

THE DUTIES OF THE ELDER OR MINISTER

1 PETER 05:01–04

Introduction

This is a critical passage. It is a personal message from Peter to the elders and ministers of the church. Never is the church in need of leadership any more than when it is being attacked and persecuted. At such times, the ministers must stand forth and be more vigilant than ever.

- I. Peter stresses his right to be heard (v. 1).
- II. The charge: Shepherd, care for the flock of God (vv. 2-3).
- III. The result: A crown of glory (v. 4).

I. 1 Peter 05:01 *Peter, an Elder Called by God*

Peter stresses his right to be heard and the importance of listening to him. Peter was deeply concerned for the believers of God's church. They were being persecuted and savagely attacked by the wolves of this world. They were just like sheep under attack, sheep who needed the pastoral care of the shepherd. This is the reason Peter writes this exhortation to the leaders of the church. The top leader was the elder or minister; he was the person most responsible for the church. He was the person who needed to take the lead in facing the persecution. He was the one who needed to feed the flock of God and to lead them to stand fast for Christ. But how? How could Peter stir the elders to take the lead and do their duty? How could he arouse them to stand in the forefront against such savage persecution? By stressing his right to be heard and the importance of listening to him. Note that Peter stresses three things that should arouse all ministers to heed his exhortation.

1. Peter himself was an elder, a man called by God to be a minister to the flock of God. Therefore, Peter held the very same calling and office as all other elders. He was one with them; he could identify with them. He knew what they felt and experienced, for he faced and went through the same experiences they did. He was the elder sharing with the elders. He was one who had been where they now were and who wanted to help them. Therefore, they needed to listen and hear what he had to say. (See *Elder*, Titus 1:5-9.)

Thought 1. Think about this fact for a moment: we hold the very same calling and office that Peter the great apostle did, the calling of being an elder, a minister of God's flock. Just think: these words are a special message to us — all elders and ministers — from Peter himself.

2. Peter was an eye-witness to the sufferings of Christ. He actually saw...
 - the ridicule, mockery and cursing of Christ.
 - the questioning and doubting of Christ.
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- the unbelief and rejection of Christ.
- the denial and rebellion against the claims of Christ.
- the accusation and charges against Christ.
- the sufferings of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- the beatings and abuse Christ bore in His trials.
- the mockery and death of Christ upon the cross.

Peter knew that the sufferings of Christ were real: that Jesus Christ actually did suffer for man. He knew that man could now be saved by the sufferings of the cross if man would only believe and endure to the end. Therefore, the elders — all ministers of the gospel — need to listen and hear the exhortation of Peter.

3. Peter was to be a partaker of Jesus' glory. Remember: Peter had witnessed the transfiguration of Christ. He had seen and experienced a little taste of the glory that is to come. While writing this his heart must have beat a little faster, for he was recalling the promise of the Lord to return. And the Lord gave the promise often, always sharing that His followers would share in the glory of the resurrection and of life eternal with Him (cp. Mt. 5:11-12; 13:43; 19:28-29; 25:23; Lk. 6:35; 13:29; Jn. 5:24-26; 5:28-29; 6:40; 8:51; 11:25-26; 12:26; 14:2-3; 17:24).

This was the reason Peter was willing to serve Christ as a minister: he had witnessed and tasted a little of the glory of heaven. He knew what lay ahead. He knew that Christ was truly the Saviour of the world and that His promise of eternal glory was true. Therefore, Peter was willing to serve and bear anything, no matter how severe the suffering. He knew that the glory of heaven was worth bearing anything, no matter how terrible.

Thought 1. These three reasons state clearly why all elders — all ministers of the Lord — must listen and heed Peter's exhortation.

- => Peter was an elder himself, one who could identify with us, one who experienced just what we experience.
- => Peter was an eyewitness of the Lord's sufferings. He actually saw Christ die; therefore, he knows that the claims of Christ are true. Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, the Saviour who died for our salvation.
- => Peter was a partaker of the glory that we are all to share. In the transfiguration of Christ he actually witnessed and tasted a little of the glory that is to be revealed and brought to us when Christ returns. He knew that heaven and the glory of life eternal are real.

II. *1 Peter 05:02–03 Be Shepherds of God's Flock*

The exhortation to ministers is direct and forceful, but as clear as it can be. "Be shepherds of God's flock." The word "shepherd" (poimane) is an all inclusive word that covers all

the duties of the minister. It means not only to preach and teach the Word of God, but to tend and shepherd the flock. It means to act like a shepherd, to carry out the duties of a shepherd. The duties of the shepherd are several fold (see *Shepherd*, 1 Pet. 2:25):

- => to feed the sheep even if he has to gather them in his arms and carry them to the pasture.
- => to guide the sheep to the pasture and away from the rough places and precipices.
- => to seek and save the sheep who get lost.
- => to protect the sheep. He is even willing to sacrifice his life for the sheep.
- => to restore the sheep who go astray and return.
- => to reward the sheep for obedience and faithfulness.
- => to keep the sheep separate from the goats.

