

HOW TO BE A CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN

AUGUST 14, 2016

INTRODUCTION

1 Peter 4 begins with an encouragement to live in the Spirit, not the flesh, and it ends with an admonition not to be surprised when suffering comes. Sandwiched between those two concepts is a description of what a contagious Christian looks like – one who prays, loves deeply, and serves others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some people are obsessed by the ‘end of the world’, to such a degree that we have movies like ‘The Day After Tomorrow’ (global warming), ‘2012’ (global cataclysm) and television shows like ‘Doomsday Preppers’ (people preparing to survive a natural disaster, financial collapse or nuclear war) and ‘The Walking Dead’ (surviving a zombie apocalypse). Why do you think people are fascinated with ‘end of the world’ scenarios?

2. Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 (NIV). Peter begins this section by stating that “The end of all things is near.” What do you think that means? (See Romans 13:11, James 5:8, 1 John 2:18).

3. What actions are all believers to do in verses 7-10?

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4. Peter challenges believers to be alert and of sober-mind so we can pray. How might a lack of either or both of these affect how we pray?

5. Above all, we are to love one another *deeply*. The word for ‘deeply’ carries the meaning of ‘fervently’, ‘without ceasing’, or ‘stretched out’. List some practical ways you could (will!) show this kind of love to others at Fellowship.

6. What does it mean to ‘offer hospitality’? Is it limited to having someone over to your house for a meal? If not, what are other ways to be hospitable?

7. Why do you think Peter felt the need to add ‘without grumbling’?

Study Questions for Community Groups

8. As part of our series, *The Power of God*, we looked at spiritual gifts. Verse 10 says that you are to use your gifts faithfully. What could it look like if you used your gifts this way?
9. There are only two gifts listed here (speaking/teaching and serving), as opposed to the larger list from 1 Corinthians 12. Why do you think Peter highlighted these two gifts?
10. Read this passage in The Message version (if you don't have The Message, it's listed below). Does it change or give you a new perspective on these verses?

APPLICATION

As you are going through this week, meditate on 1 Peter 4:7a – “*The end of all things is near.*” Share with your group at your next meeting if/how keeping this verse made you a contagious Christian.

SCRIPTURE

⁷*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.* ⁸*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* ⁹*Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.* ¹⁰*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.* ¹¹*If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NIV)

Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help. That way, God's bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and He'll get all the credit as the One mighty in everything—encores to the end of time. Oh, yes!

1 Peter 4:7-11 (MSG)