



The First Epistle General of Peter

Exhortations Concerning Sufferings and Glory

1 Peter 5:1-9

- I. EXHORTATIONS TO THE ELDERS (1 Peter 5:1-4)
 - A. Peter's Kinship to the Elders (1 Peter 5:1)
 1. He was an elder.
 - a. Confusion between elder and bishop
 - (1) The elder
 - a) His age (Genesis 10:21; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)
 - b) His wisdom (Job 32:4-7)
 - c) His leadership (Acts 15:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17)
 - (2) The bishop
 - a) His office (1 Timothy 3:1); *bishop* means *overseer*
 - b) His duties (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9)
 - b. Comparison of elder and bishop
 - (1) Both rule in the church
 - a) Elder (1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:28)
 - b) Bishop (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
 - (2) Both can be multiplied in one church
 - a) Elder (Acts 14:23)
 - b) Bishop (Philippians 1:1)
 - (3) Both terms are used synonymously in Titus
 - a) Elder (Titus 1:5)
 - b) Bishop (Titus 1:7)
 - c. Conclusions
 - (1) The term *elder* has a wider range than the term *bishop*.
 - a) The term *elder* may refer to Old Testament or New Testament offices.
 - b) The term may refer to men of age, experience, or wisdom.
 - c) The term *bishop* refers to a specific New Testament office.
 - (2) The terms may be used as synonyms of the term *pastor* but are used to describe different aspects of the same office.
 - a) Elder emphasizes the person
 - i) His experience
 - ii) His wisdom
 - iii) His spirituality
 - b) Bishop emphasizes the office
 - i) His duties
 - ii) His rule
 - (3) In the present context, it would seem to appeal more to the age and wisdom of those who oversaw a body of believers.



2. He was a witness of the sufferings of Christ.
 - a. The word *also* is used to describe Peter's association with his specific audience in both the areas of being an elder and in being a partaker of future glory.
 - b. However, the word *also* is not used when he speaks of being a witness of the sufferings of Christ.
 - c. If we read much into this, Peter's audience likely did not have the opportunity to be eyewitnesses of Christ's sufferings, but had rather heard of the sufferings after the fact.
3. He would be a partaker of the glory that would be revealed (1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Peter 5:4).
 - a. Remember that the theme of the epistle has been that suffering precedes glory.
 - b. This theme is not limited to Peter's epistle (Romans 8:18), but it has certainly been prevalent in his epistle (1 Peter 1:11; 1 Peter 4:13).
 - c. While there are references to submission, suffering, and the dangers of a present adversary in this final chapter, the portion of the theme dealing with suffering appears to be fading with more of an emphasis on the glory to follow.

B. Peter's Exhortation to the Elders (1 Peter 5:1-4)

1. The audience of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:1)
 - a. The larger audience—"among you"
 - (1) Unlike Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, this letter was not intended to be a pastoral epistle.
 - (2) Peter wrote to a larger audience identified as "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1).
 - (3) The *you* of 1 Peter 5:1 refers back to this target audience.
 - b. The specific audience—"The elders...I exhort"
 - (1) While it is true that this epistle was not aimed at specific target groups within the larger group, the Lord admonished Peter to target several verses within the epistle at more narrow or specific groups.
 - (2) In this section, the target audience was narrowed to elders who were among the larger group of scattered believers.
2. The beneficiaries of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:2)
 - a. The flock of God which is among you
 - (1) It was common for God's people to be referred to as sheep (John 10:3-16, 26-27; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).
 - (2) It is likewise normal for a congregation of God's people to be referred to as a flock (Acts 20:28-29).
 - (3) While men were appointed to take oversight of the flock (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2), it was "the flock of God."
 - (4) This is confirmed by Christ's identifying as the Shepherd (John 10:2, 11-16; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 1 Peter 5:4).



