
1 PETER 5 - SERVING IN HOPE

It has been said that the church rises and falls on the spiritual quality of its leaders. Immature leaders motivated by personal gain seem to replicate their kind among the flock. Before saying goodbye in his final chapter, Peter strongly challenges leaders to serve by example, with motives and methods worthy of their high calling. He then exhorts all believers to humbly submit to God and to one another and to stand strong in the face of the enemy's resistance.

DAY 1 **Read 1 Peter 5:1-14 | Serving in Hope.** Peter addresses this portion of his letter to the elders who serve the church congregation. The word *elder* refers to those officials who serve as pastoral leaders, occupying a position that is crucial to believers experiencing suffering and persecution. Peter includes himself as a *fellow elder*—one of them.

1. Notice the two significant statements Peter makes regarding himself.
 - a. He was a witness of what?

Proclaiming himself a witness of Christ's sufferings would cause Peter to recall the most painful time of his own life. Think back to the kind of witness Peter was at the time of Christ's death. (Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31; Luke 22:54-62.)

- b. Even though he initially failed Jesus as a witness, in what way would Peter be included as a partaker?

At the time Peter wrote this letter, he was a church leader who had sinned, repented, and been restored by God's grace, allowing him to be included as one who would share in Christ's glory. He had become a pillar of the Jerusalem church but wrote as a fellow elder. He states that a pastor's primary role is to *shepherd the flock of God*.

2. In verses 2-3, Peter summarizes the pastor's role. Using your resources, look up the word *shepherd* and write a definition.

3. Peter highlights the right and wrong ways to shepherd the flock of God. Jot down the descriptive words he uses in the following for:
 - a. Wrong motives (verse 2).
 - b. Right motives (verse 2).
 - c. Wrong methods (verse 3).
 - d. Right methods (verse 3).

4. In order to better understand Peter's heart on this matter and the emphasis of his words, take some time to carefully read through the Old Testament passage of Ezekiel 34. It is a graphic portrayal of the problems with irresponsible shepherds and the detrimental effects upon God's flock.
 - a. How does God feel about these shepherds? What will He do with them?

 - b. Contrast their behavior with that of the True Shepherd.

 - c. What do you learn in this passage about God's love and care for His flock?

 - d. The perspective Peter put forth in chapter five was indelibly written on his heart. Read John 21:15-17 to explain why this was so. Record your thoughts on it.

5. Think about it. What are some of the duties of the pastor-shepherds in your own church? Take a moment to pray for them and their huge responsibility.

6. Peter concludes this section by focusing on the highest motive for shepherding God's people. What is it? What reward will the shepherd receive?

7. The crown of glory is not a literal crown that each person will wear, rather a common glory that all pastors/leaders will share with those who are faithful servants as well as those who have persevered through suffering. Think about it. How does knowing you will share this crown of glory encourage you to continue serving in hope?

Memory Verse

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.

1 Peter 5:6-7 NKJV

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How or in what way?

DAY 2 **Read 1 Peter 5:5-7 | Submit to God.** The remainder of the chapter is directed to those who are not pastors, but most likely younger in terms of their Christian maturity and experience. The pastor's responsibility is to shepherd the flock, and the members of the flock have the responsibility to submit to those in leadership over them.

Again, Peter issues this as a command rather than an option. The word *submit* used here means to *defer to the authority of another*. It indicates a cooperative spirit and a willingness to support the pastor.

1. What motive is there for believers to be submissive?
 - a. How does Hebrews 13:17 support what Peter is stating here?

The combination of godly leaders supported by submissive followers will result in the mutual respect and humility between all members in the body of Christ. Peter's exhortation to *be clothed with humility* suggests that this virtue should be a part of the believer's spiritual wardrobe.

2. Describe the occasion and example of humility displayed by Jesus in each of the following:
 - a. John 13:1-17 – Consider the impact this scene would have had on Peter's mind and heart.

- b. Philippians 2:1-11 – Paul the apostle shared here about the unity that comes through humility, modeled by Jesus that we are to follow.
 - c. Something to think about. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “Humility is to make a right estimate of oneself.” By doing so, we can be made aware of our strengths and weaknesses. We can also commit these to God to help us improve where needed. How can this help you to follow Christ’s example in serving others?
3. Notice the verbs that Peter uses in verse 5 are present tense—meaning that God *continually* opposes the proud; those who think they do not need to listen to Him. But He *continually* gives grace to those who listen and humbly follow Him, particularly in the midst of suffering and persecution.
 - a. Explain what it means to “humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.” What happens to those who follow this command?
 4. Is the believer fully trusting in God if they hang on to their worries, problems, and struggles in life? According to verse 7, what is the answer to fear and worry?
 5. Below are three passages that contain the secret to knowing how to cast your care on Him and the results you will achieve. Write down what you discover here and begin applying these principles.

