



THE ORCHARD

Leave It to the Lord

1 Peter 4:1-19

Pastor Tom Yoon

August 23, 2026

Introduction:

- All of us have a limited number of days left on earth.
 - The problem is, no one knows how much time they have.
 - Whether it's 50 years.
 - Or 20 years.
 - Or 2 years.
 - We just don't know.
- But here's what we do know.
 - It's possible to waste the time we've been given.
 - To chase after things that really don't matter.
 - Even to give our energy to things that have little value.
- That's why in our passage, Peter warns us about wasting our time.
 - Listen to chapter 4 verse 2.
 - **“Live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.” 1 Peter 4:2**
- Peter writes about the rest of our time in the flesh.
 - He's speaking about the rest of our time in this world.
 - And instead of wasting our time on human passions, he tells us to live for God's will.



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- Reading this, it made me wonder:
 - “Am I spending my time living for God’s will?”
 - What does it even look like for someone to spend their time, living for God’s will?
- In our passage today, Peter answers this very question.
 - And he shows us 3 ways we can live for God’s will and not human passions.
 - 3 ways we can make the most of our time.

Point 1:

- First, we see how we can make the most of our time by leaving our old way of sin.
- Take a look at verse 3.
 - **“For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.”** 1 Peter 4:3
 - Peter says the time is past, for sinful practices.
 - In other words, the Bible is teaching how chasing after sin is a waste of time.
 - Sin may bring immediate pleasure.
 - But in the end.
 - It adds nothing but destruction to your life.



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- It's like mindless scrolling on your phone.
 - You scroll because it brings immediate entertainment.
 - But then you realize you just wasted 45 minutes watching a random person shopping at Costco.
 - That's what it's like to live in sin.
 - It feels good in the moment, but it leaves you empty.
- That's why Peter gives a list of sins.
 - He wants to make sure we don't go back to our old way of life.
- He begins with sensuality.
 - Sensuality is doing what feels good, even though it's morally wrong.
 - It means you cross boundaries you shouldn't cross.
 - It could be looking at explicit material.
 - Or irresponsible spending on credit cards.
 - Or compulsive gambling.
 - Or a married person signing up on Tinder, just to see who's out there.
 - Sensuality is unrestrained conduct.
- Passions refer to sinful desires.
 - It means you allow your sinful cravings to control your life.



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- It could be an unhealthy craving for approval.
- So, you become a people pleaser.
- Or wanting to control.
- So, you lash out in anger when you don't get your way.
- Or craving personal comfort.
- So, you become selfish with your time.
- Sensuality is about crossing moral boundaries.
- Passion is about being ruled by what you want.

- I think we all know the next one.
 - Drunkenness refers to consuming too much alcohol.
 - It's a lack of self-control.

- Orgies and drinking parties refer to being wild and going crazy.
 - It means you want to forget about God's word for a weekend.
 - It's someone who says:
 - "I'm going ignore God's word for a night, and do whatever I want."

- Lawless idolatry refers to worshipping false gods.
 - In Peter's day, it referred to worshipping pagan idols.
 - In our day it refers to putting:
 - Money
 - Or success
 - Or comfort.



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- Or children.
 - Or security.
 - Over trusting God.
 - And worshipping Jesus Christ.
- Peter commands us to leave all these behind.
- King Solomon was a man who had absolute power and incredible wealth.
 - And he decided to fill his heart with all the pleasures of this world.
 - He spent several years chasing after every desire in his heart.
 - He drank the best wine.
 - Created the best gardens.
 - Built beautiful buildings.
 - Obtained enormous amounts of gold and silver.
 - He had 700 wives and 300 concubines.
 - And in the end.
 - Do you know what he says?
 - He says in Ecclesiastes 2 verse 11:
 - **“And behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained...”**
- And this is exactly what Peter is telling us as well.
 - Peter commands us to leave our sins behind.



