

Women's Bible Study  
1 Peter 4:8-9, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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1Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Above all other exhortations or more important than anything else. Peter is putting a special emphasis on his statement. It might well be like us saying, 'this is important, make sure you get it right!'. We see the same phrase used in **James 5:12**.

But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

Also in Paul's words to the **Colossians, 3:14** Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Live for the will of God rather than the desires of the flesh; be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer, and pay particular regard to *keeping fervent in your love for one another*.

The Apostle placed a special value on loving one another. Sound judgment, a sober spirit, and prayer are not less important than love but without love none of these things is possible. All our motivations for living according to God's will, must come from a heart yielded to Him. The basis of loving one another, is God's love for us.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Keep is translated from the Hebrew word *echo*. **Think!** What is an **echo**? It is a repetition – again and again. We are to love one another repeatedly and fervently; intently, without ceasing, with devotion. **Why?**

*Because love covers a multitude of sins.* Consider those you have a deep affection for. When they err, you are more patient with them, desiring to turn them from their sin towards righteousness. Rather than focusing on their faults, we are willing to overlook imperfections. The encouragement is to love one another for the purpose of leading others to live for Christ.

*“He commends charity towards one another, because it buries a multitude of sins, and therefore preserves and maintains peace and harmony: for they who love one another easily forgive one another their offences”, 1599 Geneva Bible Notes.*

*“A loving disposition leads us to pass by the faults of others, to forgive offences against ourselves, and to excuse and lessen, as far as is consistent with truth, the transgressions of men”, Adam Clarke’s Commentary.*

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.

1Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Matthew 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus \*said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Proverbs 17:9 He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.

**Are we quick to point out the faults of others?** We are to be patient in our spirit, slow to retaliate or express resentment, as we seek to quickly forgive offenses. This makes me think of the verse in Matthew.

Matthew 7:3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"

Leviticus 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

We are to be more concerned with helping each other live in righteousness, than we are with condemning one another for faults. I think of my mistakes and the decisions I made as a new believer that were less than stellar. Those around me poured their love out on me and encouraged me, not by pointing out the wrong things I had done, but by pointing me to God’s righteousness. This took patience and long-suffering from those who loved me as they waited for God to work in my life.

Notice, the verse says love covers a *multitude* of sins. A large number, many. There is no limit to the number of times we are to excuse others. **Doesn't Jesus cover our sins multiple times a day?**

*Philip Doddridge N.T. notes says, "love will cover a multitude of sins; it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings".*

1Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

1Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

The Apostle reminds the church to always be ready to share, to be welcoming and ready for guests. This was especially important at that time when Christians were unwelcomed in their own homes because of their conversion. These struggling believers were no longer accepted so it was necessary for them to find shelter and food elsewhere. There wasn't a motel or restaurant on every corner, so it was up to others to provide strangers with necessities. Hospitality was also an important part of furthering the Gospel from one place to another as individuals were sent out to start churches and encourage the brethren.

Romans 12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Peter's encouragement is to be hospitable *without complaint* – not grudgingly; without murmuring. This speaks of the right attitude we are to have when helping others. Hospitality was not to be practiced simply because it was commanded but was to be extended out of love for one another.

Consider the preparation and added expense of having guests in your home. It takes extra time and effort. They were not to focus on the work involved in being hospitable, but were to serve with a cheerful heart, truly welcoming those who stayed with them.

Matthew 25:35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

In 1Peter 4:9, the church was reminded to use hospitality in serving one to another. This was important to the encouragement of believers and those who were seeking to minister to the early churches. Now, in verse 10, Peter continues to remind the church that hospitality was only one of many, diverse, spiritual gifts, which had been bestowed upon them to use for the benefit of others and the good of the church.

1Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

First, everyone has received special graces from God.

Second, each one is to use what they have to benefit others.

Third, we are stewards of these gifts.

The words *special gift* means an endowment meant to be used for others. When Peter wrote this Epistle, there were gifts present that we do not readily see today. Jesus sent out the twelve with instructions to go to the lost and preach. Along with His orders, He gifted many with the ability to perform miracles in His name. Matthew 19:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Every gift and grace is to be used to contribute to the blessing of others. Although these gifts differ, each is equally important in ministering to the church body as a whole. *"The word minister here would refer to any kind of ministering, whether by counsel, by advice, by the supply of the wants of the poor, or by preaching. It has here no reference to any one of these exclusively; but means, that in whatever God has favoured us more than others, we should be ready to minister to their wants"*, Albert Barnes' NT Commentary. This is opposite of keeping to oneself. How are we employed in service to one another? Are we seeking to edify the church with whatever God has given us? Have we allowed ourselves to be excused from serving because we are too tired, or too old, or feel we do not have anything to offer?

Recall the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. The servants who used what had been given them to increase their master's wealth were rewarded. The one who hid what was entrusted to him was condemned. Our Master is Jesus. We are to contribute to His Kingdom using our gifts.

Everything we have is a gift from God – it all belongs to Him. Everything seen and unseen, all that is in our physical possession and all that makes up our physical person, including our strengths, and abilities.

Romans 12:4-8 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 one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. **Think!** Are you able to influence others for good? Do you have something tangible to share? How about wisdom and experience? Can you pray for others, make phone calls, write notes of encouragement?

All we have and all we are is to be disposed for His Kingdom – we are merely stewards of God’s grace. This is opposite of being an owner; a steward is a manager. This word is translated from a Greek word meaning an overseer, or an employee in that capacity; a fiscal agent or treasurer. Figuratively, it means a preacher of the Gospel. **Think!** How do our lives and how we use our blessings, promote Christ? What does a good manager do?

Think of embezzlement for a moment. Each of the following excerpts are taken from the *Associated Press*. “An election commissioner in Mississippi’s largest county has pleaded guilty to fraud and embezzlement charge related to misuse of pandemic relief money ...”. “A Catholic priest is accused of stealing more than \$800,000 from three retired priests ...”. “The former clerk for a small northeast South Carolina town has been charged with embezzlement of public funds”.

Embezzlement is the “fraudulent appropriation of funds or property entrusted to your care but actually owned by someone else”. We can readily see the improper use of money in the stories above.

Each child of God has His grace poured upon their lives; the gift of the Holy Spirit residing within their soul; the promise of glory far beyond imagination; and a plethora of undeserved blessings. **Are we using these things entrusted to us for the benefit of God’s kingdom?**

1Corinthians 4:1-2 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

*“Whatever gifts or endowments any man may possess, they are properly speaking, not his own; they are the Lord's property, and to be employed in his work, and to promote his glory”, Adam Clarke's Commentary.*

Read Paul's words: Ephesians 3:8-12 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

God's blessings, through His grace, in His strength, for His glory.