

1 Peter 5: 1-14

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1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

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I. Elders/Shepherds (v 1-4)

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve

Here the term is used with special emphasis on those who vocationally hold the office of Elder/Shepherd but as well, those ordained to this office but not doing so vocationally and even to simply *Elders in the faith*. It is expected that as a believer ages he should take on the form and likeness of a Shepherd though he may not be ordained in any manner. Here we have some principles which guide Eldership.

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A. v 2) Your service must be out of positive volition, not out of obligation/compulsion.

The cost a man must pay to fulfill the Divine protocol and demands of genuine biblical shepherding are enormous. Anything less than a willing involvement by an Elder/Shepherd will result in a form of pastoral negligence which often involves things such as *poor bible teaching* which is replaced by philosophies or therapeutic uses of the bible, emphasis on social concerns sometimes accompanied by contempt toward genuine spirituality and catering to personalities and not principle and so on. All of these facets of Shepherding, when being fulfilled as they should, will produce conflicts that are difficult but inevitable. Because of this, those Shepherding by compulsion or because one does not really wish to Shepherd will result in the spiritual injury of the very sheep to which the Shepherd is called to care. They will resent their duties and not perform them properly.

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B. v 2) Not out of greed.

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve

Greed is an easy trap for a Shepherd/Elder. There are too many notable men of greed identified with the Shepherd's office. We should do all we can as members of a local assembly to make sure our Shepherds receive the kind of compensation which will not create a burdensome life for them and enable them to concentrate on their studies, prayer and other facets of Shepherding. However, a Pastor must also understand that his office was not intended as a business enterprise through which personal wealth is to be amassed. He can have wealth and save wisely but the ministry is not to be viewed as a wealth generating enterprise.

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Ask yourself a question, when is the last time your Pastor charged you to enter the church and be taught the Word of God? He doesn't. In fact he is supported by your spiritual response to his ministry through your giving.

You may not like hearing this but in no place in the New Testament will you find any ministry of the body of Christ being supported by charging people money. Businesses charge (and rightly so) for their services which include costs and profits. When an organization calls itself a ministry yet it charges you money, it is a business. That should be clear. Now you may benefit from this business but call it what it is, a business. The concept or idea of ministry is to give to someone at cost to the ministry, not to give to someone if they pay. That is called a business.

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C. v2-3) Eager to serve, not lording.

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock

An Elder/Shepherd in the NT church is a gatekeeper among the various facets of his office. Gatekeepers serve as protectors. They protect from those who would come into the gate and cause injury. Along with saying "yes" it is also their job to tell people "no". Sometimes it is someone wishing to get in that believes they have a right to enter which must be told no. However, sometimes it is someone on the inside trying to get entrance for another who does not belong inside to which the Shepherd must still say no. Now that person might pout and throw a fit and gossip about their Shepherd because he did not give them what they wanted but what he did do was what is most important, he served as a Shepherd in protecting the flock from injury.

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Understand, Elders/Shepherds are not your **spiritual butlers**. Rather they serve you in leading. While some service in the body of Christ is in subordinate roles, not all is. A Shepherd serves in a position of authority, by leading. While he may serve in a role that is not subordinate and does so by leading and teaching, he still has your benefit in mind. And that is what service is, either as a subordinate, peer or superior, one who has the benefit of others in mind.

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D. v 4) Special Commendation for Elders/Shepherds

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

The member of any congregation must understand what it is like to be a truly devoted Elder/Shepherd. The cost demanded from a faithful Shepherd is just short of literally laying one's life down. However, often, in the end, it is much like one who has indeed sacrificed his life, only over a long and enduring period.

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While his ministry may include praise and certain elements of reward, often the genuinely devoted Shepherd experiences many negatives others believers may not (*this is not to minimize the sufferings of others but to note the unique sufferings of an Elder/Shepherd*). He is resented for strong and certain doctrinal instruction, for dealing with deception and for practicing discipline that may involve denying some form of fellowship such as the Lord's Supper.

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As well, his foibles are magnified and his family subject to extraordinary scrutiny (*this is not to ignore the requirement that a Shepherd's family deport themselves in a certain manner, this is taught in 1 Timothy, rather this is referring to inordinate examinations that are characterized by "witch hunt" mentalities*), which sadly includes large circles of gossip and pettiness at times. This is precisely why, as Peter said, it must be of a voluntary and eager heart that a Shepherd serves. But a faithful Shepherd will continue to offer the truth and ministry to the sheep and the gospel and love to the unsaved and trust God to fulfill his promise of reward.

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II. Young Men (v 5-7)

A. v 5) Submission to Elders.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Peter tells the young men, in the same way as the Elders, submit to those who are older. What way? The way in which the Elders were told to approach their calling, which was to serve willingly (*not with grumbling 1 Peter 4:9*), eagerly and not for personal gain. This means with a right attitude, this is how you are to approach your service. Elders are to obey and yield to this authoritative protocol because they are obeying the one in authority over them, God. Hence, younger men must approach those older with this understanding.

