

## Attitudes

If we knew that we had only a short time to live what would that mean to us? What changes would we make in our lives? What would we do more of or less of?

- 7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.
- 8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.
- 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
- 10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
- 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.

Attitudes:

Be Expectant

Be Loving

Be Hospitable

Be Faithful

### I. Be Expectant

<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is near;

“We do not know when He’ll return, but we expect Him soon.”

The attitude of the early church concerning Christ’s return was one of expectancy.

Due to the difficulties they were facing – either pray or panic.

They expected Christ’s return in their lifetime.

In Peter’s first letter to the scattered churches I counted ten references to Christ’s second coming. In this opening verses is a declaration of the nearness of Christ’s return bringing with Him the end of all things in this evil world.

...therefore, [he writes] be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.

Another version says, “...be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

Peter seems to be leaving the theme of suffering and moving toward practical living. Here is a command to pray.

Sober – serious, sound mind, or clear minded”

The same word is used in Romans 12:3 where Paul says for us  
 “not to think more highly of our selves than we ought,  
 but to think soberly...”

Watchful, ***of sound judgment***, (nepho) – a similar word meaning “self-control”.  
 This can be understood as, “keep your head”

**Rudyard Kipling’s** famous poem If begins,

“If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you...”

Prayer is to be made priority – a lifestyle – dependent and hopeful.

1 Thess. 5:17 “Pray without ceasing”

John Bunyan wrote,

“Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God,  
 through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, for such  
 things as God has promised.”

Andrew Murray said,

“Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God’s voice in response to mine is  
 its most essential part. Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the  
 assurance that He will listen to mine.”

Prayer is finding God’s solution for our struggles.

Prayer refocuses my mind from discouragement to hope.

It restores my expectant attitude that Christ will return soon. Peter wrote that  
 one of the signs of the end times would be those who would rob us of our hope  
 and love for His appearing.

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their  
 mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the  
 promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all  
 continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’” (2 Peter  
 3:3-4)

Paul writes, "...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:12-13).

Are you ready for Christ's return?

Paul wrote of a judgment day for believers.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each on may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good ore bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men..." (2 Cor. 5:10-11a).

If we expect the soon return of Christ should increase our prayer life.

## **II. Be Loving**

<sup>8</sup>Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Fervent – intense or without ceasing

Fervent love is as the NEB translates:

"Keep your love for one another at full strength."

"**above all things**" v 8. Love is to be kept as our top priority.

The faucet of love should flow ceaselessly at full strength.

The reason: The power of love "**to cover all kinds of sins.**"

The solution for sin is forgiveness – love motivates us to forgive.

The quality of love is the very nature and character of God.

John writes,

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8)

When Jesus was asked what the greatest of the commandments was He gave the Great Commandment:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:36-40).

Similarly Jesus gave us the Golden Rule:

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. 7:12)

This was practical love in action ... in any setting.

The Ten Commandments also contain these concepts of love.

The first four represent our love for God; the last six love for others.

Paul wrote,

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement,

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Gal. 5:14)

The qualities that make up love are described in 1 Corinthians 13,

Love is patient, kind,...

### **III. Be Hospitable**

<sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Essentially hospitality is showing love in practical ways.

One definition of hospitality is

... using what God has given to us to demonstrate His love for others.

*Philos* – close friend; *xenos* – strangers or guests

*Philoxenos* – “caring for strangers as if they were close friends or loved ones.

**An old Dutch proverb,**

When there is room in the heart, there is room in the house.

In the early church believers loved to share with one another.

Peter’s letter uses “*one-another*” three times in our verses.

Hospitality was a regular practice for elders in the early church. 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8

Paul writes,

“...contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.” (Rom. 12:13)

Hospitality is in direct contrast to a spirit of selfishness permeating our society:

**“Make all you can, can all you make; hide the can.”**

See our Homes as gifts to be opened and shared,  
instead of castles for retreat with the drawbridge pulled up.

*Parallel verses in Hebrews:*

“Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.” (Heb. 13:2-4).

Showing hospitality can cost money; it takes time. It can be inconvenient and occasionally frustrating. That’s why we are to show hospitality without complaining. In other words, have a positive attitude about hospitality.

Be expectant, loving, hospitable...

#### **IV. Be Faithful**

Christian love will result in faithful service to others.

<sup>10</sup>As each one has received a *special* gift,  
employ it in serving one another  
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

**Manifold** – “*many colored*” – wide spectrum of the grace of God  
In the church God has given a diversity of gifts to edify its members.

**Steward** – We don’t own anything, it’s all on loan to us for this life.

A steward manages the property of another.

Spiritual gifts are grace gifts of the Holy Spirit given to those who are born of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of these gifts is to build up others.

NEB – “Like good stewards dispensing the grace of God in its varied forms.”

We have been entrusted with a portion of God’s grace.

Our responsibility is to use it. - ***employ it in serving one another***

Both speaking gifts and serving gifts are mentioned.

<sup>11</sup>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.

In Romans 12 nine spiritual gifts mentioned (Rom. 12:3-8)

“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function; so we, who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly...” (v 4-6)

Every church needs every Christian and every Christian is gifted to contribute.

“...not forsaking our own assembling together,  
as is the habit of some, but encouraging on another;  
and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (Heb. 10:24)  
Gifts are given for the purpose of glorifying God!

The chief end of man is to enjoy God and glorify Him forever<sup>1</sup>

God’s people are blessed and God is glorified.

**Summary:** Our hopeful expectation of the Lord’s return should motivate us to good judgment and to stay calm with a spirit of prayer v 7.

We should stay fervent in our love for one another v 8.

We must remember to be hospitable toward one another v 9. And we should never neglect to serve one another through the use of our spiritual gifts.

All four of these commands are the answer to Peter’s question,

“What should we be doing in light of the any-moment return of Christ?”<sup>2</sup>

**Final objective:** bring glory to God. Seeking God’s glory in the spiritual battlefield of this present world.

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Catechism

<sup>2</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s New Testament insights, James, 1 & 2 Peter*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 222.