gifts, the skills, and the talents that God has given to them. In fact, I am convinced that it is not ability, but availability that makes the biggest difference. Am I someone that is willing to do whatever it takes for God to use me – whatever it takes? Listen, from a spiritual perspective, I never want to be satisfied with where I am in my spiritual life. That is an utterly deadly place to find ourselves, but if the truth were known, the modern culture era in which we live, a place of prosperity and comfort and convenience, this is the easy road to take – and we blend right in.

I was thinking of brother Eddie Ildefonso and why it is that God has used him so mightily all over the world. Do you want to know why? It is because he has made his entire life available to God to be used for His purposes. He is a pastor, a teacher, a disciple maker, an evangelist, a trainer of pastors, a church planter, an encourager, a student. He is sacrificial, daring, courageous, and relentless in his pursuit of that which pleases God. And for that reason I think that he literally demonstrates every spiritual gift that we are studying. At the end of the day when I am with him, I realize that he is no different than me or you. He gets up early, gets some coffee, puts his pants on the same way that I do, studies the Bible, but what makes him different is that he is literally using everything that God has ever given him in terms of skills, talents, gifts, motivations, and more.

Listen, what [1 Peter 4:10](#) tells us is that God has given you spiritual gifts, and he has given them to you so that you can use them – “**As each one has received a gift...**” Then he tells us to use them – “**minister it to one another...**” The word “**minister**” simply means to use it, expend it, exhaust it, deplete it, exploit it, exercise it in ministry to other people. Listen. Do not just shut yourself up in your own little world. That is so easy to do, and we wind up just compartmentalizing all that God wants to do through us so that all that is left is just a little bit of our life. We think wrong, we make wrong decisions when it comes to ministering our gifts to people. We keep them to ourselves, and then wonder why we are so empty, so unfulfilled, so hollow on the inside. Do not shut yourself up in your own little world. That is not the world in which God wants you to minister. Thirdly, this verse says that we are a “**steward**”. A steward is someone who uses what God has given them for God’s glory. Do not sell yourself short. **GOD WANTS TO USE YOUR LIFE.** Take hold of that reality and realize that one way He will do that is by using your gifts. You have them and He wants to use them. That is exactly why He gave them to you in the first place. Listen carefully. God wants to use your life, so do not get stuck in your life!

Now, we are continuing to look at the seven “personal” spiritual gifts identified in [Romans 12:6-8](#),

**Ro 12:6 (NKJV) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

When we read that, we have to ask why are certain words italics – which means it is not in the original text. It is because the translators understood that it is clearly understood and implied. This is God’s will for your life – to use your spiritual gifts for His glory, so simply stop being selfish and stingy with your life.

This evening we will be looking at the gift of giving. **THIS IS NOT A STUDY ABOUT MONEY!** It is about using whatever it is that God has given to you, and using it for the advancement of His kingdom. If it just happens to be the gift of giving, then be a giver. The word for “gives” is “*metadidomai*” and it carries the simple idea of sharing with someone out of our own resources.<sup>1</sup> It says that the person with this gifting should be doing so with liberality and generosity. Some people would include that this gift refers to someone giving of themselves or giving of their time and abilities to the body of Christ. Well certainly it means that! That is perfectly legitimate simply because these believers see themselves as a resource, as a channel of God’s blessings onto others. However, I personally believe that the primary focus of this gift is that of giving of one’s material resources in order to further the kingdom of God. It is giving it to someone who will be a good steward of your gift to advance the kingdom of God. Please, do not be giving your resources to some of these television thieves who have are well crafted in their art of fleecing the flock of cash. In the NKJV it says that the person with this gifting does so “**with liberality**”, but it also carries the idea of doing so with “**simplicity**” (AMP, YLT). The word “**liberality**” is “*haplotes*” and carries the idea of a sincere, heartfelt giving that is not tainted with some ulterior motive.<sup>2</sup> I.e., the person is never going to call attention to what they are giving, they never want the recognition.