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Here it assumes that those who are older, as stated earlier, take on the form and likeness of a Shepherd. So while it includes, with certainty, ordained Elders (*vocationally and non-vocationally*), it is also being used to refer to those older in age and faith (*again spiritual maturity is being assumed*). The combination of chronological and spiritual age should bring with it personal and spiritual maturity and it is a shame when it does not. Peter speaks as if this is an understood property which should accompany age. Younger men (and women) must respect this seasoned natural office. He emphasizes men because of the office of Elder is in view with respect to what they may be fulfilling in the future but this principle applies to all young adults.

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Something to be observed - It appears that there is a Divine recognition of one of the hazards of young adulthood. As the mind expands and insight and illumination increases, young adults can be high minded. They can become overly idealistic and develop contempt for those older and believe they (*those older*) do not understand or appreciate their new founded thoughts. And this can be true at times. There are plenty of maladjusted older saints who unfortunately remain as needy as a juvenile and have no capacity for interest in the thoughts and contributions of young adults. While this kind of older arrogance is forbidden, it does not nullify this directive to young men (or women) seeing that they must appreciate and seek to understand the tempered and seasoned responses of those with greater maturity.

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B. v 5-7) We must all wear the same clothes, young and old, called humility.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Humility – orientation to your own personal strengths and weaknesses as well as the strengths and weaknesses of others which results in treating yourself and others with grace and deference.

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A humble person accepts the truth about themselves and others. They do not exaggerate their own failures and shortcomings nor do they minimize them. As well, they do not exaggerate or minimize the foibles of others in order to compensate for some personal inadequacy. Conversely, they recognize their own abilities, skills and achievements for what they are without lionizing small or modest efforts or denigrating themselves in their successes and they do the same for others. They are not afraid to recognize superior gifts and achievement in others and are happy for such.

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God rejects arrogance but those who accept their roles, duties, strengths and weaknesses and that of others, God grants capacity for grace. This person, the genuinely humble person, trusts God over self. He or she rests on God’s principle of operation:

- A right thing done in a wrong way is wrong.
- A wrong thing done in a right way is wrong.
- But a right thing done in a right way, is right.

God’s timing and the nature of God’s work is more important than their own timing and their own objectives.

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III. Satan and your life (v 8-11)

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

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Satan, also called Lucifer, has a plan for your life. In every category of life, while God expresses his will be done according to his Word, Satan has a will for you, as well. Satan's will is designed so that it appeals to some human desire or thought that is not brought under the authority and direction of God's Word. There are a number of categories in which Satan seeks to introduce an alternative will or a **counterfeit** will for you life such as:

- Spiritual deception
- Marital deception
- Doctrinal deception

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Spiritual deception comes in the form of **counterfeit spirituality**. There are all kinds of emotionalism, mysticism and experientialism that masquerade as spirituality and is promoted by Satan. Satan relies on obfuscation and a lack of clarity and precision of the believer in understanding what genuine spirituality is in order to advance these concepts. In our future studies of false teachers and false teaching we will cover a few of these forms.

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Marital deception can come before and during one's marriage. There are all kinds of alluring partners which people mistakenly feel would overwhelmingly satisfy some human need. Satan seeks to capitalize on such carnal and unspiritual thinking in order to introduce these people into our lives, thereby imagining they are *God-sent*. It may be some person of extraordinary material wealth, physical attractiveness or personality and charm. On the other hand it could be from parental conflicts where are child wittingly or unwittingly decides to engage in hyper passive-aggressive behavior by marrying someone they know is contrary to the sociological and/or theological orientation of their parents. There are many avenues that Satan uses to introduce into your life an inappropriate partner and this can happen at any time, before or during a marriage.

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Doctrinal deception is what is called "doctrines of demons" (I Timothy 4:1-2). Such deception has a form of spiritual knowledge but is a lie. These come in the form of men and women who take the Word of God and change its clear meaning so that it may be used for another purpose, usually to advance their personal well being. Often these false teachers hide behind orthodox confessions. That is, they will tell you they adhere to the Apostles' Creed but in reality, they regularly teach contrary to it. They may be very popular personalities and may even have some people fooled which you considered those who could not be fooled. Dear Christian, you must develop discernment and not let others do your thinking.

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Satan, whose has a master plan, accomplishes his work through two primary sources:

- (Invisible) Himself and his demons
- (Visible) Humans who are witting or unwitting collaborators. This might even involve believers in carnal states (as our Lord said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan" Matt. 16:23).

In lieu of this, let's understand what God's will is in dealing with Satan in our lives.

