

# Peter's Message: Be Clothed with Humility 1 Peter 5:5-7

We are looking at how God asks us to be Practicing Biblical Humility. Over the next three weeks we will see three of the ways this vital truth is communicated to us in God's Word. There are three key chapters about humility we will see:

## Humility Taught by Peter, Paul & James

**Peter's Message: Be Clothed with Humility (1 Pet. 5:5)**

**Paul's Message: Put on Humility (Col. 3:12)**

**James' Message: Humble Yourselves in the Sight of the Lord (James 4:6)**

Perhaps the clearest and simplest Scriptural guidance on humility comes to us in 1 Peter 5. It is also a vivid illustration of how to apply humility in our lives. All that is found in 1 Peter 5:5-7.

As we turn there, listen to what Peter was moved by the Spirit of God to write, as we stand and listen to God speaking to us through His Word:

1 Peter 5:5-7 (NKJV) 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.”

“Therefore **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Pray

The target of our time in the Word this morning is that expression, right in the middle of v. 5 that says “be clothed with humility”.

## The Key to God's Attention is Humility

God wants us to be clothed with humility so He can pour out His grace upon us.

God constantly, presently, and bountifully pours out grace upon humble people.

The pathway to being constantly showered with grace is humility.

Last time we saw that the essence of humility was expressed by the final Old Testament prophet John the Baptist. This greatest of the prophetic mouthpieces for God, reduced the humility God desires down to just seven words in John 3:30. Remember them?

John 3:30 (NKJV) **He must increase, but I *must* decrease.**

The heart attitude that leads to humility is summed up by John's testimony:

“Christ must increase and I must decrease”.

That is the essence of humility.

Seven words that encapsulate what practicing Biblical Humility is all about.

He must increase, but I *must* decrease

## Seeking to Allow Christ to Increase

Christ will increase when **His Word** is more and more eaten as my food on which I live. (Mt. 4:4)

Christ will increase when **His Attitudes** are reflected in me as I learn from Him. (Mt. 11:28-30)

Christ will increase when **His Actions** are empowered through me, so it becomes no longer I who live but Christ in me. (Gal. 2:20)

Christ will increase when **His Compassion** is lived out in me. (Col. 3:12)

Christ will increase when **His Priorities** are embraced by me. (Phil. 2:5)

Christ will increase when **His Will** is embraced as my goal. (John 6:38)

So that is the goal, Christ increases and I decrease. Now to look at the amazing context of what may be the most clearly presented call to humility in 1 Peter 5.

## The New Testament World of 1 Peter

The Book of 1 Peter is a book set against the backdrop of impending persecution.

Paul is back in prison awaiting execution.

Peter is on the run.

So God directs Peter to write a book about hope and peace.

We know that Peter chose one of the most difficult places to minister. Here in 1 Peter 1 we find the address of those that he has served. They were the saints in Roman Asia, the most secular, emperor-worshipping, hostile to the Gospel territory in the Roman Empire. Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia & Bithynia constitute the northern two-thirds of Roman Asia, or modern day Turkey.

They lived in the center of all that was Rome.

Peter says suffering is coming. He says that no less than 15 times, using 8 different Greek words for suffering. This becomes the most densely packed portion of the New Testament describing a theology of suffering.

Turn to 1 Peter 4:12 with me and think about what these early believers faced.

## First Century Believers Faced Horrible Tortures

1 Peter 4:12 (NKJV) Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

This phrase in v. 12 could be read as “the painful trial that burns among you.” The original readers would hear this as martyrdom by being burned at the stake.

At the very least, Peter described experiences of pain comparable to the pain of being burned with fire, though his definition of these trials remains deliberately vague.

Next, look at v. 13:

## First Century Believers Experienced Divine Comfort

1 Peter 4:13-14 (NKJV) but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

Our suffering is the same kind of thing that Christ received, and therefore, in some sense, suffering is an indication of the believers’ identification with Christ. The word Peter used in v. 13 “partake” is taken from the familiar word *koinoneo*, “to share or fellowship with someone.”

At the end of the verse when we see Peter refer to the “exceeding joy” we are reminded

that Biblical joy, in the deepest sense, is a profound confidence that God is in control of every area of our lives, even the painful places.