Obviously, and we all should already know this, we all are called on to be generous. In [Luke 3:10-11](#), listen to what John the Baptist told those who were questioning him about what fruits of repentance they should bring forth and he said this to them,

**Lk 3:10 (NKJV) So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?" <sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."**

Don’t you just love this, doesn’t this just make all the sense in the world. Every Christian should be known for their generosity to people who are advancing the kingdom of God.

Jesus gave some great advice about giving in [Matthew 6:1-4](#) when he said,

**Mt 6:1 (NKJV) "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. (That’s it. That is all you get.) <sup>3</sup> But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly."**

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *metadidomai*, #3200, ep.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, 175.

Listen, if you truly want God's blessing on your life, then whatever you do, do it ALL for His glory. Do not worry about what men think. God's opinion is the one that really matters.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19** says,

1Ti 6:17 (NKJV) **Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. <sup>18</sup> *Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, <sup>19</sup> storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.***

**Hebrews 13:16** says,

Heb 13:16 (NKJV) **But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**

Do you really want God to be well pleased with your life, then “**do not forget**” to do good and to share with others.

**James 2:14-16**,

Jas 2:14 (NKJV) **What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?**

We have to always keep in perspective that other believer's legitimate needs are often a test of the reality of our faith and trust in God. The problem is that normally we do not want to be inconvenienced, so we can find ways to avoid or to just ignore real and obvious needs that may surround us.

It appears that the real motivation behind this gifting is that of someone who desires to entrust their personal assets to someone who they believe is going to further the ministry of the gospel. THIS IS A CRITICAL POINT. It is not necessarily a gift that just gives resources to people because they may have a need, but it is more specifically concerned with helping those individuals who have committed their life to various ministries. We know that we will always have the poor, and obviously there are times when they have needs that we should consider helping. Jesus said the following in **Mark 14:7**,

Mk 14:7 (NKJV) **For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.**

**1 John 2:17** says,

1Jn 3:17 (NKJV) **But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

Wow! What a penetrating question this is. It is like having open heart surgery. If I see my brother in a legitimate need and I just shut up my heart to him, the love of God simply does not abide in my heart.

Obviously, all of these are very sobering reminders to all of us not to be greedy or selfish, but the thrust of this study is not about money. It is about appreciating those whom God has given a special ability in their life. The fundamental motivation for the person with this gift is the motivation to further the kingdom of God, to advance the gospel, and to support those whom God has called to a specific work.

I do not want us to think of this gifting as someone that you see as the “sugar daddy” when someone has a need. If there are legitimate needs in the body, then the body as a whole should be meeting those needs and not just one person who has the assets. That is exactly why as a church that we have benevolence funds – to help people, both in the church and outside of the church, who often times have immediate needs. In [Romans 12:13](#), after a listing of various attributes that God wants every believer to have, Paul says that the believer is to be “**distributing to the needs of the saints**”. So, the idea of helping people out financially is not limited to the person with the gift of giving. [Luke 6:38](#) which is a verse that has been terribly abused by all of the prosperity preachers who are constantly fleecing the flock for their own gain.

**Lk 6:38 (NKJV) Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."**

The health and wealth gospel is one of the most damning false doctrines ever perpetrated on the church! However, this is a great verse simply because it says that we cannot out give God. It is not that we give to get – never. That is never the motivation for giving. This is not God promising us more money if we give more money – NEVER! God does not want to give us money. He wants to make us Christlike, and that is what makes you spiritually rich. Listen. The more of your life that you give away, the more of God’s life you will experience in abundance. IT IS NEVER ABOUT THE MONEY! In fact, it seems that the more that people have, the less dependent they become on God.

Then we have [2 Corinthians 9:6-8](#) which says,

**2Co 9:6 (NKJV) But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.**

Here is the point of these verses. The grace of God will always sustain you, always uphold you, always sustain you, always strengthen you. What you want is not more money, but more grace. That is what you should be asking for – not money.

