

1 Peter Chapter 5

Verses 1-5: This section introduces the charge to the “elders” (Greek, presbuteros), a term borrowed from Israel (Exodus 18:21), to describe the men who ruled in the church (1 Tim. 3). The term is synonymous with bishop (Greek episkopos), and is a term often overlapping for pastor in some forms of Protestant church government.

“A crown of glory” is promised to faithful pastors. “When the chief Shepherd shall appear:” The rewards will be realized when Jesus returns for His church.

1 Peter 5:1 "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:"

“The elders which are among you I exhort”: Times of suffering and persecution in the church call for the noblest leadership. The “elder” is the same leader as the “shepherd” (verse 2), and “Guardian” (2:25), or “overseer”. The word “elder” emphasizes their spiritual maturity. As in almost all other uses of the word (with the exception of Peter’s reference to himself here and John’s in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1), Peter wrote in the plural, indicating it was usual to have a plurality of godly leaders who oversaw and fed the flock.

“Elder ... witness ... partaker of the glory”: Peter loaded this exhortation to the elders with some rich motivation.

1. First, there was motivation by identification with Peter, who refers to himself as a fellow-elder. As such, he could give relevant exhortation to the spiritual leaders.
2. Second, there was motivation by authority. By noting that he had been an eyewitness of Christ’s suffering, Peter was affirming his apostleship (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:21-22).
3. Third, there was the motivation by anticipation. The fact that Christian leaders will one day receive from the hand of Christ a reward for their service should be a stimulant to faithful duty.

“Partaker of the glory that shall be revealed”: Peter, apostle, elder (pastor), and eyewitness of Jesus’ sufferings, had also briefly beheld the transfigured person of Jesus Christ, His face shining as the sun and His garment as white as the light (Matt. 17:2).

He, with James and John, had a fleeting glimpse of Jesus’ effulgent majesty. When His glory is fully revealed at His return, those who have suffered for Him and those who have faithfully served Him will share forever His eternal glory (Rev. 2:10; 3:12, 21).

Peter is speaking to those who have some authority in this verse. He separates them out from the average Christian, because their responsibility is greater. He is aware that they are not only responsible for themselves, but for the Christians in their congregation. Peter related to them because of the great responsibility of the church placed upon him.

1 Peter 5:2 "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

“Feed the flock of God”: After the motivation (verse 1), comes the exhortation (verses 2-4). Since the primary objective of shepherding is feeding, that is teaching, every elder must be able to teach (John 21:15-17). Involved with the feeding of the flock is also protecting the flock (Acts 20:28-30). In both duties, it must be remembered that the flock belongs to God, not to the pastor. God entrusts some of His flock to the pastor of a church to lead, care for, and feed (verse 3).

He is not speaking of physical food, but the food of the Word of God. They are not to minister because of obligation to do so, but from love of the brethren. The minister must desire to help others. This should be his motivation for ministering, and not because they are compelled to do it. Ministry is not an occupation, it is a call.

“Not by constraint, but willingly”: Specifically, Peter may be warning the elders against a first danger, laziness. The divine calling (1 Cor. 9:16), along with the urgency of the task (Rom. 1:15), should prevent laziness and indifference. (2 Cor. 9:7).

“Not for filthy lucre”: False teachers are always motivated by a second danger, money, and use their power and position to rob people of their own wealth. Scripture is clear that churches should pay their shepherds well (1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18); but a desire for undeserved money must never be a motive for ministers to serve.

Those who minister because of the salary they receive are not in the ministry for the right reason. The call of God on ministers' lives should be so great that they would minister if there was no payment for it at all. We all know they need a salary to live, but it should not be their reason for ministering.

1 Peter 5:3 "Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being examples to the flock."

“Neither as being lords over”: This is the third major temptation for a pastor:

1. Laziness (verse 2);
2. Dishonest finance (verse 2);
3. Demagoguery.

In this context; “lording it over” means to dominate someone or some situation. It implies leadership by manipulation and intimidation. Rather, true spiritual leadership is by example (see 1 Tim. 4:12).

The high priest and the priest's office in the temple had been used many times to rule over the people. This is not the way Jesus taught the leaders of the Christians to be. The greatest among you should be the servant, is what He taught.

The ministers should not glory in their authority, but should live godly lives before the people as an example of how the people were to live. The requirements for those in authority are greater than for the average Christian, because they are operating in knowledge.

James 4:17 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin."

1 Peter 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

“Chief Shepherd shall appear”: Jesus Christ, the “chief Shepherd” (John 10:11; Heb. 13:20), will return to reward His faithful under shepherds with “a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” This special reward for faithful, godly spiritual leaders is one of five crowns mentioned in Scripture for living, faithful service (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10, 3:11).

