

1. **Introduction:** In the last chapter of Peter's first letter, he abruptly switches from addressing every Christian's practical needs and obligations during tough times to specifically addressing elders, the people responsible for spiritual leadership.
  - Peter's discussion of pastoral leadership is in the context of a coming time of persecution which will be bad enough to be termed a "fiery trial."
  - Peter writes specifically to elders (Pastors and others chosen for spiritual leadership), but his admonitions are directed at all spiritual leaders.
2. <sup>NASB</sup> **1 Peter 5:1-4:** *Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup> nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*
  - In times of persecution and/or confusion, God's people need proper leadership, strong spiritual leadership that will stand fast in the faith in all circumstances.
  - Spiritual leaders are to model godliness, hope, love, and faithfulness to the flock.
  - At first it seems strange Peter choose to "exhort" elders so near the end of his letter?
  - In the OT, accountability is clear in Ezekiel 9 and Malachi 3. In both instances there is judgment by God that begins with spiritual leaders.
  - Looking back at Chapter 4, Peter anticipates that in the coming fiery trial, spiritual leaders will be the first to be tested so he says, "Therefore."
  - Consider 4:17a, *"For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God."* So, Peter says in 5:1a, *"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder."*
  - He sees the coming fiery trial as a judgment from God beginning with the house of God which means beginning with the spiritual leaders, the elders.
  - It is both God's blessing and a fearful thing to be a spiritual leader in the house of God.
  - Believers live their lives in a hostile, unholy world and the way they live is significantly affected by the way their spiritual leaders function as shepherds.
  - Peter is a good leadership model. He faltered on the night Jesus was arrested, but after Jesus' resurrection, He restored Peter to his position of leadership among the disciples.
  - Peter was the first Christian spokesman to preach the risen Christ. He did so with great effectiveness on Pentecost. Scripture tells us that some 3000 souls were saved that day.
  - As a long-time close friend and disciple of Jesus, Peter was a witness to His sufferings. His experience with Jesus and training by Jesus, were vital to the future of Christianity.

- Every spiritual leader needs a vital personal experience with the Lord. It will not be the same experience as Peter's, but it needs to be a life-changing experience that provides the energy and fervor to carry out their calling as a Christian spiritual leader.
  - Peter stresses that leaders are to act in humility with no hint of pride of position. Peter walked with Christ from the beginning of His earthly ministry to the end. He witnessed most of the events of Jesus' ministry from the vantage point of a close friend.
  - Though designated an Apostle by Jesus, Peter refers to himself simply as a fellow elder.
  - He is a fellow elder in the sense that he willingly will endure the fiery trial with them.
3. **Peter's Warnings:** He warns against three common causes of failure in spiritual leadership. They are (1.) laziness (the lust for an easy life). (2.) Greed (the lust for worldly goods and wealth). (3.) Pride (the lust for power, prestige, and praise).
- (1.) Laziness (the lust for leisure, comfort, and an easy life).
  - Peter's warning: **1 Peter 5:2a:** "*Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.*"
  - "*Not under compulsion.*" Don't be like a mule that must be controlled by bit, bridle, and forceful actions. Don't be disconnected and unconcerned. Don't drift into a ministry style that is distracted or majors "in minors." Be a willing servant of God caring for His flock.
  - Don't be fearful to carry out your duties. Voluntarily, give your best.
  - (2.) Greed (the lust for worldly goods and wealth).
  - Peter's warning: **1 Peter 5:2b:** "*Shepherd the flock ... and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.*"
  - In today's world, this warning applies especially to spiritual leaders who make their living in ministry, but it also applies to anyone who receives money for ministry activities.
  - The message is, don't fall into the trap of considering your ministry activities as merely a means of making a living. As Paul warns in 1 Timothy 6:5, avoid the temptation to make "godliness a means of gain." Do your ministry with "eagerness." Love your work.
  - (3.) Pride (the lust for power, prestige, and praise).
  - Peter's warning: **1 Peter 5:** "*Shepherd the flock ... <sup>3</sup> nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*"
  - Spiritual leaders' pride in successful ministry indicates they have forgotten that, without Christ, they can do nothing. A proud heart will begin to feel it can be self-sufficient. That may cause one to believe they are indispensable and lead to seeking people's praise.
  - A spiritual leader must "lead," but should lead with servant lowliness – imitating Christ as they lead by example. When a fiery trial comes, walk through it with the flock.
  - It is altogether too easy for spiritual leaders to fall into the trap of pride of position. After all, they serve and speak on behalf of God. They likely address large groups of people on a regular basis. People look up to them and make major life decisions based on their teaching. Most people trust them. To what standard are spiritual leaders to be held accountable. The temptation to be prideful may be very great.

