

“The Heart Of A Grace-Giver”
September 13, 2009 * 1 Peter 4:7-11

8 WAYS GRACE-GIVERS SERVE

1. Grace-givers serve with the _____ in mind.

“The end of all things is near.”

1. What’s one thing highly-successful people do?
2. What “end” is Peter referring to?
3. What do grace-givers remind themselves of?

2. Grace-givers serve _____.

“Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled...”

1. What do we mean by this?
2. What did Jesus mean when he said, “Give to those who ask of you”?

3. Grace-givers serve _____.

“...so that you can pray.”

1. What message does God speak in both Old & New Testaments?
2. How does God feel about it when we launch into doing something without talking to him first?

4. Grace-givers serve with _____ as their deepest motivation. “Above all love each other deeply...”

1. “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” What other things might motivate someone to give?

2. What’s the best way to make sure my name will be remembered?

5. Grace-givers serve _____.

“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.”

1. What does the word for ‘hospitality’ literally mean?
2. Why do we love to see new people come into the church?

6. Grace-givers serve out of their _____.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received...”

1. “Where should I volunteer?” What’s the answer?

7. Grace-givers serve as _____ & _____.

“...to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms...”

1. Why does Albert point to the heavens?
2. “God gives but he doesn’t share”. What do Haitians mean by this?

8. Grace-givers serve _____.

“...so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus...”

1. What’s the ultimate motivation for someone who gives and serves?

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8 WAYS GRACE-GIVERS SERVE

1. Grace-givers serve with the end in mind.

“The end of all things is near.”

1. What’s one thing highly-successful people do?

They “begin with the end in mind.” Most people go just through the motions, living day to day, never setting goals, never looking ahead, never thinking about where their choices and habits are all taking them. They live poorer lives as a result.

2. What “end” is Peter referring to?

The end of all things, the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the wrapping up of this whole chapter of existence we call human history.

3. What do grace-givers remind themselves of?

They remind themselves often of the fact that their lives are but a gift God has given to them, and God has poured into them an assortment of talents and interests and abilities of his choosing, and one day God is going to call in his investment in us, to see what we did with this gift of life we were given.

2. Grace-givers serve thoughtfully.

“Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled...”

1. What do we mean by this?

You never unplug your brain as a grace-giver. Jesus once healed a crazy guy, possessed with demons, and afterwards the Bible says the man was “in his right mind.” The Greek word used to describe the crazy-guy-now-healed is the same word Peter uses here when he says ‘clear-minded’. When giving, be in your right mind. Don’t get manipulated or used. The Greek word Peter uses for ‘self-control’ is a word that literally means, ‘be sober, abstain from

wine’ – in other words, ‘don’t drink the coolaid’ when someone’s trying to sell you something.

2. What did Jesus mean when he said, “Give to those who ask of you”?

Interpreted wrongly, you might think that he was telling us to never say no. But he didn’t mean you open up your wallet to every Tom, Dick and Harry that knocks on your door with their hands out. He really just meant: Learn to have a generous heart. We’re naturally selfish; learn to counteract that.

3. Grace-givers serve prayerfully.

“...so that you can pray.”

1. What message does God speak in both Old & New Testaments?

Jesus once said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from me, you can do nothing.” In the Old Testament, God makes a similar point. Hosea 14:8 – “I am like a green pine tree, [God says]; your fruitfulness comes from me.”

2. How does God feel about it when we launch into doing something without talking to him first?

Isaiah 31:1 – “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or seek help from the Lord.”

4. Grace-givers serve with love as their deepest motivation. “Above all love each other deeply...”

1. “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” What other things might motivate someone to give?

Some give because they’ve been worn down. “Mommy, I want a cookie now!” “Yes, darling.” Some give because they’ve been conned. “I want your life-savings, now!” “Yes, Mr. Madoff”. Some give out of guilt. We toss some coins into the street peddler’s can. Some out of shame. The husband caught by his wife with the porn addiction becomes Super-Husband for a couple weeks, until the shame wears off. Some give out of compulsion. They feel they *have* to give, if only to get Pastor Barry off their backs. The Bible

explicitly says, Don't give if that's your motivation. God wants a cheerful giver. And the biggest false motivation of all: Pride. We want our name in lights.

2. *What's the best way to make sure my name will be remembered?*

Give out of love however, now there's a deed that will be remembered for eternity. A woman washed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and repentant tears. Jesus said, "What she has done will be spoken of forever." Now that's true celebrity.

5. Grace-givers serve _____.
"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

1. *What does the word for 'hospitality' literally mean?*

The Greek word for 'offer hospitality' is philozenoi. Which is the 'love of strangers'. Which is what hospitality is at its heart. Making strangers feel welcome. Feel at home.

2. *Why do we love to see new people come into the church?*

This isn't *our* church. This is the Body of *Christ*. It belongs to him. This building belongs to him. The ministries that we'll be celebrating soon, they belong to him. The money we give belongs to him. And Jesus is entitled to add to his body anyone he chooses.

(The Name of One New Person I Met This Morning)

6. Grace-givers serve out of their giftedness.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received..."

1. *"Where should I volunteer?" What's the answer?*

Peter says, "Take those talents, abilities, interests and desires that you have, and be a minister with them." I don't know about you, but that's good news to me. Because there was a period of time in my faith-walk when I had this perception that God wants us to serve in places where we'll just hate it. And if God ever catches you saying out loud something that you do not want to do, he'll jump out from behind some bushes and say, "Aha, I heard that!"

You don't want to be a missionary to Africa. Guess where I'm sending you?"

7. Grace-givers serve as servants & stewards.

"...to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms..."

1. *Why does Albert point to the heavens?*

Every time Albert Pujols hits a home run – and he's hit a lot of them this year – as soon as he crosses home plate he points to the heavens. He's not thanking God for helping them win. God doesn't do that. Believe me, if God manipulated the outcome of sporting events, it wouldn't be the teams with the highest payrolls making the playoffs. That's not God's way. No, Albert does that because it's his way of acknowledging that he knows where his talent comes from. It's an act of humility. He's got the heart of a servant.

2. *"God gives but he doesn't share". What do Haitians mean by this?*

A servant is someone who knows his place. There is a God and you are not him. A steward is someone who knows his responsibilities. God gives us the raw material to work with. Now it is our part to take that raw material and mold it into something usable and creative and productive.

Down in Haiti, they have a saying. "God gives, but he doesn't share." In his book, "Mountains Beyond Mountains" about the suffering in Haiti, author Tracy Kidder quotes a native Haitian who explains this proverb: "God gives us human everything we need to flourish, but he's not the one who's supposed to divvy up the loot." That's what servanthood and stewardship is about.

8. Grace-givers serve worshipfully.

"...so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus..."

1. *What's the ultimate motivation for someone who gives and serves?*

It's never about our fame. It's about His fame. It's not about making my name known. It's about making his name known.