

Alert Living
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1 Peter 5:1-11

Opening Discussion: Pay attention! There are hazards all around.
What are some examples of how not paying attention can get us in trouble?

This chapter is the conclusion of Peter's letter to suffering saints who were living under persecution for their faith. In these verses Peter gives encouragement and instructions the way a general talks to the troops before a battle, or a coach to the team before they run out on the field.

Peter's conclusion to this letter covers three topics:

- How church leaders should lead
- How believers should follow those church leaders
- And, a final "pep talk" for all followers of Christ on how to live in world where Satan is on the prowl trying to ruin your life as a believer

Before I give you the "big idea" of this text, I thought I would give away the ending. Let's start with the end result God wants for all of us, and then look at how Peter tells us to live so we can get there.

1 Peter 5:10–11 (NLT)

¹⁰ In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. ¹¹ All power to him forever! Amen.

Peter encourages us that though things are difficult now, keep looking at what God has promised us. He will patch up our wounds, give us a new, perfect body, and bring us safely home to His presence to share in His eternal glory forever!

How do we live in this crazy world so we can enjoy that eternal future? The answer can be summed up in three words: Humility,

Faith, and Alertness. BIG IDEA: Be humble toward others; trust God completely; watch out for the devil!

1 Peter 5:1–11 (NLT)

Advice for Elders and Young Men

And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: ² Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. ³ Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. ⁴ And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

- Peter gives the success formula for those in leadership in the church.
 1. Care - Church leaders need to “care for the flock” like a shepherd cares for the sheep. Protect them, respect them, and do NOT neglect them!
 2. Motivation - Don't take on a leadership role because someone twisted your arm or sent you on a guilt trip. If you do you will be bored and bitter, and those you lead will be neglected and demotivated.
 3. Motive - Don't take on a leadership role to get something for yourself. This doesn't have to be money. Sometimes it's about power, recognition, ego.
 4. Example – Godly leaders lead by example!
 - Peter says if leaders will do these things, when Jesus comes back you'll get REAL recognition for your work: *“the unfading crown of glory.”*
 - What about how younger believers interact with more mature believers?

⁵ In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders.

- **Why should young believers accept the authority of the “elders?”**
- **Why should older believers pay attention to younger believers?**

- **Is this about age, maturity, or a little of both?**
- Peter tells us how all believers can get the most out of interacting with other believers regardless of their age or maturity level. Next sentence:

And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for

- **Why do you think Peter chose the words “dress/clothe yourself with humility?” Why not just say “be humble?”**
- Here’s Peter’s point: How many of you were born with clothes on? We didn’t come into this world with clothes on. Being clothed is not our natural state. We also didn’t come into this world with humility.
- Naked sinful pride is the natural state of any human being. We’re born with our pride showing!
- **How would you define sinful pride vs acceptable pride?** ¹
- C.S. Lewis said, *“Pride is the mother hen under which all other sin is hatched.”* Lewis also said, *“Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.”* ²
- [More: http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Pride_and_Humility_Page1]
- We have to decide to put on the clothing of humility. Putting on humility toward others is an intentional act, a decision we make.
- You decided to put on clothes this morning. Some of you spent more time deciding than others! Wouldn’t it be nice if followers of Christ spent as much time and attention putting on humility as we do on our wardrobe?
- When we’re not careful about our clothes sometimes we may accidentally show things we didn’t intend to show. If we’re not careful to dress in humility someone may say, “Excuse me, your pride is showing!”
- Dressing in humility isn’t just a fashion tip; it’s a “dress code from God.”

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

⁶ So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

- Let’s be honest. How many times do we try to help God lift us up?

- Peter says, don't manipulate or orchestrate, just work and wait.
- If we'll live in humble submission to others and humble submission to God, God will put us in the perfect position He has prepared for us.

