



Living Hope - 1 Peter 5:1-7

Shepherd the Flock of God

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

1. In the first four verses, Peter gives us direct teaching toward “elders” in the church. What are some of the characteristics of a good Elder? (For help, you may want to read 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 20:13-38)
2. Peter begins in 5:1 by appealing to them as “one of them.” As Peter approaches the church leaders, he comes as a co-laborer, not as someone who was “higher and holier” than they were. What does this tell you about the nature of Christian leadership in the church?
3. 5:2 reminds the leaders in the churches that all the people are God’s, not theirs. This is an extremely important reminder. What would be some of the implications if Christian leaders viewed their congregations as “theirs” not God’s?
4. In 5:2b-3, Peter shares a series of contrasts that should mark the Christian leader in the church. Peter reminds us that we should serve the Lord and tend His flock willingly . . . The Lord does not force us or coerce us to be involved in ministry. He calls us and invites us to ministry, but we have the freedom of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’!” If leaders are supposed to lead willingly, how much more should this principle apply to those who are serving in other ways (beside leadership)? How does this truth impact you as it pertains to serving in the church?

5. Another of the commands in 5:2 is that the Elder is to serve enthusiastically, not just for selfish gain (monetary gain). As you serve or lead, are you serving enthusiastically to the needs of others, or are you serving merely to receive the “paycheck” of affirmation or influence?
6. A third command comes in 5:3 as Elders are instructed to be an example, not a domineering leader. In what ways does the life of a leader (their example) back up and support their message? In what ways is your “message” supported by your life?
7. Finally, this passage concludes with a promise of a crown of glory when Jesus returns to those who serve faithfully in the church. How does knowing that there is a future reward motivate you to serve in Christ’s Church today?
8. After talking to the Elders in the church, Peter now turns and addresses the younger men. Literally, in the original language, this passage does not address just young men, but “young people (men and women).” Why is Peter singling out younger people in this passage?
9. In 5:5b, Peter talks about people “clothing themselves with humility.” The word translated “clothe” is a little used Greek word that refers to a servant’s outer apron that they might wear over their clothing. Given this, what do you think it means to “clothe yourself with humility?”
10. What are some of the reasons given here for why someone would humble themselves? What would it look like for you to live a humble life?