

1 Peter 5:1-14

Who is Peter addressing (v. 1)? Elders. The idea of the elder came into church life from Jewish culture (Exodus 3:16; 12:21; 19:7). The word "elder" simply speaks of the maturity and wisdom that an older person should have -- making them qualified for leadership. In its application, it is more about wisdom and maturity than a specific age. It had been the practice of Paul and Barnabas to appoint elders in the churches they had founded (Acts 14:23).

How do you apply this passage if you are too young to be an elder? The principle behind Peter's exhortation was to be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care. You don't have to be an elder to have a flock.

Where might you find yourself in a position of being a shepherd? What flock might fall under your care? Family members...Sunday School students....church youth group....those you mentor...etc. Any superior – subordinate relationship.

Peter is writing from a position of authority. What observations do you have about Peter's attitude (v. 1)? Peter is in a position of authority but he doesn't lord it over them. He appeals to them vs. giving orders. He humbly emphasizes his association with them as a "fellow-elder" who "exhorts" them rather than issuing a decree.

1 Peter is written during a time of great suffering and persecution under Nero. In times of persecution, it takes great courage to be a step-up leader. Those who are leaders make themselves vulnerable to attack. Peter therefore urges them not to shrink back but to step forward and carry out their God-given calling in faith. There is a cost to leadership. In Peter's day it could very easily be death. **How might that compare to our day?**

What should be some right motives involved in shepherding a flock (vv. 2-3)? A willingness to lead based on sensing that God wants you to lead. A desire to please and glorify God. A recognition that your flock is a God-given privilege and responsibility. A realization that if you are in a leadership position it is because God put you there.

What might be some wrong motives? Power, prestige, financial gain. Some people may be strongly motivated to lead but for the wrong reasons, e.g. the scribes and Pharisees.

What is the payoff for faithfully shepherding the flock (v. 4)? *"You will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."* An eternal reward. We don't know too much about the promised crowns of scripture but we do know they will be ample recompense for any tears, trials and sufferings we have experienced in this life.

What direction does Peter give to the young men (v. 5)? Be submissive....obey your elders....follow their leadership. Note the unconditional nature of this command. Young men need to learn first to be faithful followers, especially in adverse circumstances.

What are all of us supposed to do (vv. 5-7)? Humble ourselves toward both God and man.

Why is humility important? Humility is the key to receiving the power to live the Christian life. James 4:6; Proverbs 3:34 "...for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." "Grace" not only implies unmerited favor in salvation but also the present power to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. The humble heart honors God. The humble heart lines up with God's own heart. The humble heart acknowledges the need for God.

Humility is demonstrated by submission. It is the ability to cheerfully put away our own agenda for God's, even if God's agenda is expressed through another person. The key to unity and harmony in the church, the workplace and the family is humility.

A missionary to India once said, "If I were to pick out two phrases necessary for spiritual growth, I would pick out these: 'I don't know' and 'I am sorry'. And both phrases are the evidences of deep humility."

What might be some marks of a humble person?

- A willingness to perform the lowest and littlest service for Jesus' sake.
- A consciousness of our own inability to do anything apart from God.

- The willingness to be ignored of men.
- Not so much self-hating or deprecation as self-forgetfulness and being truly others-centered vs. self-centered.

What are some of the keys to becoming a humble person? Time and experience and spiritual maturity. Having an accurate perception of God and myself. Understanding how big God is and how small I am.....And yet He knows me by name, loves me and sent His son to die for me. Knowing / realizing the significance of what Christ has done and how undeserving I am. Preaching the gospel to yourself every day. Pursuing an understanding of the concept of Grace. Humility begins by simply understanding and acknowledging there is a God enthroned in the heavens, and *I am not Him!*

Can a humble person be a great leader? Yes. Christ is our prime example.

Why you think God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (v. 5)? Grace and pride are eternal enemies. In the eyes of God, pride is the most detestable of sins. God is the generous giver of grace but He will not honor the proud, the one who opposes Him.

What are the implications of “in due time” (v. 6)? If God has us in a humble place at the present, we must submit to God's plan. He knows the due time to exalt us, though we often think we know that time better than God does.

Why is casting all your anxiety on God an action of humility (v. 7)? It implies trust in Him and not in myself. It acknowledges my total dependence on Him. It is the God-given solution to worry.

What additional instructions does Peter give us (v. 8)? Be self-controlled and alert. **Why?** Because there's a battle going on. Our enemy is ever present and formidable. **What kind of battle is Peter talking about?** A spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12). The battle is largely invisible but nevertheless very real. It is a battle for our hearts and minds. Our adversary is deceptive, cunning and powerful. Constant vigilance is called for.

v. 8 *Like a roaring lion*: For Christians, Satan is a lion who may roar but who has been de-fanged at the cross (Colossians 2:15). Yet the sound of his roar - his deceptive lies - is still potent and he has the power to devour souls and rob Christians of their effectiveness.

What is one tactic we are directed to use while engaging in spiritual warfare against Satan (v. 9)? Resist. Satan's desire is to get the Christian to doubt, to deny, to disregard, and to disobey what God has said. The Greek word translated "resist" means to defend oneself. James 4:7 "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" 1 Peter 5:9 "*Resist him, standing firm in the faith.*"

How do we resist? Christ is our model. He quoted scripture. He prayed. He recalled the promises of God. Paul described the Armor of God to be used in the battle (Ephesians 6:10).

What other tactics are we called upon to use in the spiritual battle? Flee! "Scripture urges believers to flee from various evils (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22), but nowhere are we advised to flee from the devil. That would be a futile effort." (Hiebert)

What should motivate and encourage us in this battle to "resist and stand firm" (v. 9)? One of Satan's tools is to discourage us with the thought that our sufferings are unique....that no one else has as much trouble as we do. Peter debunks that myth by reminding his readers that other brothers and sisters are suffering along with us in other parts of the world. We are not "lone rangers" riding the trail of suffering by ourselves; but rather we are part of the cavalry of Christ, enduring hardship as a team.

What was Peter's purpose in writing this letter (v. 12)? He was exhorting the readers to stand firm in their faith in the face of suffering and persecution since suffering for the Savior is part of being a recipient of God's grace.¹

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on 1 Peter, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>)