

Living a Vertical Life in a Horizontal World – 1 Peter 4:7-11

After reminding his readers of the impending judgment waiting on all, the living and the dead, Peter gives several admonishments concerning our attitude and behavior in this present broken world. We live our lives with a sense of anticipation, a longing for a new and better life. We carry out our horizontal relationships with a vertical perspective. How we treat one another is a true reflection of our fellowship with Christ.

“All Christians must expect tribulations in the world, but these would soon terminate; for the end of all things was at hand, and death was about to close their course of trials or services; and how can this present experience be at all compared with eternity.” Joseph Benson

(Romans 8:16 -18 & 2 Corinthians 4:16-18) Peter emphasizes both suffering and glory!

Note: We are accustomed to instant gratification; we are often like spoiled children, “I want it, and I want it now.” We must learn to wait for it! Our best days are just ahead.

- **Live everyday with the expectation of Christ’s return. (7)** What does Peter mean when he says, “The end of all things is near?” Scholars debate whether Peter has the return of Christ in mind or the reality of death. Either one is sobering!

(1 Corinthians 15:24; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:8-9; 2 Peter 3:9-11; 1 John 2:18-19)

Since we do not know the day of either Christ’s return or the day of our death, we should live with sound judgment and live soberly and prayerfully.

- **Make love a major priority in your daily life. (8-9)** Peter uses opening phrases to indicate his emphasis upon Christian behavior. Look at the use of, “To sum up, all of you,” in 3:8 or, “Above all,” in 4:8.

This reminds us of the daily priority that love should be. Love is the most Christlike of qualities and it also smooths away the rough edges of interpersonal relationships. Love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint, ouch!

- **Use your gift(s) to edify and build up others. (10-11a).** Stewardship is related to not only our finances, but also our giftedness. Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift to be used for the glory of God and the edification of the body of Christ.

Note: We recognize that our spiritual gift(s) are given by the same Spirit, and God determines how they should be used. They are given by Him and for Him to be exercised in humility and grace.

- **Do all things for the glory of God. (1b)** The glory of God is the most significant reality of our human existence. We, as all creation, exist to bring Him glory!

Soli Deo gloria is the motto that grew out of the Protestant Reformation and was used on every composition by Johann Sebastian Bach. He affixed the initials SDG at the bottom of each manuscript to communicate the idea that it is God and God alone who is to receive the glory for the wonders of His work of creation and of redemption.

Note: We should seek to live our days so that SDG is inscribed upon the close of our day and the close of our life!

Questions: How does your vertical relationship with God affect your daily life choices?

How does the perspective of eternity affect your temporal view of life?

Remember, as a child of God, your present situation is not your final destination!