Now, look at v. 19:

## First Century Believers Knew God Allows No Accidents

1 Peter 4:19 (NKJV) Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

In this one verse we can see that the content of the entire letter of 1 Peter is summarized. We as believers do not suffer accidentally nor do we go through affliction because of some irresistible forces of fate.

This is why we want to daily renew our surrender to God. The word Peter used, translated “commit” literally means “to entrust yourself for safe keeping.”

If our God can oversee the countless galaxies of our Universe, and the constant ebb and flow of the tides of the seas, He certainly is able to personally walk me through any trials I’ll ever face in my lifetime.

The book of Peter is an epistle on hope, portrayed against the backdrop of suffering. If Paul emphasizes faith, and John emphasizes love, it is Peter who emphasizes hope.

Peter begins by explaining that salvation starts a “living hope” within us. Knowing Christ produces hope that lives (1 Pet. 1:3).

Then Peter adds that this hope guards our minds so that we can “hope to the end” (1 Pet. 1:13). Our hope need explanation and defense before a watching world (1 Pet. 3:15). Finally, we can stand fast in our hope because of the grace of God that never fails (1 Pet. 5:12).

Now we come to chapter 5. Peter reminds them of their calling to be servant leaders. Then he expands his words to everyone in the church and explains the trio of attitudes that mark spiritual maturity and prompt God’s blessings.

## God Says Submission is the Pathway to Spiritual Maturity

Peter explains the trio of spiritual attitudes that reflect spiritual maturity. When God is our focus, and we are spiritual healthy, these attitudes are the choices we make:

**submissiveness** v. 5, **humbleness** v. 6, and **peacefulness**.

Note again what he says in 1 Peter 5:5-7.

1 Peter 5:5-7 (NKJV) 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.

First Peter says that younger believers (in both physical age and spiritual maturity) are to submit to the recognized spiritual leaders gifted and chosen by God to lead, called the elders. Peter is adding another category to the six levels of Biblical “submission list” of our lives.

Peter started with: 1). all saints. submitting to the authority of human government (1 Pet. 2:13-17), and expanded that to 2). believing slaves submission to their masters (1 Pet. 2:18-25). Then Peter explains that in God’s created order 3). all believing wives are to submit to their husbands (1 Pet. 3:1-7). Now he rounds out the submission doctrine to include 4). all believers submitting to their elders, 5). all believers submitting to each other, and finally, 6). all believers submitting to God.

**Amazingly God has said that submissiveness, humbleness, and peacefulness are all tied together, interconnected, and mutually dependent.**

**Humility is seen in submissiveness; and leads to peacefulness.  
Peacefulness comes by humility and submission.  
Submission leads to humility and peace.**

## **God Says Submission is the Pathway to Grace**

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV) 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.”

The first choice on the pathway to spiritual maturity is submissiveness.

All believers submit to one another’s God-designed roles, because we all submit to God. That’s what God tells us in 1 Peter 5:5.

God’s answer is always that we first submit to God, and then choose to clothe ourselves with humility. Jesus could lay aside His outer garments in the Upper Room and tie on the apron of a slave to wash the disciples’ feet (Jn. 13), because He had already submitted to do the will of His father (John 6:38).

True godly submission in our marriage, at our church, and in our life is never possible until we first submit to God.

Only God’s grace can enable us to submit to other believers, submit to ungodly governments and work authorities; but when we do, God is able to make all grace abound towards us as we submit.

## **God Says Humility is the Pathway to Spiritual Maturity**

1 Peter 5:5-6 (NKJV) 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,

The second choice on the pathway to spiritual maturity after submissiveness is humbleness. God will always resist pride in any form in our lives because He hates pride (Proverbs 6:16-17; 8:13). God desires us to clothe our self with humility.

**The only medication that defeats pride is grace.**

**The only pathway to that grace is submissiveness.**

**Grace enables us to clothe our self with humility.**

**The evidence of the grace of submission is when we submit humbly to one another.**

Submission is very hard because it requires that we trust God more than ourselves.

When we entrust ourselves to God He allays our fears.

The “mighty hand of God<sup>1</sup>” that we humbly submit to is able to take care of anyone and anything around us, better than we ever could.

