

□ **P**\_\_\_\_\_

We need to be s\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ and s\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_. We need to be clear-headed people so that we can give ourselves to prayer. We must have that militant mindset. We must be alert so that we can pray.

### 1 Peter 4:8-9

□ **L**\_\_\_\_\_

We must keep sincerely loving one another earnestly (see 1:22). It's something we must continue to do. We must keep it up. Like an athlete in a strenuous, exhausting competition, we must keep going in our love for one another. We can't quit, even in hard times.

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses."

-Proverbs 10:12 (ESV)

"Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends." -Proverbs 17:9 (ESV)

The sins being covered are the sins of the person being loved, **not** the sins of the one who is showing love to that person.

In our straining to love each other in these final and often difficult days, we must be people who are **not** quick to take offense. We should **not** be super sensitive to the sin of others against ourselves.

An unkind act or an insulting word should **not** get an immediate angry reaction from us. We should **not** be people who are instantly offended when someone fails to love or respect us.

We must be willing to o\_\_\_\_\_ such personal offenses. We must be willing to cover the sins of others against us rather than b\_\_\_\_\_ them. We sow the seeds of disunity in our church by telling tales about how others have sinned against us, and God hates that (Proverbs 6:19).

But sometimes the sin **cannot** be overlooked. For the glory of God, the good of others, and/or the furtherance of the Gospel, some sin must be humbly and lovingly addressed. Sometimes hard conversations need to happen. Sometimes the restorative process of church discipline must start. If a crime is committed, the proper authorities must be notified.

But that failure by that brother or sister must not be weaponized and used to sow discord in our community.

One way we show this sort of love is by opening our homes to our brothers and sisters. This is not for the purpose of showing off our cooking, baking, or cleaning skills. It's about caring for others in our homes.

**Question:** What does it take to show this kind of caring hospitality? **Answer:** An o\_\_\_\_\_ h\_\_\_\_\_ is what it takes.

O\_\_\_\_\_ h\_\_\_\_\_ lead to o\_\_\_\_\_ h\_\_\_\_\_.

We must have hearts that are willing to "widen the circle" of fellowship to include more brothers and sisters, including people we may not already know or people who may be hard to love.

Hosting others in our homes can be hard. It can be exhausting. Our guests may not be grateful guests. They may make a mess.

They may not get the hint when it's time for them to leave. But we are not allowed to grumble about our guests. We kindly care for others rather than complain.

### **1 Peter 4:10-11a**

□ **S**\_\_\_\_\_

All of the people of God are gifted by God to serve in some way. Sometimes there is some trial and error involved in figuring out how God has gifted us and where we serve best in the church.

The goal of these gifts is not the exaltation of the gifts themselves or the exaltation of the one who's got the gift(s). The goal of these gifts is the good of God's people in your local church. The presence and importance of the local church and our ongoing involvement with the local church is assumed and implied in these verses. We follow Jesus in community (the church).

*We are stewards/managers of God's multicolored, kaleidoscopic grace. There is great variety, but it's all of God.*

We must do "the Lord's work in the Lord's way." The gifts and strength are God's, not ours. We are simply stewards and servants. We are managers and ministers. How we speak and how we serve in the church must reflect and honor the Giver of this grace.

### **1 Peter 4:11b**

God's **g**\_\_\_\_\_ is the **e**\_\_\_\_\_ of everything. God has given us gifts of grace for the good of others and for His glory. God sends us strength as we serve Him for the good of others and for His glory. And that endgame is just fine with us!

## **Our Final Days Bucket List**

1 Peter 4:7-11

Do you have a bucket list? What's on your list? Does God have a bucket list for us? What is on His list for us?

### **1 Peter 4:7**

We live between the first and the second arrival of Jesus the Christ. We are in the **I**\_\_\_\_\_ inning, but we don't know how long this inning will **I**\_\_\_\_\_.

As those who are now God's spiritual children by the miracle of spiritual rebirth effected by our sovereign, gracious, saving God (1:3) through the preaching and the hearing and the believing of the Gospel (the good news about Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose from the dead—1:23-25), and as those who have made a definite break from sin (signified by our Christian water baptism as believers in Jesus—3:18-4:6 and Romans 6:1-11) and who now value holiness and are passionate about pursuing purity—who are now committed to serving God instead of self—what (else) is His will for us?

What should we devote our time and energy to? What would God have us do? What is on His final days bucket list for us?

While we are experiencing hostility from those are still in the **w**\_\_\_\_\_, we are to be praying and caring for those who are now in the **c**\_\_\_\_\_.

*They slight us and slander us. We love and serve each other.*