

1 Peter 5:6-7

1Pe 5:6 (NKJV) **Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**

I do not know of anything that is more destructive to the Christian life than pride. Pride was the initial sin of Satan for which God cast him out of heaven, and it remains that area of people's lives where they continue to exalt themselves against God and His ways. For the Christian life, I consider it to be a deadly sin – that of placing our will above the will of God. It literally destroys people's lives. In reality, it is a form of idolatry where we worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. The sins identified in [Romans 1](#) are many, but it all begins in v21 which says that men “**became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools**”. This is the spiritual destiny of pride, and eventually it leads to God simply giving men over to themselves and letting them do whatever they want to do.

In these two verses there are two imperative commands – “**humble yourselves, casting**. V6 and 7 are dealing with your personal humility before God. Peter's exhortation in v5 is for all of us to “**be clothed with humility**”. It is an imperative mood verb which makes it a command. There may not be a more important attribute to develop in our life than that of being “**humble**” before God. The word simply means to have a meaningful contrition, remorse, repentance, and sorrow before God for those things in our life that we know do not honor Him.¹ The reason that humility is so important is because of what Peter stated in v5 that “**God resists the proud**”. The word for “**proud**” means to show yourself above,² and in this context, it means that you put yourself and your ideas and what you want and how you want it above God's will for your life. It is a willful, deliberate choice that a believer makes over what they know to be God's clear and perfect will for their life. The underlying problem for this individual is that even though they know that they are choosing their will over God's will, it does not really matter to them. They simply are not committed to God's best for their life. God's will is not a priority for their life because, honestly, they believe that they know better than God does. Rather, they are committed to doing what they want to do the way that they want to do it. That is the kind of pride to which Peter is referring – self-will over God's will.

The problem with that mindset is that this individual has simply forgotten how God is going to respond to their pride. The word for “**resists**” simply means that God actually sets Himself against the proud individual – which obviously is not something that you want to happen. It is a military term that describes an army that arranges itself in a battle array against an enemy.³ I.e., the more stubborn that a believer becomes in their life, the more God is going to resist them. When God sets Himself in array against you, simply think of it as life not just working out like you want it to work out. You go off in your predisposed direction, and suddenly there is the unexpected, something that you were not anticipating, something that you did not foresee happening to you – but it does. Because of the sovereignty of God, it is not something that you can just avoid. You cannot escape God's discipline or His providential and corrective work in your life. You decided that your will was better than God's will,

¹ Zodhiates, *tapeinoo*, 1366.

² Wuest, *1 Peter 5*, 126.

³ Zodhiates, *antitasso*, 195.

but nothing happens to make that a reality. It is hard to describe or even explain, but no one has an upper hand on God and how He deals with His stubborn and rebellious children.

Trust me, you do not want God to be against you, to be resisting you, but if you are a proud person and someone that is so absorbed in what you want for yourself personally, then you do not have much to which you can look forward. Why? It is because God is going to “**resist**” you and set Himself against all of your stubborn and self-centered choices. How many times have you found yourself doing what you know God did not want you to do, but it all worked out great for you? Probably not very often - that is for sure. When God resists you because you are unwilling to yield to His ways, there is nothing that you can do to change the outcome – absolutely nothing. If you do not believe me, then just try it.

You must understand that God is never pleased with a believer’s pride - never. It is a sign of that believer’s **idolatrous independence** and **self determination** to live life how they want to live it. God did not create you and call you by His grace for that purpose, and the sooner you understand and accept that, the better off your life will be. God is never pleased when you stubbornly make life all about yourself and what you want and how you want things to work out in your life – especially if you know that in those choices that you are not submitting to His will for your life. He is not pleased when you decide that your will is much more important and much better than His will. That is nothing more than a spiritual fantasy and you will not like the final results at all. What God has for you is always so very much better than you ever even imagined it could be, but we can be so proud and so stubborn that we never ever experience God’s best for our life. It is my opinion only, but I believe that the average American Christian experiences very, very little of God’s best for their life. Why? Well, many times it is simply because of their pride and stubbornness in not fully yielding their life to Jesus Christ. If we were studying in the Old Testament, we might simply say that they are just wandering in the wilderness.