I have taught often that the tithe is not a New Testament principle, but this is how Christians are to give to God’s work – cheerfully and not grudgingly. Think of it this way. First of all God does not need our money. How dumb, how spiritually naïve is that? What in the world would ever make any of us think that he was dependent on our resources for anything? His work will continue with or without us, so it would be foolish to even think that God would want someone to support His work in the world who really did not want to support it. In fact, I think that if someone started to give something begrudgingly to someone or to the church or to some ministry that if we could here God speak, He would say “*Keep it buddy. I have this covered. Don’t need it!*”.

There is a very enlightening sequence in the Book of Acts relative to this. It is important to remember that after Pentecost that those Jews who were saved now became “blackballed”, ostracized, and rejected by the Jewish leaders. They could not get jobs and could not buy food and various goods. No one would

buy what they were selling, and so great poverty became the lot of many of them. However, listen to the unfolding of how God worked during that time. It begins in [Acts 4:32-37](#) which says,

Ac 4:32 (NKJV) **Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.** *(This is a historical narrative, not a doctrinal teaching.)* <sup>33</sup> **And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.** <sup>34</sup> **Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,** <sup>35</sup> **and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.** <sup>36</sup> **And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,** <sup>37</sup> **having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.**

This is an amazing picture of how the church was operating during some very incredible spiritual times, but also during some very severe trials they were experiencing because of their faith. People willingly gave up much of what they had so that others would not go hungry. As many are projecting will happen in the Fall during flu season, the Coronavirus may be much, much more worse than it is now. So, what if there were genuine believers in our midst, in our church who became destitute and poverty stricken. WHAT WOULD WE AT CHIME BELL BE INCLINED TO DO? How far would we go? What would we give, what would we be willing to sacrifice? What would we do to help? “**Be warmed and be filled**” simply would not be enough.

However, the story has a sour note relative to the life of Ananias and Sapphira in [Acts 5:1-11](#) where they lied about their giving and they died immediately upon not being honest with Peter. They had the wrong motive for giving. They schemed to be recognized by men, and they both died. However, Barnabas eventually traveled with Paul in much of his ministry. This is a very sobering lesson that God was teaching those in the early church.

In contrast to that story of Ananias and Sapphira, I think of someone like George Mueller who eventually ran five orphanages with thousands of orphans without ever making any of his needs known to others. He went to Bristol, England as a missionary, and when he got there he saw so many children who were orphans, street children just living off of the crumbs and scraps that others threw away. However, he had no money, but he learned to pray. He learned what it meant to trust God when he literally had no food for the children for whom he was caring. He was a man who took God at His Word when God said the following in [Philippians 4:19](#),

Php 4:19 (NKJV) **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

From the very first George Mueller remained resolved never to ask for funds from people or to borrow money. He went to God alone for every need, trusting wholly in the Lord’s faithfulness and provision.<sup>3</sup> Listen carefully. George Mueller was a man who had intentionally “learned” to simply trust God at His Word. He literally lived by faith and not by sight.

<sup>3</sup> Guideposts, ep.

Now, it is just my opinion, but it would only make sense that the person with this gifting is also someone who has demonstrated the ability to make money and gain assets. They have the ability and discernment to make wise purchases and investments so that they can be generous. Someone who is wasteful and lazy, they simply will not have this gifting. The person with this gifting will never tell you what they are doing. They do not want the left hand to know what the right hand is doing. They are fully committed to [Matthew 6:3](#) which says,

**Mt 6:3 (NKJV) But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,**

So, if you hear of someone calling attention to a gift that they have given, then you can be assured that they do not have the gift of giving. One last characteristic related to the person with this gifting is that they are willing to give sacrificially if they truly believe that their gift benefits the cause of Christ, both in their local church and in the various ministries and people that they are willing to support. To be honest, and this is just a personal thing for me, I do not think that I know many people who have this gift, nor have I known them. I was wondering about that because I am sure that there are people with this gifting. They are important to the body of Christ. However, the reason I believe that I do not know many people like this is because they will never advertise what they are doing. If they could, what they give would always be in complete secrecy, obscurity, and anonymity.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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