

Shepherding Well, Standing Humble, Resisting the Enemy

In First Peter chapter five, Peter closes his letter with practical, Spirit-led counsel for church leadership, for the younger believers, and really for all of us as we live in a world that resists Christ. Peter's aim is clear: God wants His people to grow up—steady, humble, watchful, and hopeful.

A Word to the Elders: Shepherd, Do Not Perform

First Peter 5:1–4

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.” (First Peter 5:1 NKJV)

Peter speaks with a remarkable blend of authority and humility. He does not place himself above the other elders—he calls himself a fellow elder. Yet he also reminds them he is a witness of Christ's sufferings and a partaker of the glory to come.

Peter had seen Jesus suffer. And Peter had seen a preview of future glory. That is the posture of a faithful pastor: eyes fixed on the cross and the coming kingdom. That balance protects a shepherd from becoming harsh, cynical, or self-serving.

Then Peter gives the central command:

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers.” (First Peter 5:2 NKJV)

That is the heartbeat of ministry. The call is not to entertain the flock, not to impress the flock, not to build a brand—to feed and shepherd the flock of God. Jesus Himself pressed this into Peter after the resurrection:

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? ... Feed My sheep.” (John 21:15–17 NKJV)

Love for Jesus is proven, not by talk, but by care for His people. A pastor's first job is to nourish souls with the Word of God and to guard the flock from what harms them.

Peter continues by giving three contrasts—three ways a leader can drift off course:

1. Not by pressure, but willingly
“Not by compulsion but willingly.” (First Peter 5:2 NKJV)
Ministry is not meant to be forced or driven by guilt. God wants shepherds who serve because they are called and they love Christ's people.
2. Not for money, but with a ready heart
“Not for dishonest gain but eagerly.” (First Peter 5:2 NKJV)
Peter warns against turning ministry into a business. When money becomes the motive, people become a means. The gospel never prospers where greed is tolerated.
3. Not as a dictator, but as an example
“Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” (First Peter 5:3 NKJV)
Spiritual leadership is not control; it is service. It is not domination; it is discipleship. A shepherd leads best by living what he teaches.

And Peter lifts the eyes of every servant-leader to the true evaluation that matters:

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”
(First Peter 5:4 NKJV)

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. Every under-shepherd answers to Him. And He remembers faithful service that the world never sees.

A Word to the Younger: Learn Humility and Mutual Submission

First Peter 5:5–6

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility.” (First Peter 5:5 NKJV)

Peter’s vision for the church is not a power struggle. It is a humble family—older believers guiding, younger believers learning, and everyone submitting to one another in love.

Then comes one of the strongest warnings in the New Testament:

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (First Peter 5:5 NKJV)

Pride is not a personality quirk. It is spiritual poison. Pride makes a person unteachable, harsh, defensive, and self-justifying. And Peter says something sobering: God Himself opposes it.

So what is the pathway to grace?

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”
(First Peter 5:6 NKJV)

God knows how to lift up His people, and He always does it at the right time and in the right way. Our job is not to promote ourselves, but to submit ourselves.

A Word for the Anxious: Give the Weight to God

First Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (First Peter 5:7 NKJV)

This is not sentimental. This is survival. The Christian life has real burdens—family burdens, health burdens, financial pressures, fears about the future, grief, spiritual battles.

Peter says: do not carry what God never intended you to carry alone. Cast it—throw it—place it decisively into the hands of the One who watches over you with loving concern.

You are not ignored in your suffering. You are not overlooked in your weakness. God cares for you.

A Word for the Alert: The Devil Is Real, So Be Watchful

First Peter 5:8–9

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (First Peter 5:8 NKJV)

Peter does not want believers naive. The enemy uses fear, intimidation, temptation, accusation, and discouragement. Sometimes the roar is the strategy—if he can frighten you, he can weaken you.

So what do we do?

“Resist him, steadfast in the faith.” (First Peter 5:9 NKJV)

Not negotiate. Not surrender. Resist.

And we resist by standing on what is true: Christ has saved us by His blood, Christ has risen from the dead, and Christ is Lord. The devil is not sovereign. He is not equal to God. He is a defeated enemy, and Jesus’ name is not a religious slogan—it is authority.

Also remember: you are not alone.

“Knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (First Peter 5:9 NKJV)

The enemy loves isolation. Peter restores perspective: the people of God have always faced trials. And God has always been faithful.

A Word of Hope: Suffering Is Brief, Glory Is Forever

First Peter 5:10–11

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (First Peter 5:10 NKJV)

That is one of the most comforting promises in Scripture. Suffering has a limit. It is “a while.” Glory does not.

God uses trials to mature believers—forming stability, strength, and spiritual depth. Not because pain is good, but because God is faithful, and He wastes nothing.

“To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (First Peter 5:11 NKJV)

Closing Encouragement and Fellowship

First Peter 5:12–14

Peter closes with personal notes—Silvanus (Silas) is mentioned as a faithful brother, and Peter emphasizes again:

“This is the true grace of God in which you stand.” (First Peter 5:12 NKJV)

That is where we live: standing in grace. Not earning, not performing, not proving ourselves—standing in what God has given through Jesus Christ.

He sends greetings, calls for warm fellowship, and closes:

“Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (First Peter 5:14 NKJV)

Practical Application

- If you lead, shepherd people with the Word of God and with Christlike example.
- If you follow, learn humility and grow in teachability.
- If you are anxious, cast the whole burden on the Lord—not some of it.
- If you are under attack, be sober-minded and resist steadfast in the faith.
- If you are suffering, remember it is “a while,” but God’s glory is eternal.

A Challenge for Believers

Ask yourself honestly:

- Am I walking in humility, or am I defending pride?
- Am I carrying anxieties I should have cast on the Lord?
- Have I been spiritually drowsy instead of watchful?
- Am I resisting the devil, or quietly accommodating what I should be confronting?

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Cast your cares on Him. Stand firm. Resist steadfast. And keep feeding on the Word—because strong sheep are not easily devoured.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

If you are not in Christ, you are not standing in grace—you are standing in your own strength, and one day you will stand before God.

But God has made a way for you to be forgiven and reconciled. Jesus shed His blood on the cross to save sinners. God raised Him from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He is the Chief Shepherd, and He calls you to come home.

Turn to Him. Confess your sin. Ask Him to save you. Trust Him as Lord. He will forgive you, give you new life, and place you in His flock—kept by a faithful Creator, guarded by a risen Savior, and carried by the God of all grace.