Notice the word "receive" in the verse above. The crown belongs to Jesus, but He puts it on our head. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. Anything He gave you would be for all of eternity. When Jesus (Chief Shepherd), appears means at the coming of Christ.

“Crown of glory”: All the crowns describe certain characteristics of eternal life.

1. The imperishable wreath that celebrates salvation’s victory over corruption (1 Cor. 9:25);
2. The righteous wreath that celebrates salvation’s victory over unrighteousness (2 Tim. 4:8);
3. The unfading wreath;
4. The wreath of life that celebrates salvation’s victory over death (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10);
5. The wreath of exultation which celebrates salvation’s victory over Satan and mankind’s persecution of believers.

1 Peter 5:5 "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the Humble."

“Submit yourselves unto the elder”: The elders are the pastors, the spiritual leaders of the church (verse 1). The church members, especially the young people, are to give honor, deference, and respect to spiritual leadership. Submission is a fundamental attitude of spiritual maturity (1 Cor. 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Titus 3:1-2; Heb. 13:7, 17). Lack of submission to the elders not only makes the ministry difficult, but also forfeits God’s grace (as noted in the quote from Prov. 3:34).

This is saying that the Christian, who has been one for a long time, has probably studied the Word of God more than one who is a new Christian. It would be best for the new Christian to learn from the elder.

“Be clothed with humility”: To “clothe yourselves” literally means to tie something on oneself with a knot or a bow. This term was often used of a slave putting on an apron over his clothes, in

order to keep his clothes clean. "Humility" is literally "lowly mindedness," an attitude that one is not too good to serve.

Humility was not considered a virtue by the ancient world, any more than it is today. Those who believe they already know everything cannot be helped. They are too proud to receive help. To humble yourself before God is the first step to receiving from God.

James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

1 Peter 5:6 "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

"Under the mighty hand of God": This is an Old Testament symbol of the power of God working in the experience of men, always accomplishing His sovereign purpose (Exodus 3:19-20; Job 30:20-21; Ezek. 20:33, 37; Micah 6:8). The readers of Peter's letter were not to fight the sovereign hand of God, even when it brought them through testing.

Moses was one of the humblest men who ever lived, and we know that God exalted Moses greatly. Moses was the only one God revealed Himself to by bringing Moses to the mountain top for 40 days at a time to fellowship with.

Peter remembered the Lord Jesus' statement (in Luke 14).

Luke 14:11 "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Matthew 18:4 "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

"Exalt you in due time": God will lift up the suffering, submissive believers in His wisely appointed time. One of the evidences of lack of submission and humility is impatience with God in His work of humbling believers.

1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

"Casting all your care upon him": This verse partly quotes and partly interprets (Psalm 55:22). "Casting" means "to throw something on something," as to throw a blanket on a donkey (Luke 19:35). Christians are to cast all their discontent, discouragement, despair, and suffering on the Lord, and trust Him for knowing what He's doing with their lives (1 Sam. 1:10-18).

Along with submission (verse 5), and humility (verses 5-6), trust in God is the third attitude necessary for victorious Christian living.

If the problem is too big for God to handle, it is far too big for me to handle. We see how foolish it is on our part to try to take the cares of the world upon our own shoulders. God is able to take care of you and me. This is a beautiful promise from the Old Testament.

Psalms 55:22 "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

The righteous are His, because they have put on the righteousness of Christ.

Matthew 6:25-26 "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"

“Be vigilant”: Strong confidence in God’s sovereign care does not mean that the believer may live carelessly. The outside evil forces which come against the Christian demand that the Christian stay alert.

The roaring lion, here, is speaking of the devil. The devil would love to catch us unaware (not vigilant). We must be like the 5 wise virgins who stayed ready to meet their master. This does not mean that you must stop living. It means that we must keep our sound mind operating at full capacity. We should not take drugs, or get drunk on alcohol and let our guard down.

Satan and his forces are always active, looking for opportunities to overwhelm the believer with temptation, persecution, and discouragement (Psalms 22:13; 104:21; Ezek. 22:25). Satan sows discord, accuses God to men, men to God, and men to men.

He will do what he can to drag the Christian out of fellowship with Christ and out of Christian service. And he constantly accuses believers before God’s throne, attempting to convince God to abandon them (Job 1:6-12; Revelation 12:10).

Be vigilant, ever watchful, lest you be caught unprepared to meet Jesus. Notice "as a roaring lion". The old devil is not a lion; he is just trying to pretend that he is. Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The devil would like to ruin your life. Do not let him.

1 Peter 5:9 "Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

"Steadfast" in the verse above, means rock-like firmness. We see then, that our strength to withstand the devil must be in the name of Jesus, and in the power of His shed blood. We must stand firmly on the Rock who is Jesus Christ. The problems of the world may be swirling around us, but the knowledge that we are built on the Rock will help us have enough faith to stand.