4. **Biblical Accountability for Leaders:** Very few people think biblically about leaders' accountability. Peter's rules for spiritual leaders set a worthy example to be followed.
- Peter highlights a potential problem in the duties of spiritual leadership with a reminder to ***“shepherd the flock of God.”*** Spiritual leaders often speak of “their flock,” but spiritual leaders do not have a flock of their own. The flock entrusted to them is “God’s flock.”
  - The spiritual leader is accountable to God to lead that flock with a good shepherd’s heart.
  - As we have seen, that requires ***“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.”***
  - Spiritual leaders should have attitudes of willingness, eagerness, and meekness.
  - Such key attitudes are of great benefit both to the flock and to the spiritual leader.
  - Being a spiritual leader with these qualities and attitudes will bring an unfading crown of glory when the chief shepherd appears.
  - Having emphasized that elders must carry out their ministry of leadership with humility, Peter now says there is a corresponding requirement on the members of the flock. They should be subject to the elders and clothe themselves with humility toward one another.
5. **1 Peter 5:5-7:** ***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.”<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,<sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.***
- ***“Be subject to the elders”*** suggests that people young in the faith should not depend only on their own knowledge, understanding, and authority but should submit to those proven to be wise in the faith and trustworthy in action to benefit from their experience.
  - Believers are not called to submit to everyone. Submission is to be to those who have proven themselves to be wise in the faith, capable of wise leadership, follow Christ faithfully, and point others to Christ.
  - God opposes the proud because He hates the sin of pride which leads to so many other sins.
  - Peter’s second admonition is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. God’s “mighty hand” is an OT metaphor for God’s power displayed in discipline and deliverance.
  - To humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God means that we follow God wherever He leads, down smooth roads or roads fully of potholes.
  - We follow whether we are being disciplined or delivered. We cannot humble ourself before others until we have humbled ourself before God.
  - The third admonition is to cast all our anxieties on the Lord because He cares for us. We are to throw ourself onto the mercy and care of the Lord whose grace will sustain us.
  - Peter highlights the fact that it is safe to cast all our anxieties on the Lord because He is trustworthy and cares for each of us. That is pertinent to all troublesome times.
  - Coming to the end of his letter, Peter pauses to remind his readers that Satan is real! Satan is the true adversary of all who choose to believe God and follow Him.

- As Christians living in difficult times, each of us must be prepared to resist Satan.
6. **1 Peter 5:8-11:** *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* <sup>9</sup> *Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.* <sup>10</sup> *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* <sup>11</sup> *To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
- Satan must be taken seriously! He must be resisted by standing firm in the faith. Trust in the Lord for He is trustworthy, good, and powerful.
  - Believers can rely on God to make possible the defense we need to enable us to stand firm in the face of the wickedness of Satan and his minions.
  - Satan’s style is to prowl like a lion and pounce when least expected. For that reason, believers must be sober-minded and watchful. Don’t be taken in by subtle arguments that condone sin. We do not fight alone.
  - Throughout the world, the brotherhood of believers faces the same adversary and the same kind of suffering we experience. God is with us. A great army of saints through the ages have fought similar battles against unrighteousness. Sometimes unrighteousness appears to win, but the ultimate victory is to the righteous.
  - Judgment will come. The righteous and unrighteous will be separated. Justice will reign supreme and those not “in Christ” will be punished.
  - Though ultimate victory is certain, Peter reminds us that there will be suffering and pain as the battle is fought. Those fighting on the side of righteousness will be with God.
  - When our battle is over, the God of all grace will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us. Silas wrote the letter Peter dictated, but Peter wrote final 3 verses himself.
7. **1 Peter 5:12-14:** *By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.* <sup>13</sup> *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.* <sup>14</sup> *Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.*
- In the letter, Peter has exhorted and declared the true grace of God to encourage his readers who are coming face-to-face with a fiery trial.
  - Peter says he is writing from Rome (nicknamed Babylon by first-century Christians. He refers to the church in Rome as the chosen ones in Babylon (Rome) who send greetings to all their fellow believers.
  - Mark, who Peter references as his son, is most likely John Mark who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Gospel of Mark based on Peter’s recollections drawn from his experiences with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry to Jesus’ glorious resurrection.
  - Peter ends the letter encouraging love and peace for all who are “in Christ.”
8. **Next:** A look back at key features of 1 Peter followed by Chapter 1 of 2 Peter.