⁷ Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

- I find it interesting that after saying we should be humble and not try to control things Peter talks about anxiety. **Why do you think that is?**
- Peter understood people. When we start living in humility and submission we'll worry: *"If I'm not looking out for #1 what will happen to me?"*
- The NLT says *"give all your worries and cares to God."* The better translation is "cast." The word really means to "throw upon" God.
- Imagine: *"Daddy, this is too heavy for me to carry!" "Give it to me child!"*
- **But what do we always do after we give God our worries? Why? Tell me why that's not only stupid but also clearly unbiblical.**
- **Wait, isn't it reckless not to hold your worries in the front of your mind? Isn't this putting your "head in the sand?" Why?**
- **Here's one to ponder: Is it a sin NOT to cast your cares on God?**
- In our example of the child and the daddy, the daddy didn't say stop walking; he just said stop carrying things you're not strong enough to carry. That's what our Heavenly Father says to us. Keep walking and working but let me carry the things that are too heavy for you to carry.
- How foolish we are to think we're more qualified to deal with our problems than the almighty God of the universe!
- When we give God our worries it frees up our minds to be alert for trouble.

⁸ Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family

of believers* all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

- **Do people really believe Satan prowls like a lion trying to devour us? Why is that?**
- There are some strong words in that verse like, “prowls” and “devour.” The word that jumps out to me is “roaring.” **Why would Peter say Satan is a roaring lion? Any thoughts?**
- My take is that if we’re alert we can hear that lion coming and flee!
- Think about our daily lives. **What are some examples of when you can hear Satan roaring and about to try to devour your life and witness?**
- *“It’s not stealing, it’s just creative accounting.”* Hear that lion roaring?
- *“My marriage is boring and he/she sure looks interesting.”* Hear that lion?
- *“I wish I had his wife, car, house.”* Sounds like a roaring lion to me!
- *“I love God but I REALLY love fishing on Sunday morning.”* Is that a lion?
- If we’ll stay alert we can hear Satan roaring in our thoughts, through temptation, through music, movies, the internet, we even pay Comcast to pipe Satan’s roaring into our own homes!
- Satan is on the prowl around every corner trying to ruin your life.
- So, Peter says we should resist Satan. The literal translation is “to be opposed to.” The first step in not getting eaten by a lion is to decide that roaring lions are dangerous! Too many people think they can invite the lion into their home and make a pet out of him. That is until he eats them!
- Bottom line: Lions are dangerous but you can hear them coming if you’re paying attention! Don’t try to tame the lion, run to safety.

James 4:7 (NLT) James says essentially the same thing Peter tells us,

7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- If you're a leader in the church the first four verses give a success formula for being a godly leader. We also saw how leaders and followers in the church should live and work in harmony. The key is humility.
- Here's what I want you to remember from this lesson:
- 1 Peter 5 summed up in three words: Humility, Faith, and Alertness. Be humble toward others; trust God completely; watch out for the devil!
- Humility: We weren't born wearing humility; we have to dress up every day! Dressing in humility isn't a fashion tip; it's a "dress code from God." Do you really want God to oppose YOU?
- Worries and Cares: Stop carrying things you're not strong enough to carry. Keep walking and working but let God carry the things that are too heavy for you to carry. How foolish we are to think we're more qualified to deal with our problems than the almighty God of the universe!
- Satan is a Roaring Lion: If you haven't heard Satan roaring you're not paying attention. Will you be alert and listen for the sounds of Satan roaring this week? Will you decide he's your enemy; acknowledge he's dangerous; and run to safety?
- Challenge: This week take a sticky note and put it on your bathroom mirror where you'll see it as you get ready for the day. Write three things on it:
 - Did I put on humility?
 - Am I carrying worries that are too heavy for me?
 - Am I listening for Satan's roar?
 - You might just need to write three words: HUMILITY; WORRY; ROAR.
- This week let's be intentional in all these areas. Peter says, if we'll live this way as a follower of Christ the payoff is eternal:

¹⁰ In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. ¹¹ All power to him forever! Amen.

¹ 8802 pride - Arrogance or delusions of greatness on account of one's achievements, status or possessions. Scripture frequently speaks of God humbling the proud.

Manser, M. H. (2009). Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. London: Martin Manser.

² <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/search?page=2&q=pride+c.s.+lewis>