- b. God's heritage (1 Peter 5:3)
 - (1) A *heritage* is identified as that which may be inherited.
 - (2) Interestingly enough, the word *heritage* is mostly used in the Old Testament with our passage being the only New Testament appearance and it has a strong connection to Israel.
 - (3) It should be understood that saved Jews were beneficiaries in the present of many of the promises found in the new covenant that other Jews will not experience until the millennial kingdom.
- 3. The content of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:2)
 - a. **Feed** the flock of God which is among you.
 - (1) We should not miss the irony of Peter's message to these believers and its correspondence to the message given to him of Christ.
 - (2) Some of Christ's final words to Peter after His resurrection stated:
 - a) Feed my lambs (John 21:15).
 - b) Feed my sheep (John 21:16).
 - c) Feed my sheep (John 21:17).
 - (3) Some of Peter's final words in his first letter will echo what he heard from Christ—"Feed the flock."
 - (4) Sheep cannot survive without eating and in the present context it was to be a steady diet of the words of God (see Acts 20:28-29).
 - a) The newborn babes were to receive "the sincere milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2).
 - b) The more experienced and mature believers were to receive the meat (1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12, 14).
 - c) As it was in the days of Jeremiah, far too many men "speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:16).
 - d) Finding men who would fulfil this call was and is so rare that the Lord told Timothy, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17).
 - b. **Take the oversight** thereof.
 - (1) The task is easier to define than it is to accomplish.
 - a) Taking oversight simply means that one watches over something.
 - b) Much like a steward, the under-shepherd, if you will, is watching over sheep that are not his own. Those sheep belong to the "good" (John 10:11, 14), "great" (Hebrews 13:20), and "chief" (1 Peter 5:4) Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Paul identified this people as **overseers** in Acts 20:28.
 - (3) Paul warned the Jewish believers to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they **watch** for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17).



4. The motivation of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:2-3)
 - a. Not of force (1 Peter 5:2)
 - (1) The negative—"not by constraint"
 - (2) The positive—"but willingly"
 - (3) The message—The elders were not to fulfil their calling out of pressure or force of others. The apostle Paul alluded to this truth when speaking of fulfilling his obligation as a steward of God's dispensation—"For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" (1 Corinthians 9:17).
 - b. Not for the money (1 Peter 5:2)
 - (1) The negative—"not for filthy lucre"
 - (2) The positive—"but of a ready mind"
 - (3) The message—The elders were not to fulfil their calling merely for the sake of obtaining money or riches (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). Like it is for all men, "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).
 - c. Not with force (1 Peter 5:3)
 - (1) The negative—"Neither as being lords over God's heritage"
 - (2) The positive—"but being ensamples to the flock"
 - (3) The message—Although the flock was admonished to obey the elders (Hebrews 13:17), the elders were not to lead the flock by demanding obedience or conformation; rather, the elders were to lead by being ensamples before the flock.
5. The reward in the exhortation (1 Peter 5:4)
 - a. The giver of the reward—"the chief Shepherd"
 - (1) This is no doubt a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) He is referenced elsewhere as the:
 - a) Good shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
 - b) Great shepherd (Hebrews 13:20)
 - (3) Here, He is identified as the CHIEF Shepherd likely emphasizing His role as being OVER the overseeing elders.
 - b. The time of the reward—"when the chief Shepherd shall appear"
 - (1) The word *appear* is often used to speak of Christ's return for the church at the blessed hope.
 - (2) It is the time when our earthly obligations cease (1 Timothy 6:14).
 - (3) It is the time when the Lord will judge the quick and dead believers (2 Timothy 4:1).
 - (4) It is a time of rewarding (2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Peter 5:4).
 - (5) It is identified as the blessed hope for which believers look (Titus 2:13).
 - (6) It is the time when Christ shall come without sin and unto salvation [physical redemption] (Hebrews 9:28).
 - (7) It is the time in which believers hope that they will not be ashamed (1 John 2:28).
 - (8) It is the time when we shall be made like Christ (1 John 3:2).