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A. v 8) Satan the plaintiff.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Here a very interesting word is used to describe Satan, which the NIV translates as "enemy". The Greek word for enemy, which is sometimes translated Adversary, is (ἀντίδικος) antidikos. It literally refers to the prosecutor or plaintiff in a case who is bringing charges. In other words he is *the accuser* (which is also a translation of the word).

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Think about the case of Job and its beginning:

Job 1

6 One day the angels[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan[b] also came with them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

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While Satan's greatest charge is against God, he also, regularly (*if not moment by moment*) seeks to charge us, (*evidentiary witnesses of God's grace*) of having failed God and of sinning against God. He seeks to bring charges against us in God's court and does so based on his subversion of our lives. This is precisely why it describes him as a "roaring lion" meaning a wild animal with an insatiable appetite and you are the dinner Satan has in mind. Obviously our Advocate, Christ, always stands in our stead but this does not change the truth that Satan will still seek to "devour you". He is trying to prove a case and does not accept or believe God's rulings, thus he presses on, always, trying to prove his. Therefore you must understand Satan will stand at nothing to set a trap for you. He will seek to snare you in your "*ungirded clothing*" through all kinds of deception and temptation. So what must we do?

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B. v 8-9) How we are to live in light of Satan's existence and efforts to subvert our lives.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1. **Alert** – (γρηγορέω) grégoreó – be watchful, vigilant. The implication is that we must pay attention to the construct of things. Is our thinking and activities and so on giving entrance to the influence of the Evil One? Often the world scoffs at such concerns and mocks this and Christians become susceptible to being embarrassed by this reality. As a result they end up blocking it out of their minds because they are embarrassed by the world's opinion. Ignoring this reality is not considered an accepted way to be alert or vigilant, in fact it is spiritual negligence which will result in your being captured, in some manner, by satanic devices.

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2. **Sober minded** – (νήφω) néphó we studied a form of this word, earlier, in 1 Peter 4:7 which means to not permit our thinking to be "intoxicated" or controlled by non-biblical thinking. And this is quite easy to do. Not only do believers deal with the most literal temptation to be intoxicated with alcohol in order to deal with distress and life in general but they can also be intoxicated with ways of thinking that are very worldly and philosophical which appear to have a form of great intelligence and rationalism but are spiritually bankrupt. Such intoxication paralyzes or renders impotent your ability to respond with robust spiritual insight, confidence and biblical certainty. Remember God teaches us, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Rom 12:2).

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3. **Resist** – (ἀνθίστημι) anthístēmi – this means to oppose but not simply oppose, rather *to oppose from conviction*. That is, because within one's soul and mind they are convinced of the truth of Satan's error and diabolic intents, they no longer ignore or minimize what they understand to be his work. They understand satanic efforts and instruments and from conviction oppose such, even publicly if this is called for such as identifying doctrines of demons.

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4. **Stand firm** – this is an adjective which describes how you to are resist, without giving way. Satan will seek to intimidate the believer when he or she resists but the Word of God teaches us to not give way. Making concessions is giving way. Humans pout when they don't get their way. They sometimes get upset when you don't see things their way; this often includes human adults in a family or even in your church. You do not have to become a loud and pompous crusader, letting everyone within 100 miles know your objections when you resist satanic efforts. But it does mean that those relevant to the issue who wish to undermine your efforts or intimidate you into backing down need to understand graciously but firmly, you are standing firm from conviction.

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C. v 10-11) God's response to our faithfulness to apply his Word – spiritual maturity.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen

Here there is a promise made that after we suffer by living faithfully we will experience "restoration". The word here is (καταρτίζω) *katartizō* which means most literally, (Strong's) "to bring into its proper condition". That is, God will bring us more fittingly to the place we need to be spiritually. He will take these things gained during suffering, especially satanic suffering (*which will involve our intense application of his Word in faith and the wisdom and illumination gained*) and used them to mature us.

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Here Peter makes it clear that such suffering, which includes satanic subterfuge of our lives, will occur. Sometimes we will respond successfully, sometimes not and possibly with resultant great personal disasters. But this subterfuge (*which will include some form of suffering which we are to undergo*), if we respond to it biblically following God's prescription (*which is an exercise of faith*) will result in our spiritual growth.

Any time someone has undergone difficulty and responded with a strong mentality, though they suffer from it, they gain in the process and this same principle is true spiritually. And when the pressure subsides, those that have cracked or succumb (i.e. failed this testing) must repeat this process or form of testing.

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But those who have passed this can and may move on and this is precisely how we grow in the Christian life with regard to suffering and its benefit. It places stress upon us and demands we enlarge our faith which requires a more serious concentration of taking in God's Word, applying it and prayer. And when we do this our Lord uses these new capacities to make us into the maturing believer he intends for us to become.