

1 Peter Introduction – Part F

[1 Peter 1](#) – What Salvation is All About

[1 Peter 2](#) – Living Out the Christian Life

[1 Peter 3](#) - How to Be a Blessing to Others

[1 Peter 4](#) – What It Means to Suffer for Christ

[1 Peter 5](#) – Godly Leadership and Humility

[1 Peter 5](#) is a very short chapter with only 14 verses, and the last three (3) verses are simply Peter’s final greeting to those he is writing. His initial focus in this chapter is to those who are in positions of leadership within the local churches. In v1-4 Peter speaks to the elders of the different churches and provides them with what I consider to be some of the most important exhortations given to elders in the New Testament. Obviously, [1 and 2 Timothy](#), as well as the book of [Titus](#), were written to two men who were pastors, with both serving in very difficult circumstances. In each of those letters, Paul provides biblical requirements for those serving in leadership positions. The worst thing that any church can do is to have people serving in positions of leadership who are not called to do so, who do not have the qualifications to do so, and who are not serving for the right reasons. It would be safe to say that it is virtually impossible for a church to rise above its leadership. Individuals may do so, but the church as a whole is generally a by-product of its leadership team.

So, in the first four (4) verses, Peter provides several very important admonitions to the elders. The first exhortation comes in the word “**shepherd**” or “*poimaino*” which is in the imperative mood. This is a very important word relative to the function of the elders and it simply means to tend to the church as a shepherd would tend to his sheep. The primary task of a shepherd is to feed his sheep and to make sure that they are well protected from any kind of predators. It is a word that refers to the whole process of shepherding to include guiding, guarding, and providing spiritual food.¹ If you study [1 Timothy](#) carefully, one of Paul’s primary exhortations to Timothy was to guard the church from false doctrine and false teachers. Notice what Paul said to the elders at Ephesus as he was getting ready to leave them in [Acts 20:28-32](#),

Ac 20:28 **Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**
²⁹ **For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.** ³⁰ **Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.** ³¹ **Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.** ³² **So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

Paul’s major concern was never with what kind of music they sang, or what kind of programs they had, or how many people they baptized in a year. Paul’s primary concern for the elders was that they would courageously guard the truth and teach the truth. For Paul, that one function overrode everything else. It was to be the major focus of the elders – for them to guard the truth. In the pastoral letters, Paul encouraged them to maintain a godly life, to reject vain teachings, to be an example to the flock, and to

give great attention to doctrine and exhortation. He told them to pursue godliness, to fight the good fight of faith and to guard those things that had been committed to them. He told them to hold fast to sound doctrine, to be strong in the grace that God gives, to endure hardship, to commit the truth to faithful men who would do the same, and to present themselves to God as men who rightly divided the Word of God. He commanded them to reject false teaching and to reject foolish and ignorant arguments about the truth. They could not quarrel, but had to be gentle, able to teach, and patient. They had to correct people when they were doing things that clearly dishonored God. They were to preach the Word, reprove, and exhort. Now, all of that and more is covered in this simple little verb “**shepherd**”.

Notice what Jesus told Peter in [John 21](#) because I think this dialogue had a tremendous influence on Peter’s life after Christ was resurrected. In the time frame of this chapter, Jesus is having breakfast with His disciples after they had been fishing all night, and He specifically begins to talk to Peter beginning in v15. He asks Peter a very simple question and Peter responds. [John 21:15](#) says,

Jn 21:15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

Notice that after Peter responded that Jesus told Peter to “**Feed my lambs**”. The word for “**feed**” there is the Greek word “*bosko*” in the imperative mood and of the nine (9) times that it is used in the New Testament it is translated as “**feed**” in eight (8) of those uses. Then we come to [John 21:16](#) which says,

Jn 21:16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

The word for “**tend**” is “*poimaino*” and is the same word that Peter uses in [1 Peter 5:2](#) to express the function of the elders. Then in [John 21:17](#), Jesus asks Peter a third time to as to whether or not Peter really loved Him.