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- Why?
- Because they can never truly satisfy our hearts.
- You may feel that you're missing out by resisting sin.
 - But you're really not.
 - You're actually protecting yourself from the pain and destruction that sin can bring.
- And this was really important for Peter's readers.
 - Because during this time, Christians were suffering for their faith.
 - Peter says in verse 4 how they were being maligned or insulted.
 - Some Christians were even killed.
- And they were most likely wondering if their godly way of life was really worth their time.
 - Didn't Jesus promise eternal life?
 - Why were the wicked prospering and Christian's suffering?
 - It's possible their suffering was making them doubt if living for Christ was worth the effort.
- But listen to how Peter answers this.
 - He says in verse 5:



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- **“They malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”**
- Peter is basically saying:
- “I know there are people who insulted you and persecuted you.”
- “But you have to remember.”
- “In the end of time.”
- “They will be judged.”
- “Even wicked people who died without judgement will have to give an account.”
- “Because God judges the living and the dead.”
- And then in verse 6 he speaks about believers who passed away.
 - He writes:
 - **“For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.”** 1 Peter 4:6
 - Do you see what Peter is saying?
 - The gospel was preached to people.
 - And they became Christian believers.
 - And after believing the gospel.
 - These Christian believers died.
 - That’s why Peter says they were judged in the flesh like everyone else.



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- They experienced physical death.
 - But Peter reminds them:
 - Because they believed Jesus Christ.
 - They're living right now in the spirit.
 - The gospel didn't fail.
 - Death didn't defeat them.
- And so, Peter encourages them to leave their old way of sin.
- I would guess that most Christians, maybe even all Christians, at one point might wonder if all their sacrifice for Christ is truly worth it.
 - Have you ever wondered this?
 - Whether it's worth it to resist temptation.
 - Whether it's worth it to forgive.
 - Whether it's worth it to stay faithful in marriage.
 - Whether it's worth it to serve and sacrifice.
- Peter's answer is yes.
 - It's absolutely worth it.
 - Because this life isn't all there is.
 - At times, your sacrifice for Christ may look foolish.
 - But one day everything will be made right.
 - Sin will be judged.
 - Christ will return.
 - The dead will rise.



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- And when the chief shepherd appears, he'll give you the unfading crown of glory.
- And those who trusted in Christ will live with him forever.
- Your labor is not in vain.

- You may feel that it's a busy season in life.
 - But remember this.
 - The time you have, wasn't given to you mainly to fulfill your own desires.
 - It was given to you, so you might live for God's will.
 - Yes, we must rest.
 - Yes, you can watch Netflix.
 - Yes, our capacity to serve may be different at different times.
 - But let's not make the mistake of letting another day go by messing around with sin or living for our sinful desires.
 - Instead let's make our life count for Jesus Christ.

- Here we see, how we can make the most of our time, by leaving our old life of sin.

Point 2:

- Second, we see how we can make the most of our time by living with the end in view.



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- Take a look at verse 7,
 - It says:
 - **The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.** 1 Peter 4:7
- In this verse, Peter writes about living with the end in view.
 - In other words, he encourages his readers to think about the return of Christ.
 - To remember that Jesus Christ is going to make all things right.
 - That Jesus is bringing us to an imperishable inheritance what will never fade.
 - That no matter what happens in this life, the story ends well for those who trust in him.
- And because we know how the story ends, he tells us to be sober-minded and self-controlled.
 - These two words have the meaning of thinking clearly.
 - It has the meaning of being calm.
 - It's the opposite of fear and panic.
- That's why Peter also talks about prayer.
 - Because clear thinking is what leads to prayer and not panic.
 - When you face a difficult situation.



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- Instead of getting worried.
 - A sober-minded person is someone who seeks and trusts the Lord.
- In 1 Samuel 30, we're told a story about David, during the time he was running from Saul.
 - And during one occasion, while David and his men were away, when they came back to the place they were staying.
 - They found their city was burned.
 - And their women and children were captured by the Amalekites.
 - David's men were devastated.
 - And Bible says how David's men become so bitter that some even spoke of stoning David.
- Can you imagine how David felt?
 - Saul was trying to assassinate him.
 - Their wives and children were captured.
 - Their homes were destroyed.
 - And his men were now speaking of stoning him.
- But do you know what the Bible says.
 - It doesn't say David began to panic.
 - Or blame others.
 - Or make excuses.