- c. The content of the reward—“ye shall receive a crown of glory”; See special notes on the believers’ crowns (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
- (1) Obtaining a crown
 - a) Striving for the mastery (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
 - i) All do not win a prize (1 Corinthians 9:24).
 - ii) We must run to obtain (1 Corinthians 9:24).
 - iii) Our crown is incorruptible (1 Corinthians 9:25; see 1 Peter 5:4).
 - iv) Subjection of the flesh is a necessity (1 Corinthians 9:27).
 - b) Striving lawfully (2 Timothy 2:5)
 - c) Loss of crown (Revelation 3:11)
 - i) Crowns are not the same as salvation.
 - ii) They are rewards for faithfulness in a particular area.
 - iii) Unlike your salvation, it appears that your crown(s) can be taken from you.
 - (2) Available crowns
 - a) The crown of rejoicing (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19)
 - i) This crown has often been called the “soul-winner’s crown.”
 - ii) However, it appears to be much more than that and is never called such in the Bible.
 - iii) In fact, the people are said to be Paul’s crown.
 - iv) It is very likely that this is a crown for anyone who has led others to the saving knowledge of Christ or taught them in the ways of God.
 - v) Believers who you have led to the Lord or instructed in the words and ways of God are your rejoicing (2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 3:9; 3 John 1:4).
 - vi) It is possible that you will even be involved in presenting those you have led to the Lord to Him.
 - (a) The church will be presented to Christ (2 Corinthians 4:14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; Colossians 1:22, 28; Jude 1:24).
 - (b) The apostle Paul is somehow involved in this presentation (2 Corinthians 11:2; Colossians 1:28). Note: Colossians 1:28 seems to indicate that believers other than Paul are involved in this presentation. Could it be that you physically get to present believers to Christ that you led to Him while on this earth?
 - b) The crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)—given to those “that love his appearing”



- c) The crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
 - i) Given to those who are faithful (Revelation 2:10)
 - ii) Particularly faithful unto death in suffering (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
 - d) **The crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4)**
 - i) Given to those who take oversight of the flock
 - ii) Particularly they have to meet the following requirements
 - (a) They feed the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2).
 - (b) They willingly take the oversight thereof (1 Peter 5:2).
 - (c) They are ensamples unto the flock (1 Peter 5:3).
- (3) The crowning day
- a) The time of crowning
 - i) At the end of the race (1 Corinthians 9:24)
 - ii) At the day of trial (James 1:12)
 - b) The casting of our crowns
 - i) No Bible verse specifically says what believers will do with their crowns, but a scene in heaven indicates that we will cast them at our Saviour's feet (Revelation 4:4-11).
 - ii) Interestingly, our heads are not worthy to bear those crowns, but those crowns are not worthy to be on the head of our Lord.
- d. The longevity of the reward—"that fadeth not away" (see 1 Peter 1:4)
- (1) The world does their bidding for crowns that fade or corrupt.
 - (2) We, on the other hand, run our spiritual races for rewards that do not fade away and our obtained crowns are said to be "incorruptible" (1 Corinthians 9:25; see also 1 Peter 1:4).

II. EXHORTATIONS TO THE YOUNGER (1 Peter 5:5-7)

A. The Likeness of the Exhortation (1 Peter 5:5)

- 1. The declaration of likeness—"Likewise"
- 2. The subject of likeness
 - a. In the immediate context, the elder was encouraged to submit himself to God, and, in some ways, to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - b. Now, the younger are encouraged to submit themselves to the elders in the manner in which the elders submit themselves to God and to the flock.
 - c. This mutual submission can also be found in Ephesians 5:21 where the saints were admonished, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."



B. The Exhortation to Submission (1 Peter 5:5)

1. The audience of the exhortation—“ye younger...yourselves”
 - a. Obviously, in the present context, the reference to elder and younger speaks to age and maturity.
 - b. Those ruling these scattered believers were elders, likely both in office and in age.
 - c. If all things are right, the most spiritual and capable people in any body should be its oldest congregants.
2. The beneficiaries of the exhortation—“unto the elder”
3. The commandment of the exhortation—“submit” (see Proverbs 20:29)
 - a. In youth, man has a great amount of strength and zeal—“the glory of young men is their strength.” A young man might have the fortitude, strength, and stamina to accomplish great things, but his limited knowledge hinders him from accomplishing all God has for him.
 - b. As time elapses, man learns from both failure and success. He obtains the knowledge and enjoys the wisdom that often eluded him during his youth. His beauty becomes “the gray head.” The very thing that limited his ability to accomplish great things in youth is now a virtue he has achieved.
 - c. For this reason, and others, the Lord calls upon the younger to submit unto the elder.
4. The mutuality of the exhortation—“Yea, all of you be subject one to another” (Ephesians 5:21)
 - a. There are good reasons for the two groups to cooperate in the work of God and submit their abilities one to the other.
 - b. There are also good reasons for the two groups to submit themselves to the other for the sake of learning how to better accomplish the work of God.