Psalm 55:22

Matthew 11:28

Philippians 4:6-7

DAY 3 **Read 1 Peter 5:8-11 | Resist the Devil.** If you cast yourself and your cares on God, you are safe. If you do not, Satan will gain the advantage. C.S. Lewis once said, “The two mistakes Christians make in talking about Satan are that we either joke about him or we ignore him.” Neither of these can be an option for the believer.

The words *sober* and *vigilant* could be better translated *be self-controlled and alert*. The intent is to *pay attention*—wake up! It is a strong warning for every Christian to realize that we are in a life-and-death spiritual battle and the stakes are very high.

All of the persecution that believers will ever face comes down to one source. Your enemy, the devil. He is the enemy of God and the source of all evil in the world. Although he has no power over God, he does what he can to divide and destroy those who belong to God. We must learn to be aware of his tactics and always be on guard.

1. How much do you know about this “roaring lion” that is seeking to devour you? It is vital that you have a correct understanding of Satan and his demonic forces in the world. Here is your opportunity to examine his activities, limitations, and ultimate destiny. The references below will enable you to say that you *are not ignorant of his devices* (2 Corinthians 2:11).

a. Activities:

Job 1:7

Matthew 13:19

2 Corinthians 4:4

2 Corinthians 11:14

Ephesians 6:16

1 Thessalonians 2:18

b. Limitations:

Job 1:12

James 4:7

1 John 2:13

1 John 5:18

Revelation 12:10-11

c. Destiny:

Matthew 25:41

John 16:11

Romans 16:20

1 John 3:8

Revelation 20:2-3

Revelation 20:10

- d. What, from this exercise that you just completed, stands out to you and why?

2. What instruction does Peter give in verse 9 about how you must deal with Satan?
 - a. The word *resist* speaks of maintaining a defensive position rather than one of attack. What do you think is the best way to resist him and remain steadfast in the faith?
 - b. What does Peter say about suffering? How does this underscore the importance of praying for one another? Do you take this to heart?
 - c. In terms of the big picture, what does Peter say God will do? Which of these saving grace actions are you most in need of right now?

DAY **4** **Read 1 Peter 5:12-14** | Peter writes his final thoughts and offers greetings at the conclusion of his letter. He mentions Silas, who served as Peter's secretary, taking down the dictation of this letter as Peter spoke it.

1. For what reason did Peter say he wrote this letter?

The "kiss of love" (verse 14) was a popular form of greeting in the early church. It represented unity and expressed love among the believers. Today a handshake or hug is the equivalent. But no matter what greeting is used, the point is that we are to let our love for others show through our actions.

2. Peter ends his letter as he began it, by wishing believers the peace that comes to all those who are in Christ Jesus. Do you have His peace right now? If not, would you like to? Just bow in His presence and invite Him into your heart by repeating these words:

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner in need of Your forgiveness. I ask You right now to be my Savior and Lord. Thank You for dying for me and rising again from the dead and for granting me Your peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

If you just prayed this prayer, tell someone. Share your experience and stay connected with others who will encourage you to continue growing in your faith.

DAY 5

In Touch with Jesus. This section is intended to be a review of what you have learned and what God has spoken to you this week. Go back over your lesson with a marking pen or highlighter and mark those places and points that stand out to you. Use the margins to make personal notations. Be sure to indicate which points or questions you'd like to share with your discussion group.

1. **Listen** | In what way did the Lord meet you in His Word this week? Be specific.

2. **Learn** | How can you apply this understanding to your daily Christian walk?

3. **Live** | What step of obedience will you purpose to take in your walk of faith?

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. —Ephesians 6:18 NIV

Adoration – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

Confession – Honestly deal with sin; acknowledge to God the ways (and whys) you fall short.

Thanksgiving – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

Supplication – Pray specifically for the needs of others, ourselves, our church, our nation.



Close your discussion time by praying together. Use the A·C·T·S pattern as a group focus and keep it simple. No need to be lengthy or profound, just authentic.