I have said it often that that the worst thing that God can do is to give you what you want and prefer over His perfect will for my life. That is a train-wreck for your life if you take that position, and if you knowingly and willingly pursue the exact opposite of what God desires for your life. There is nothing unclear or blurred or ambiguous about God’s will for your life - nothing. The commands of God and the principles of God by which we are to live are very, very clear. Is there anyone here who does not believe that? There is no mistaking what God wants for our life. The truth of God is settled, firm, and it will not change to make our life more pleasing when we mess it up with our pride and stubbornness. Most of the time, the only way that you can grow is through trials and through difficulties. Those are God’s spiritual tools and there is no way to avoid Him using them in your life. This entire letter from Peter is about what Christians are called on to endure and what they will invariably suffer when they do what is right. Life is hard enough without us making it even harder.

Now, the command that Peter gives us is clear in v6 – “**(you) humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time**”. You may not even believe that God has a “**mighty hand**”, but He does. You may not believe that He will “**exalt you in due time**”, but He will. Those words and the truth that resides in them may not even mean anything to you, but they are words of life, words of spiritual direction that you have a personal responsibility to believe. They are truths from God who cannot lie. However, seeing God’s “**mighty hand**” work on your behalf and having Him raise you up out of your trial and affliction will never happen if you stubbornly resist His clear-cut will for your life. I am not exactly sure how God’s resistance of stubbornness and pride occurs in our life, but I am

personally convinced from Scripture that it does. When God resists you by giving you what you thought that you wanted, it never works out like you thought it would – never. At the end of your stubbornness and resistance and pride, someone is going to ask you “*So, how did that work out for you now that you have what you want?*” You do not want that to happen in your life, but I am convinced that it is happening all of the time in the lives of many, many believers, and the end result is that they find themselves more miserable and more deflated than before they began.

We always seem to think that a change of our circumstances will be better than a change of heart, but that simply is not true. The more you allow God to change your heart, the less your circumstances will even matter. Personally, I would much rather have God change my heart in some difficult circumstance that I find myself rather than changing my circumstances. Here is the principle that you need to embrace for every difficulty in your life, so listen very carefully. **God is much more interested in using your difficult circumstances to change your heart than He is in changing your circumstances.** However, **once He has changed your heart, then He is free to change your circumstances.** This is a very basic and fundamental principle for your life. With God, it is always a heart issue, always a character issue, and never a circumstance issue. We literally have it backwards. We think that if God will just change my circumstances, then that is what will change my heart – but that is not true. It is actually the very opposite of what God wants for your life.

It is important to get one reality very settled in our life. One of the very worst things that you can do as a Christian is to always be resisting what you know to be the will of God for your life. God’s will is clearly defined for you in His Word. There are commands that are given to every single one of us and we do not have the spiritual right to just casually ignore them as if they do not apply to us. Every command, every godly principle applies to every one of us. There is no green light here for dismissing God’s Word as if it is not binding on our lives. I as a pastor have not been given an exemption, the elders of this church have not been given an exemption, you as a husband have not been given an exemption, you as a wife have not been given an exemption, and you as a young person have not been given an exemption. There are no exemptions for failing to obey the commands of Scripture. However, much too often it is something that we simply are not willing to take seriously, and eventually our pride catches up with us. I cannot quantify what you lose in that process, but it is more than you will enjoy. Submitting your life to the will of God is the best choice that you can ever make for your life. You will never regret doing what you know to be the clear will of God for your life.

The way that Peter reiterates this truth is tremendous. In v7 he says “**casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you**”. I love the way the Amplified Bible translates this verse. It says,

1Pe 5:7 (AMP) Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

God is always doing what He has to do to get you to come to Him, to get you to depend on Him, and we are always finding excuses and reasons why we simply are not going to do that. Someone is going to ask me, “*Gary, how can I know that I have really cast all of my cares and anxieties on Him? What does that mean practically for my life?*” Let me say up front that spiritually there are no quick fixes, there is no silver bullet. That would be great, but life simply does not work that way. That is the American bias, the American pipe dream that everything in life can be easy and painless. The reason is simple. It is

because God is always transforming us to be like Christ, and that does not happen overnight. With God, He is always concerned with our character. We never see it as good because in America we have ways of fixing everything quickly and just like we wanted them to be fixed. We are determined that we are not going to be inconvenienced or disturbed by something that we know we can change. That mentality may provide an initial level of relief, but it is just a quick fix with no lasting benefit. That is not how God works. Spiritual progress and maturity always requires patience and endurance. It always requires making the right godly decisions. It always calls on the believer to trust that God's ways are much better than their own. It always challenges us to a deeper level of trust and commitment to do things God's way and not take matters into our own hands. Ultimately to not do so is simply what the Bible declares to be unbelief. The reality of God's kingdom and God's work in your life is that the more areas of your life that you genuinely submit to Him, the greater will be His work in your life.