Jn 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

The word for “**feed**” in this verse is once again “*bosko*” which means to “**feed**”. All three verbs are in the present tense signifying that Peter is to always be feeding the sheep. In our terminology, he is to always be teaching the Word of God. That is his primary concern. It is not ministry, not administration, not serving, not programs. It is teaching. No wonder Peter told the believers the following in [Acts 6:3-4](#) when the ministry demands on the apostles began to take away from the actual ministry of the Word,

Ac 6:3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

What we glean from Jesus’ exhortation to Peter in [John 21](#) is really very simple. This is Jesus’ last exhortation to these men before He ascended, and it is specifically related to “feeding” the flock from the Word of God. Because the verbs are in the present tense, it meant that this calling on their life was to be a constant and regular necessity that could not be ignored, overlooked, or brushed aside.² It was to have the absolute foremost place in ministry – studying and teaching the Word of God with accuracy,

with clarity, and with every ounce of due diligence that the apostles could muster. The primary difference between the two words “*bosko*” and “*poimaino*” is that “*bosko*” is literally concerned with the actual teaching of the Word and “*poimaino*” is a broader term that involves the total care of the church.³ The ultimate role of an elder, then, is to provide pastoral care, to teach the Word of God, to provide spiritual guidance, and to guard the church from false teachers and their very harmful teachings.⁴ One obvious caution that Peter gives to the leadership of a church is that they should never have money as their motive. So many of the false teachers are so wealthy that it defies description. In fact, one of the primary attributes of a false teacher is their obsession with becoming rich. The health and wealth gospel has spawned an entirely different generation of teachers – men who are clearly in the ministry for the wealth that they can accumulate. I personally consider them to be religious thieves, money changers in the temple, and desperately lost. False teachers understand that religion is big business and has far-reaching implications for accumulating wealth. It all began with Oral Roberts and his seed-faith teaching, and it has escalated to a place that is so far removed from biblical Christianity that it is difficult to conceive how people are so blinded to what they are supporting.

In v3, Peter gives what I believe is one of the most crucial of all of his exhortations. He says,

1Pe 5:3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

The little word “**nor**” is just as well translated as “**not**” (ESV, AMP, NIV, ISV, RSV) which makes it a very emphatic exhortation. The NASB says “**not as lording it over**”. The ESV says “**not domineering over those in your charge**”. The AMP, which I really like, says “**not domineering (as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons) over those in your charge**”. The NIV says “**not lording it over**”. Every elder is forbidden to try and run the lives of those that God has placed under their care. The phrase “**lording it over**” (Greek Interlinear) is just one word in the Greek – “*katakyrieuo*”. It comes from the preposition “*kata*” which can mean down, against, and many other things. The word “*kyrieuo*” means to control, to subjugate, and to exercise dominion over.⁵ It specifically refers to someone who exercises a very high-handed oppressive and domineering control over the flock. This is strictly forbidden by God. Please appreciate that this does not eliminate the God-ordained and properly exercised authority that should be administered through godly leaders. They are to be highly respected and honored as divinely ordained leaders in the congregation.⁶

My personal opinion is that the two worst qualities that a pastor can have is to be lazy with studying the Word of God and to try and control the people to whom he ministers. The word actually was used in classical Greek of someone who subdued someone else, similar to a king who subdued other nations. It is only used four (4) times in the New Testament, and never in a good sense. In [Matthew 20:26-27](#), Jesus clearly taught that if someone was going to occupy a position of leadership that they first had to be servants to the people.

