

## 1 Peter 5:1-7

1Pe 5:1 (NKJV) **The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; <sup>4</sup> and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. <sup>5</sup> Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."** <sup>6</sup> Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

I was doing some research on bad leaders in the work place and what people have to say about those whose leadership they have to follow. This is what I found:

- **3 out of 4 employees** report that their boss is the worst and **most stressful** part of their job.
- 37% of employees say their boss **failed to give credit** when due.
- Employees with bad managers are among **the least productive workers**.
- **65%** of employees say they would take a **new boss over a pay raise**.

Much of the criticism centered around attributes like they were never wrong, they hog the limelight, they constantly change their mind, they have their favorites, their feedback is not relevant, and they are nowhere to be found when you really need them.<sup>1</sup>

Well, since this is a church and not a workplace, I want you to listen to a very scathing indictment of the shepherds of Israel in [Ezekiel 34:1-6](#). This is about as scathing of a rebuke as you can find in the Scriptures regarding shepherds, but it seems so very contemporary that it is a little eerie.

Eze 34:1 (NKJV) **And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? <sup>3</sup> You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. <sup>4</sup> The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. <sup>5</sup> So they were scattered because *there was no shepherd*; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. <sup>6</sup> My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching *for them*."**

Obviously God was not well pleased with the spiritual leaders of Israel. So, I wonder how pleased He is today with the spiritual leaders of the church? I was thinking about the different qualities that are essential for those who lead the church today. Here is my list: biblical discernment, wisdom, fortitude, determination, endurance, skill with the Word, deep, deep convictions, the willingness to speak candidly

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<sup>1</sup> Pencak, ep.

to people about issues in their life, and a willingness to actually enter into the spiritual conflict.<sup>2</sup> I wonder how much of that we actually see in many churches. What totally confuses me personally is how much innovation the church is involved with, but how little critical thinking is involved with the innovation. Churches today seem to be obsessed with things that do not matter and make no meaningful difference in people's lives. We have opinion polls, market research, merchandizing schemes, advertising ventures, a host of innovative ideas, and this pre-occupation with numerical growth. If I am not mistaken, the longer Jesus ministered, the number of disciples and followers decreased. In a world filled with pragmatism, it is no longer "What's true?", but "What works?" The church is almost mesmerized with methodology much more than theology to the point that sound doctrine and biblical living are more of a non-issue than the issue. The modern church has become so "seeker-sensitive" that all it wants to do is become relevant to anyone and everyone. Rather than edifying the believers, we are more interested in entertaining unbelievers. It is almost as if the modern evangelical church has a kind of morbid devotion to superficiality.<sup>3</sup> I guess I am just old-fashioned, but I just do not get it.

So, where does all of this nonsense come from? It comes from the leadership within the local churches. Many pastors are what I call "fad chasers". [Ephesians 4:14](#) warns us with these words,

**Eph 4:14 (NKJV) that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,**

God has spoken. He has clearly spoken to us, and because He has, He holds every single one of us responsible for understanding and obeying what He has written. I think of how Jesus dealt with the Pharisees. It was not nice or pretty. He rebuked them severely because of how they handled the Word of God. They twisted it, set it aside for their worthless traditions, disobeyed it, and ignored the obvious. He could heal someone and they would take counsel to kill Him. I am convinced that the Word of God is so understandable that anyone who reads it can understand its simple gospel message and be saved. Some churches just seem to leave you in the dark about almost everything.

The problem is that biblical discernment is virtually out of date in many churches. This generation in which we live has been exposed to more false teaching and perverted ideas about Christianity than any generation that has preceded us. We have religious broadcasting on all day, religious television 24-7, more bad books than you could ever read, and so much deviant teaching that it is mind-boggling. We are such a media driven culture that biblical truth has fallen prey to utter spiritual nonsense. Most Christians are afraid to take a stand on the most obvious of issues. We have such nonsense as redefining the family, abortions to within 5 minutes after birth, gender identity where parents are allowing their kids to determine what gender they want to be, and the nonsense goes on and on and on. To make it worse, it has invaded the church. The church would rather be tolerant than confrontational on these kind of issues.

I have said it often and will continue to do so that nothing is more destructive to the health and vitality of a church than bad leadership. Any church can have bad members who are constantly causing problems, but when a church has bad leadership, the destructive nature of that leadership is difficult to quantify. If I could define spiritual abuse relative to leadership, I would say that it is when a spiritual

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<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, Truth, 146.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, Truth, 146-149.

leader uses his position and influence to manipulate people and to control people – what Peter refers to as lording over people. Unfortunately, this happens all of the time. Bad leaders defile the grace and mercy of God, they marginalize people, and they abuse the position that God has given them. Most bad leaders are greedy for power, for money, and for attention. They are generally harsh, they use people, and they refuse to help and be a servant to the people. They never want to be held accountable for what they do that is wrong, and very rarely are genuinely repentant. They isolate their critics and surround themselves with people who support their agenda. The spiritual reality is that there is absolutely no place for bad leadership in any church environment.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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