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- Rather, in 1 Samuel 30 verse 6, it says:
- **“But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.”**
- And then it says:
- **“David inquired of the Lord...”**
- He calmly trusted in God.
- And asked the Lord what he might do.
- And you know what?
- They were able to save the women and children.

- This is a helpful picture of what Peter is commanding us.
 - And what it looks like to be sober-minded and self-controlled for the sake of prayer.

- When we get laid off.
 - Or get an unexpected medical bill.
 - When you face unfair criticism.

- Your natural reaction may be panic, and to start thinking the worst.
 - “Oh no, I lost my job.”
 - “I’m going to have to sell the house.”
 - “And become homeless.”
 - “And live on the street.”
 - That’s not sober-minded thinking.
 - That’s fear and panic.



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- But when you face an unexpected situation.
 - Remember that Jesus is still on his throne.
 - That he's still working in your life.
 - And most importantly.
 - Remember that no matter what happens in this life, your inheritance is secure in Christ.
 - And when you do, it'll lead you to prayer and not panic.
- Are you facing a difficult situation today?
 - You may be tempted to act in fear or panic.
 - But ask yourself:
 - "What would it look like for me to be sober-minded?"
 - And then ask:
 - What are the promises God has made to me that I need to believe?
 - And then take time to pray and ask God for direction and wisdom.
- If you're controlled by fear.
 - You're going to waste a lot of time worrying for no reason.
- But if you remember the imperishable inheritance God has promised to you.
 - You'll be able to live with peace.



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- Here we see how we can make the most of our time, when we live in view of the end.

Point 3:

- We can make the most of our time on earth by leaving our life of sin.
 - We can make the most of our time by living with the end in view.
 - And third, we can make the most of our time by loving one another more deeply.
- Take a look at verse 8.
 - It says:
 - **“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly...”**
- Peter commands us to love others earnestly.
 - It means we don’t settle for shallow love.
 - But we keep stretching ourselves to love others more deeply.
 - It means we keep adding fuel to the fire.
 - It means we need to grow in love.
- Do you feel like you’ve grown in love?
 - Consider the last 5 years?
 - Or the last 10 years?



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- Do you feel you're more loving today than you were 5 years ago?
- We can spend years growing in bitterness.
 - Refusing to forgive.
 - Shutting people out.
 - Becoming a cold person.
 - But do you see what the Bible is saying?
 - That's a terrible way to spend your time.
 - Rather, Peter shows how we need to grow in love.
 - And how that's the best way we can use our remaining years on earth.
- In fact, growing in love is one of the most important ways we can use our time.
 - Again, look at verse 8.
 - **"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly..."**
 - Love is given priority over Peter's other commands.
 - The Apostle Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians 13.
 - **"So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."** 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Pastor, I want to grow in love.
 - What can I do?
 - Should I watch *The Notebook* once a week?
 - Or maybe watch *The Titanic* before going to LIFE Group?



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- Listen to My Heart Will Go On?
 - It's not by watching a romantic movie.
- But here, Peter shows how we can grow in love by covering over a multitude of sins.
 - **“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”** 1 Peter 4:8
- Peter isn't saying we should be okay with sin.
 - Or that we shouldn't confront sin.
 - Of course we need to do that.
- But to cover over sins, means we learn to forgive.
 - It means we don't hold on to bitterness.
 - It means we don't keep a record of wrong.
 - It means we let it go.
- Further, it also means we don't spread someone's sin to others.
 - Just like Christ covers our shame.
 - It means we also cover the shame of others.
 - It means we don't ruin the reputation of others.
 - It means we don't join the text chain that's bashing our co-worker.