Let me give you a simple suggestion. You may think this is overly simplified, but if you would be willing to do what I am going to suggest and to do it with a sincere heart of submission to God, I am convinced that you will see God's blessings on your life. It will not be the next day, but they will come. Take a piece of paper and simply write down everything in your life that you know is not yielded to God. Do not leave anything out. Be patient and wait on God to show you those areas where you know that you are resisting His will for your life. Then get before God in a quiet and private place and in the sincerity of your heart yield those stubborn areas of your life to Him in a moment of complete surrender. Just do it. Do it privately. Do not tell anyone. Peter calls it "**casting all your care upon Him**". There comes a point in your life where you as a believer have to find a way to fully yield and surrender your life to God. This is the Christian life. God can be fully trusted. This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is what it means to become a fully devoted follower of Christ. There is no short cut to this – not one short cut. You have to take the first step in obedience and with a heart that is willing to allow God to change both your heart and your life, so do not be afraid to trust Him. He will show Himself strong on your behalf. He will, and you can trust that reality.

You must come to the place where you truly believe that "**He cares for you**" more than you could ever realize. The word for "**cares**" is a very precious word in the Greek language. It simply means that God is deeply concerned for your life.⁴ God is actually more concerned for your life than you are. He is not a disinterested bystander who has no power to help you. To the contrary, He is the only Person that has everything you genuinely need to be complete, to be content, and to be yielded fully to Him. So, His promise is that you can cast all of your care, all of your concerns, all of your worries, and all of your anxiety on Him. You can take all of your discontentment, all of your discouragement, and anything that you may encounter in your life no matter how great or how small and cast it on God.

When I hear people talk who are struggling in this area of their life, I invariably always hear the same arguments. They are always blaming their problems on someone or something else. It may be their partner, their boss, their circumstances. However, the issue is that you may have areas of your life that are incredibly unbiblical. It could be very bad habits. It could be bitterness and resentment. It could be a lack of self-control or anger. It could be a lack of genuine love for someone. It could be that anything irritates you or frustrates you. It could be that you do not know how to control what you say. You just

⁴ Zodiates, *melei*, 957.

blurt out ugly things and then expect everyone else to just rollover. It could be that you are selfish and always want things your way. It could be an unwillingness to let God change you even though you know that is what He truly wants to do. It could be pure stubbornness. I remember what Samuel said to Saul in [1 Samuel 15:23](#) about stubbornness. He said,

1Sa 15:23 (NKJV) **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being king*."**

I believe the reason that he said “**stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry**” was because Saul was much more intent on doing what he wanted to do than what God had commanded him to do. It was idolatrous because he literally worshipped what he wanted to do more than the clear commands of God to his life. Listen very carefully. When you take the time to do what I have suggested by getting alone with God and yielding your cares and concerns to Him, you can trust in His love for you. You can trust in His faithfulness to you, in His supernatural power to care for you, and in His inexhaustible wisdom to give you the guidance and the strength that you need. You are not obligated in any way to do what I have suggested. You can continue along doing what you have always done and always wanted to do, but if that is your decision, you can be assured that you will keep getting the same results. The definition of insanity is when a person keeps doing what they have always done, but expecting different results. If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got. The Christian life is always about change. It is always about having a willingness to yield ourselves to the will of God over our own personal will. I know this may be hard and difficult at first, but it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness and God’s peace and strength for your life. However, if you choose not to give your burdens and struggles to Him, life will only get more and more difficult for you. You may not really believe that because you think that you are smart enough to work everything out on your own, but that simply is a spiritual illusion that has no substance or merit whatsoever. You are not wiser than God and he has ways of convincing you of that reality.

So, if you do this and you genuinely give your struggles to God, how will you know that you have really passed the test? It is simple. It is when the same frustrations, irritations, disappointments, angers, and bitterness that you previously had no longer have a pull on your life. It is not that your circumstances have eliminated all of the issues, but that you have reached a place in your life where you know that God is sovereign over your life and that He is able to make all things work together for good for you. You know that and you trust Him to do the very best for your life through the very worst of circumstances. What is happening is that through your difficult circumstances and your disappointments, you are genuinely learning what it means to trust God. You are now growing, you are now becoming His vessel, you are now becoming like Christ Himself. This is what God wants for your life, so do everything in your power to yield your will to His will. You will never be disappointed if you do.

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