“Resist” means “to stand against”. The way to resist the devil is not with special formulas, or words directed at him and his demons, but by remaining firm in the Christian faith. This means to continue to live in accord with the truth of God’s Word. As the believer knows sound doctrine and obeys God’s truth, Satan is withstood (Eph. 6:17).

“The same afflictions”: The whole brotherhood, the entire Christian community, is always going through similar trials brought on by the roaring lion that never stops trying to devour believers (1 Cor. 10:13).

The world is built on the sand, and when the storms come, they fall. Our faith in the power of Jesus will keep us from harm. He (Jesus), fought the devil with the Word of God. We must fight the devil the same way, with the Word of God.

1 Peter 5:10 "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you]."

“After that ye have suffered a while”: Christians are to live with the understanding that God’s purposes realized in the future require some pain in the present. While the believer is being personally attacked by the enemy, he is being personally perfected by the Lord, as the next phrase attests (1:6; 2 Cor. 1:3-7).

“Who hath called us”: As always in the New Testament epistles, an effectual, saving call.

It is by God’s grace we are saved, not of our own doing. The grace offered to every person by the crucifixion of Jesus on Calvary, requires nothing to receive, except to believe in Jesus Christ.

In this life, we will have tribulation (suffering). These troubles come to make us strong in the Lord. The trials that we overcome establish us in the faith. We grow in the grace of the Lord every time we face a problem and overcome it by the Word of God.

“Perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle”: These four words all speak of strength and resoluteness. God is working through the Christian’s struggles to produce strength of character. (In verses 5-14), Peter elucidated briefly, but in wonderful richness, those attitudes which are necessary for the believer to grow in Christ to effective maturity. These include:

1. Submission (verse 5);
2. Humility (verses 5-6);
3. Trust (verse 7);
4. Sober mindedness (verse 8);
5. Vigilant defense (verses 8-9);
6. Hope (verse 10);
7. Worship (verse 11);
8. Faithfulness (verse 12);

9. Affection (verses 13-14).

1 Peter 5:11 "To him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The "Him" here, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory is not ours, since we did nothing to receive the grace, but believe. The glory is God's. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

1 Peter 5:12 "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

Silvanus is the same person as Silas in Acts. Paul and Silas were imprisoned together for the gospel. It is believed that he probably was the one who brought this letter. Faithful brother means that he was a fellow Christian. The last words of Peter here, explain that the letter was brief, but was to "exhort" (call near), them in the grace of God. Peter knew first-hand that this was the true grace of God that saves us all.

Silvanus "Silas", was the one who traveled with Paul and is often mentioned in his epistles. He was a prophet (Acts 15:31), and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37); he was apparently the one who wrote down Peter's words and later took this letter to its intended recipients.

1 Peter 5:13 "The [church that is] at Babylon, elected together with [you], saluteth you; and [so doth] Marcus my son."

"Church" is the assembly of the believers and refers to a church in Rome (Rev. chapters 17 – 18).

"Marcus my son": Mark, called John Mark, was the spiritual son of Peter. Tradition indicates that Peter helped him write the Gospel of Mark (Acts 12:12). This is the same Mark who once failed Paul (Acts 13:13; 15:38-39; Col. 4:10), but later became useful again for ministry (2 Tim. 4:11).

1 Peter 5:14 "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace [be] with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen."

The kiss, spoken of here, is not a passionate kiss. This was a kiss of fellowship between brothers, or sisters and brothers in Christ. This was a kiss (probably on the cheek), of brotherly love. Notice, who the peace is with. It is with those who are in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the King of Peace. If we have Jesus in us, we are full of peace.

1 Peter Chapter 5 Questions

1. What does Peter call himself in verse 1?
2. What had Peter been a witness of?
3. Who is Peter speaking to in verse 1?
4. Why does Peter separate them from the average Christian?
5. Why could Peter relate to them?
6. What did Peter tell them to do in verse 2?
7. What should be their purpose in doing this?
8. What kind of food is intended here?
9. Ministry is not an _____, it is a call.
10. What should the ministers be to the flock?
11. The greatest among you should be the _____.
12. Who is the Chief Shepherd?
13. When will the Chief Shepherd appear?
14. Younger submit yourselves unto the _____.
15. Be clothed with _____.
16. God resisteth the _____.
17. Who was one of the humblest men who ever lived?
18. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
19. What was done for the fowls of the air that we can expect from God, if we are His?
20. Who is the Christian's adversary?
21. Who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah?
22. What does "steadfast" in verse 9 mean?
23. How can we fight the devil?
24. Why do Christians have tribulation?
25. Who is Silvanus?

26. What does "exhort" from verse 12 mean?
27. What is the "church" in verse 13?
28. Babylon in verse 13 is probably speaking of what city?
29. Who is Marcus in verse 13 (probably)?
30. What kind of kiss is verse 14 speaking of?