Notice God tells us to “be clothed with humility”<sup>2</sup>. The verb clothed spoke of the tied on action a slave took when coming to serve. It is also amazing reflective of Christ's actions at the Last Supper. In the midst of all the proud hearts, Jesus humbly served the dirty-footed, proud-hearted disciples by lovingly tying on the apron of the slave.

So we are to take His attitude that we are never above serving anyone, and with that humble attitude securely tied onto us, we go out reflecting Christ’s love. Pause and ask yourself,

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<sup>1</sup> MSB: This is an OT symbol of the power of God working in the experience of men, always accomplishing His sovereign purpose (cf. Ex. 3:19, 20; Job 30:20, 21; Ezek. 20:33, 37; Mic. 6:8). The readers of Peter’s letter were not to fight the sovereign hand of God, even when it brought them through testings. One of the evidences of lack of submission and humility is impatience with God in His work of humbling believers (*see notes on 2 Cor. 12:7-10*). **exalt you in due time**. Cf. Luke 14:11. God will lift up the suffering, submissive believers in His wisely appointed time.

<sup>2</sup> MSB: To “be clothed” literally means to tie something on oneself with a knot or a bow. This term was often used of a slave putting on an apron over his clothes in order to keep his clothes clean. “Humility” is literally “lowly mindedness,” an attitude that one is not too good to serve. Humility was not considered a virtue by the ancient world, any more than it is today (but cf. John 13:3-17; Phil. 2:3, 4; see also Prov. 6:16; 8:13; Is. 57:15).

when is the last time you consciously tied on Christ's apron of humbly serving others? Is that a daily attitude? Is it your desire to reflect Christ in this way?

## **Spiritual Maturity Prompts the Attitude of Peacefulness**

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

The final choice on the pathway to spiritual maturity after submissiveness and humbleness is peacefulness. A submissive and humble person wants to walk in obedience to the God of the Universe who has clearly asked us to cast "all our cares" upon Him.

God wants to take care of all of our troubles, cares, and burdens. But, without the first two attitudes of submission and humility we can never get the benefit of His Mighty Hand caring for us.

**In 1 Pet. 5:7, that word translated "care" in English comes from a Greek word rich with meaning that literally means: "anxiety, the state of being pulled apart". God asks for us to gather up and consciously unload all of our burdens, discontentment, troubles, anxious thoughts, fears, and pains onto Him.**

Believers can't really point others to an All Powerful Heavenly Father when they are unwilling to trust Him with their own struggles in life. Peter is using that great promise from the life of David to frame the way God wants us to likewise respond to Him. Remember Psalm 55:22?

Psalm 55:22 (NKJV) Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

God Himself walks alongside us through every moment of each day of our lives. He is the Divine Dumpster.

**He says, "Throw all those heavy, painful, sharp, poisonous, debilitating, injuring thoughts and attitudes upon Me, they are wearing you down. My Mighty Hand can hold all your sorrows, all your woes, and all your pains and fears. You can't. They injure our relationship when you hold onto them. They distract you away from looking at Me with the eyes of faith and a heart of trust.**

Actually, the verb that the Spirit of God inspired Peter to use makes this so clear. It is once for all (the aorist tense means once in the past). We are to make a choice that once and for all we are going to give over all our past cares, and all of our present cares, and all of our future cares to God.

We don't sort them, keep the ones we can handle (or think we can handle) and give the rest to Him. He wants them all, once and for all, now. Then, whenever a new care arises all we have to do is remember that belongs to the Lord not us. We have already cast them all for life, upon Him.

## **Humility: Seeking to Allow Christ to Increase**

Amazingly God has said that submissiveness, humbleness, and peacefulness are all tied together, interconnected, and mutually dependent.

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Peacefulness comes by humility and submission.

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God's answer is always that we first submit to God, and then choose to clothe ourselves with humility. Jesus could lay aside His outer garments in the Upper Room and tie on the apron of a slave to wash the disciples' feet (Jn. 13), because He had already submitted to do the will of His father (John 6:38); and in the process He laid aside His divine prerogatives and humbled

Himself (Phil. 2) to become one of us and die in our place.

## **Surrender to Jesus Today**