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- In Genesis 9, we're told that Noah got drunk and was laying naked in his tent.
 - And one of Noah's sons, Ham, saw his father in this state.
 - And instead of covering his father's shame, he began to talk about it with his brothers.
 - We're not told exactly what Ham said.
 - But can you imagine what an immature son might've said?
 - "Brothers, father is naked and drunk."
 - "You got to go see this."
 - But in contrast.
 - His two other brothers walked backwards with a blanket and covered their father's nakedness.
 - They covered their father's shame.
- **"Love covers a multitude of sins."**
 - And when we learn to cover others.
 - We can grow in love.
- We can also grow in love by showing hospitality to others.
 - Take a look at verse 9.
 - **"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."**
1 Peter 4:9
 - Hospitality can be opening our home to others.
 - But it can also be taking someone out for a meal.
 - Or taking time to listen.



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- Or pursuing a friendship.
 - Or noticing the person who looks alone.
 - It's about making time for others.
- I've been so encouraged by many people in our church showing hospitality to others.
 - But let's remember, this command isn't just for a select group of people.
 - It's a command for every Christian believer.
- And Peter also warns us against grumbling.
 - **"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."**
 - Let's not make it a chore we need to check off.
 - Rather, let's ask the Lord to give us a heart that cares.
 - For a heart that genuinely wants to welcome others.
- Now, there are some people who can meet several people a year.
 - But it may be that you can only focus on a couple of people a year.
 - And you know what, that's okay.
 - We all have different capacities.
 - What's important is that we obey this command.
 - And so, please consider, who's that 1 person you can show hospitality to this coming year?



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- Ask the Lord to show you one person you can serve and show hospitality.
 - And when you do.
 - You'll be able to grow in love.
- Finally, Peter says we can grow in love, as we use our gifts to serve.
 - Take a look at verse 10.
 - **“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...”** 1 Peter 4:10
- I said this before.
 - But there's not one person who's not needed in our church.
 - Every single one of you has a purpose in our church.
 - There are no useless stones in God's temple.
 - In fact, it's when everyone in the church serves together, that we can shine the brightest.
 - The church is at its best, when each person is doing their part.
- That's what it means to be a good steward of what God has given to you.
 - When you use your gifts for others.
 - You're being faithful with what God has entrusted to you.



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- But Bible scholar Edward Clowney also gives us a warning about our gifts.
 - He says that sometimes, discovering spiritual gifts becomes more about self-fulfillment rather than serving others.
 - It becomes more about self-discovery, and taking personality tests rather than focusing on building others up.
 - It becomes self-focused rather than others focused.
- One way we can put others first is by serving to fill a need.
 - It may not be the most comfortable.
 - But when we use our gifts, even though it's not our best gift.
 - When we use our time.
 - When we sacrifice through a difficult season for others.
 - That's how we can grow in love.
- How can we love others more deeply?
 - By covering over a multitude of sins.
 - By showing hospitality.
 - And by serving to put the needs of others first.

Conclusion:



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- You may be here today.
 - And you might be saying.
 - Pastor Tom.
 - I've been failing in sin, and I've made some really big mistakes.
 - I've been living with fear instead of living in view of the end.
 - I've been serving myself, more than others.
 - I've wasted so much time.
- And as you look back at your past, you may wish you could change the past.
 - Sadly, we can't change the past.
 - But the good news is that our God is a redeeming God.
 - And he's able to restore.
 - He's able to heal.
 - And he's able to redeem our time.
 - In Joel 2 verse 25, God gave his people an awesome promise.
 - He says:
 - **"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten."** Joel 2:25.
 - God is able to take a broken past and give it a faithful future.
 - It may be you've wasted part of your life.
 - But you don't have to waste the rest of your life.



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- When Jesus was on this earth.
- He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.
 - He was hungry.
 - He was alone.
 - But he refused to give himself over to sin.
- And when he went to the cross.
 - He knew it would be the most painful agony he'd ever face.
 - But he didn't panic.
 - Instead, he prayed:
 - **"Not my will, but yours be done."** Luke 22:42
- And on the cross.
 - Jesus showed the greatest love of all.
 - He bore our sins.
 - And carried our shame.
 - He covered over a multitude of sins.
 - He didn't come to be served.
 - But he came to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
- And so, let's not waste any more time.
 - But as we look to Christ.



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- Let's leave our old life of sin.
- Let's live with the end in view.
- And let's love one another more deeply.
- As Christ loved us.