C. The Exhortation to Humility (1 Peter 5:5-6)

1. The nature of the exhortation—“be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5)
 - a. What is humility? (see Isaiah 2:9, 11)
 - (1) King James VI (King James I) pointed out that the definitions of many Bible words could be found by considering surrounding words. John Eadie explains this in his book: *The English Bible*, vol. 2, London, Macmillan, 1876, p. 191.
 - (2) The true riches of the word *humility* can only be gleaned when one considers words used in close proximity of the word *humble* (along with its variations). These words include:
 - a) Croucheth (Psalm 10:10)
 - b) Lowly (Proverbs 16:19)
 - c) Boweth or bowed down (Isaiah 2:9, 11)
 - d) Brought down (Isaiah 5:15)
 - e) Hewn down (Isaiah 10:33)
 - f) Abased (Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14)



- (3) God wants the Bible student to understand the depths and riches of His word and words. In this case, He clearly indicated that humility results from one being brought low.
 - b. Understanding the context
 - (1) To be clothed with something can mean to cover one's self as with clothing.
 - (2) In other words, these believers were to cover themselves with humility as a means of putting away their pride.
 - (3) This was especially true in the immediate context where younger believers were going to have to submit unto the elder.
 2. The motivation of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6)
 - a. God resisteth the proud.
 - b. God giveth grace to the humble.
 - c. The Bible associates several qualities to the truly humble person.
 - (1) The book of James lists a few of these traits as follows.
 - a) The humble man submits to the will of God (James 4:7).
 - b) Additionally, he repents of his sins (James 4:8) and mourns over his disobedience (James 4:9).
 - c) He refuses to speak evil of his brother (James 4:11), but rather chooses to leave judgment to the Lord because He is the righteous Judge (James 4:12).
 - d) He refuses to boast about what he is doing (James 4:13-16) because he knows that his failure to do right is a sin (James 4:17).
 - (2) Yet, the greatest truth concerning the humble man is not what he does or gives for God, but what God gives to him.
 - (3) The Bible says that God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud (1 Peter 5:5-6).
 - (4) God gives a man what he needs if that man will simply remain humble.
 3. The reward of the exhortation (1 Peter 5:6)
 - a. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.
 - b. God may exalt you in due time.
 - (1) The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that honour follows humility (see Luke 14:11—"whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.")
 - (2) Abased means to be brought low, while exalted means to be elevated.
 - (3) What or who is at work behind the scenes to make this principle true?
 - (4) The answer is found in James 4:10—"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
 - (5) Man's finite mind-set leads him to think that the way up is up and the way down is down; but according to the Bible, the opposite is true.
 - (6) The way up (to be exalted) is down (through humility) and the way down (to be abased) is up (self-exaltation).



D. The Exhortation to Trust (1 Peter 5:7)

1. The nature of the exhortation—“Casting all your care upon him”
2. The reward in the exhortation—“for he careth for you”
3. The understanding of the exhortation
 - a. Generically speaking
 - (1) Prayer serves as the greatest remedy for worry and fears.
 - (2) In Philippians 4:6, God’s word tells us to “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
 - (3) A man can expend time and strength caring for the things of this world including the necessities of life, or he can make a conscious decision to obediently cast those cares upon God.
 - (4) According to Philippians 4:7, by choosing to pray, the cares and worries of man are replaced with “the peace of God.”
 - b. Contextually speaking
 - (1) While much of the above is true even in the present context, the point of the immediate passage is that the younger believers within the body were to submit themselves to the elder in humility and take their cares or complaints to the Lord rather than airing them out to the elder or to others about the elder.
 - (2) There could be no doubt that problems would arise. There could be no doubt that pride would rise up in those younger saints and motivate them to critique, rebuke, and rebel against the elders, but the Lord reminded these saints that they should take such grievances to Him and allow Him to sort out the transgressions or supposed transgressions.
 - (3) For further clarification consider 1 Timothy 5:1.
 - a) Improper treatment of the elder—“Rebuke not an elder”
 - i) The issue at hand is one of respect.
 - ii) The scripture does not imply or teach that believers can never question the actions of an older man. However, it does indicate the method of this questioning.
 - iii) An elder is not to be rebuked but intreated “as a father.”
 - b) Proper treatment of the elder—“intreat him as a father”
 - i) By intreating
 - (a) To intreat a person is to plead with or earnestly ask him.
 - (b) Intreating reflects approaching him with respect.
 - ii) As a father
 - (a) The manner of approach is further clarified with the phrase “as a father.”
 - (b) In other words, Timothy needed to deal with the aged men with respect much like a son should approach his father.