

Be Humble  
May 4, 2025  
Allen Power

1 Peter 5:1-11

Opening: What is an oxymoron? Can you share any examples? Fifty years ago, in the first episode of Saturday Night Live, George Carlin joked about the oxymoron, “jumbo shrimp.” He said, *“The term Jumbo Shrimp has always amazed me. What is a Jumbo Shrimp? I mean, it’s like Military Intelligence, the words don’t go together.”* How about the term, “humble leadership”— is THAT an oxymoron? Why might someone think “humble leadership” is a contradiction in terms? Why is humble leadership exceptional?

Peter closed this letter to the early church with a challenge to church leaders about how to lead God’s people. Peter did NOT consider “humble leadership” a contradiction of terms; in fact, he taught that humility is exactly HOW godly leaders should lead.

When this text speaks of humility in leadership, it applies to every follower of Christ. Whether or not you have a title, everyone is a leader because we ALL have influence.

I like this quote from our Lifeway writers on humble leadership: *“Humility isn’t just a virtue; it’s a cornerstone of effective biblical leadership. Picture a tree—strong, resilient, yet firmly rooted in the soil. It stands tall, yet its roots run deep. Similarly, humility grounds leaders, reminding them of their humanity amidst their authority. It’s the humility that allows a leader to listen before they speak, to learn from mistakes, and to empathize.”*

The point: This passage teaches us how to be a good shepherd -- especially when times are tough. How to lead with the right motives, for the right reasons, with humility, without anxiety, avoiding sin, and keeping the proper focus. Look at verse one:

(NLT) <sup>1</sup> 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: <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.

- Peter defined humble leadership in the church (also at home, work, wherever we have influence.):
  - Care for the flock BECAUSE God entrusted them to you.
  - Leadership can feel like a burden. There is no doubt that leadership comes with burdens but leading is an honor entrusted to people from God Himself.
  - Peter got specific about what Godly leadership should look like.
  - Lead people willingly, not “grudgingly.” That word grudgingly means reluctantly or with resentment. Instead, lead willingly not with a bad attitude.

- Don't lead for selfish gain but because you are eager to serve God.
- Don't lord it over those you lead. What does it mean for a leader to "lord it over" those they lead? Simply put, don't be a jerk, lead by good example.
- Who originally taught Peter this kind of leadership?
- Why do you think many/most leaders DON'T lead in the way Peter described?
- Verse four talks about receiving honor and glory for leading well.

<sup>4</sup> And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

- Leaders can get addicted to honor and glory from people. This honor is from God.
- Not only should leaders be humble – followers should also be humble.

<sup>5</sup> In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- If God opposes the proud, He must hate pride. Why would God hate pride?
- What is a simple definition of pride? How can it sneak up on us?
- What does that verse say God gives to those who are humble?
- Wiersbe- *"The only antidote to pride is the grace of God, and we receive that grace when we yield ourselves to Him."* Why is that hard for any human to do?
- We mistakenly believe WE are in control, and we act like it! *"If I don't look out for me and mine, no one will!" "You gotta toot your own horn or it won't be tooted!" "I'm paid to worry!"* Peter said, *"Wrong! I used to live like that, now I know better!"*
- Then he gives us three verses worthy of memorizing:

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

- Verse six again talks about leaders seeking to be honored by people.
- Some leaders seek honor with the "humble brag." Do you know what that is?
- That verse applies to leaders, but what about all of us on social media [or as I call them, Fakebook or Insta-glam]? Have I gone to "meddling?" 😊
- Peter said: Trust God, humbly do your job and He will give proper honor.
- Verse 7 tells Christ-followers how leaders and followers should handle ANXIETY:

<sup>7</sup> Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

- It is really an exchange. I give God my worries and He gives me several things.
- Courage – "Fear not, I'm with you and I will strengthen you..." - Isa. 41:10
- Wisdom – Just ask and God will give you the wisdom you need - James 1:5
- Strength – "I can do all things through Christ, Who gives me strength." Phil. 4:13
- Faith – "Commit everything to the Lord...trust Him...He will help you." Ps. 37:5

<sup>8</sup> Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

- Why is tempting a leader to indulge in flagrant sin one of Satan's major tactics?
- Strong words: "Watch out!", "great enemy," "roaring lion," "someone to devour."
- When a leader is devoured by sin everyone in that leader's orbit suffers.
- Here is another way a leader can succumb to temptation.
- Leadership is hard and we can begin to feel sorry for ourselves. That can cause us to take our eyes off the Lord and turn to harmful sources of comfort.

<sup>9</sup> Stand firm against him [Satan] 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.

- I am not the only one with problems like these, so I should cancel my "pity party." Instead, I should look forward to the graduation celebration God has planned for me when He is done teaching me how to live and lead. Look at verse ten:

<sup>10</sup> 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.

- I might say, "*Peter, this is a high standard. How can I lead in this way?*" Verse 11:

<sup>11</sup> All power to him forever! Amen.

- When we continually worship God (giving Him praise) we are reminded that all power not only belongs TO Him, it comes to us FROM Him.
- Other thoughts on leading this way?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- "Humble leadership" is not a contradiction in terms; it is HOW godly leaders should lead. All of us are leaders because we all have influence over others.
- I often tell you that the lesson text teaches me first and then I share it with you. That was true of this text. In this season, as a leader, I needed Peter's reminders.
- Godly leaders in the church, at home, at work, everywhere need to remember:
  - We care for those we lead because God entrusted them to us.
  - Leadership can feel burdensome, but it is an honor given by God
  - We must lead willingly, not reluctantly or with resentment.
  - We must lead to serve God and others and not for selfish gain.
  - Godly leaders should be firm but not domineering. Instead, we must lead by example.
  - True honor and glory for good leadership come from God, not people.
- God will empower us to lead like this if we will humble ourselves to Him.
- He will relieve our anxiety. If we give Him our worries, He gives us strength, courage, and wisdom.

- If we work humbly, God will decide how we are to be recognized.
- If we will “watch out” for Satan’s schemes, God will give us the grace and strength to avoid falling into flagrant sin.
- In summary, these eleven verses are the plan for godly leadership! Let’s all lead this way everywhere we have influence.