Mt 20:26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—

Peter says that God has “**entrusted**” people into the elders care. I like that translation best. Some of the translations say something like “**allotted to your charge**” (NASB) or “**in your charge**” (ESV, AMP). For me personally, the word “**entrusted**” makes the entire issue much more personal. If you were going somewhere and you asked me and my wife to keep your children for several days, it would be much

more than just allotting them to our charge. You would literally be entrusting them into our care, and on our part we would have the greatest responsibility that you could ever give to us – to guard your children who are your treasure with the deepest care possible. That is the sense of this word. The ultimate role that elders have is that of “**being examples to the flock**” (v3b). The word for “**examples**” is a word that means to strike something with a blow so as to leave an impression. It means to be a model, a pattern, and a spiritual template that other people can follow.⁷ For those of us who are elders, we should be able to genuinely tell people that if they will just follow the pattern of our life that they will lead a meaningful Christian life. Paul consistently encouraged people to follow his example. He said the following in [Philippians 3:17](#) and [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#),

^{Php 3:17} **Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**

^{2Th 3:9} **not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.**

In [1 Peter 5:5](#), Peter addresses the quality of humility in our lives. The word for “**submit**” is “*hypotasso*” and is generally seen by most people in a very negative way. However, the truth that is embedded in this word is not saying that people are to blindly follow others who are not living a consistent Christian life. In fact, I would say that it would actually be a very grievous mistake for someone to not question things within the leadership of a church that are obviously wrong. This was one of the greatest failures in my personal life when years ago I was not willing to confront things in my pastor’s life that were obviously wrong and harmful to the body of Christ. [1 Timothy 5:17-20](#) provides some very important guidelines that make it apparent that when those in leadership in a church fail that the church should identify and address those issues.

^{1Ti 5:17} **Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.** ¹⁸ **For the Scripture says, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*” and, “*The laborer is worthy of his wages.*”** ¹⁹ **Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.** ²⁰ **Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.**

The primary issue in [1 Peter 5:5-6](#) is that of humility in the believer’s life. The word “**elder**” was literally used to refer to older men and so Peter encourages the younger people to willingly allow their lives to come under the leadership of those men who should be a godly example for them to follow. He says that we are to be “**submissive to one another, and to be clothed with humility**”. Now, for me personally, the real truth to which Peter is driving comes at the end of v5 when he makes the statement that God “**resists**” those who are proud, but He “**gives grace**” to those who are humble. In the context of Peter using that verse, he is clearly saying that humility is generally evidenced in how we yield ourselves to those godly individuals that God has placed in our lives to help strengthen and guide us in our life. It could be anyone – a husband, our parents, a teacher, those who lead us spiritually, and even a godly friend. The point that Peter makes is that grace is a very necessary attribute for the Christian life. Without humility, nothing that we do in the Christian life will be successful simply because God both opposes and resists that which is proud and arrogant in nature. Every one of us are subject to this admonition and must take it very seriously. Pride was the attribute that caused Lucifer to fall, and it will

just as much cause any believer to fall who does not recognize the various levels of authority and leadership that God has placed into their life. These levels of authority are really designed by God to protect the believer, not harm them, and so once that is understood and appreciated, then God is able to fully administer his grace in a believer's life.

Next, Peter gives a series of final exhortations to the believers in [1 Peter 5:7-9](#). He encourage us to cast all of our care and concerns on God (v7), to be self-controlled in our behavior (v8), and to be watchful and alert in our lives because the devil himself is always trying to ruin our lives (v8). When he does, we are to “**resist him**” by remaining “**steadfast in the faith**”. There is no substitute for faithfulness in the Christian life. Then his ultimate encouragement to us as believers is in v10 that there may very well be times when we do have to suffer for our faith, but when we do that we can be assured that God “**will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us**”. Peter's encouragement is that whatever God may allow in our life is what He will ultimately use to make us stronger and more steadfast in our faith.

ENDNOTES

¹ Strong, 1322.

² Vine, 417-418.

³ Zodhiates, 345.

⁴ Wuest, 124-125.

⁵ Strong, 1169.

⁶ Wuest, 125.

⁷ Wuest, 125.

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