

# Your God-Given Gifts

1 Peter 4:7-11

Sunday July 11, 2021

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*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others,  
as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

—1 Peter 4:10

As traveling by car, especially on highways, became a central part of American society by the 1960s, so did accidental injuries and preventable deaths due to inadequate emergency medical care after car accidents. Doctors found themselves overextended and unable to help with the growing crisis. New medical workers were needed to take some of the triage efforts and pre-diagnostic tasks off the doctors' plates. Around the same time, military medics returning from medical service in Vietnam provided a new blueprint for emergency medical care back home in the states.

Until the mid-1960s, most medical first responders were funeral home workers doing double duty. Hearses, when not being used to transport the dead, were used as ambulances. Drivers were young and had basic first aid training. My father worked in a local funeral home in my hometown of Mishawaka, Indiana, soon after his high school graduation. He was one of these local, early first responders.

A 1966 National Academy of Sciences report entitled "*Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society*" revealed some eye-opening findings. The funeral home drivers who acted as first responders had a wide range of experiences responding to accidents. Consistent and standardized treatment protocols were lacking, and so was efficient transportation to and from the scene of an emergency.

The 1966 report from the National Academy of Sciences suggested the United States needed a corps of emergency medical first responders. Just as various state legislatures and federal agencies began to form necessary structures to create local EMS (Emergency Medical Services), Vietnam veterans began to return home.

Former Vietnam War medics formed the core of early Emergency Medical Services in local communities across the United States. Their war training and experience provided a good foundation for a system and culture of medical first responders. They had so much more to

offer than the untrained funeral home workers of the early 1960s. The war medics helped address the growing realization of researchers that the wounded in combat in Vietnam actually had a better chance of survival than those getting injured in car accidents in the U.S.

The former war medics used the gifts they had been given during their time overseas. They used their training, skills, and experiences to help states and communities across the U.S. develop highly effective Emergency Medical Services. Today, their use of their gifts allows us the privilege of having the finest Emergency Medical Services in the world.

1 Peter 4:7-11 encourages us to engage with one another in such a way that we love each other, and we use our gifts to edify one another. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). Rather than watching God and others work, we are called on by God to serve others. We cannot sit back and merely observe or absorb. We need to engage.

Early in my walk with Christ, when I used gifts and experiences God had given me, I found incredible fulfillment. The satisfaction of seeing God use me (sometimes in spite of myself) gave me courage to use other gifts, experiences, and talents for the Lord.

Like the Vietnam War medical veterans, we should use our past experiences, training, and resources to build up others. What can you use? What experiences, training, and resources are gifts you have to help others?

**We should press into God's work. We should use our God-given gifts for the good of others and God's glory!**

## Today's Prayer

*Thank you Father for the training, experiences, gifts, passions, and talents that you have uniquely given me. I commit to use them for your glory and the good of others. Use me to point others to your Son! —Amen*