But note this: in all the duties of tending and looking after God's flock, we must never forget what the great Greek scholar W.E. Vine stresses:

"In the spiritual care of God's children, the feeding of the flock from the Word of God is the constant and regular necessity; it is to have the foremost place. The tending (which includes this) consists of other acts, of discipline, authority, restoration, material assistance of individuals, but they are incidental in comparison with the feeding" (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

Note another significant fact; the flock is *God's flock*; it is not the flock of the minister. Ministers are only shepherds under God. But they are to be under-shepherds: they are to tend God's flock, to look after and care for the flock. The fact that God is the Chief Shepherd does not mean that the minister can leave the care of the flock up to God as though He was going to automatically care for the flock. God looks after the flock through the under-shepherds whom He chooses. This is the way He shepherds. Therefore, every minister is important; every minister is to feed and tend and shepherd God's flock. And Scripture pulls no punches about the fact: Scripture lays down exactly how the minister is to go about caring for the flock.

1. The elder or minister is to take the oversight of the flock willingly, not by force. This does not mean that a person is not to feel the constraint of God and His love in the ministry. He is. All ministers are to sense the constraint of God. Paul forcefully declared the fact:

1 Cor 9:16 *For I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!*

2 Cor 5:14 *For Christ's love compels us.*

The person should not have to be forced and coerced to minister. He should willingly shepherd God's flock. The minister must willingly do the will of God. He should never have to be compelled or coerced to minister to God's people.

Thought 1. The great tragedy is this: many have been called by God into the ministry, called to shepherd His flock, but they refused. Why?

- => Some felt unworthy and inadequate.
- => Some felt it would cost them too much.
- => Some felt it required too much sacrifice.
- => Some did not want to bear the reproach of the ministry.
- => Some felt the demands and duties and expectations were too much to bear.

On and on the list could go, but Scripture is clear. If we have been called into the ministry by God, we must not reject His call. We must not have to be compelled and coerced to do God's will. We must willingly minister and shepherd God's flock.

Mat 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

Mat 12:50 *"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

Mat 25:22-23 *"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

John 4:34 *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."*

John 15:16 *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

Acts 20:24 *However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

1 Th 2:8 *We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.*

2 Tim 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Rev 22:14 *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."*

2. The elder or minister must take the oversight of the flock not for personal profit and gain, but of a ready mind. The Greek says that no person is to enter the ministry "greedy for money" (mede aischrokerdos), that is, for base gain or for some soiled and dirty advantage. No person should ever enter the ministry...
 - as a profession.

- as a means of livelihood.
- as a means to serve mankind.
- because people say he has the gifts for it.
- because people say he would make a good minister.
- because family and friends encourage him to enter the ministry.

All of these reasons usually surround a person's entrance into the ministry. But they must never be *the reasons* why a person enters the ministry and cares for God's people. The ministry is a *call from God*, and no person dare enter the ministry without a personal call to the ministry. But note: when the call comes, the person is to have a ready mind. He is to minister to God's people; he is to shepherd God's flock.

Mat 19:21 *Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

Mark 10:28 *Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"*

Luke 9:23-24 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Luke 14:26-27 *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

Luke 14: 33 *"In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

Luke 18:29-30 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."*

Acts 20:33 *I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.*

Rom 8:13 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

1 Cor 10:24 *Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Phil 2:4 *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Phil 3:8 *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

3. The elder or minister is to take the oversight of the flock not as a lord, but by being an example. Note, some manuscripts add the phrase “God’s heritage,” stating that ministers are not to be “lords over God’s heritage.” The flock of God is called God’s heritage (kleron). This is the word that was used of Israel in the Old Testament. It means that the Jews were the people who were set apart and allotted and assigned to God. They were His very special allotment and assignment, the people charged to His care and oversight. This is the picture painted of the elder or minister and the flock of God. God has given the minister a very special heritage or allotment and assignment: the minister has been assigned to feed the heritage of God, the very flock that belongs to God Himself.

Now note how the minister is to lead God’s flock. He is not to lord it over them, but he is to lead by example. The minister...

- is not to be a dictator but an example.
- is not to preach one thing and do something else.

The minister is to lead people by living for Christ. He is to preach and teach Christ, but he is to first of all live a pure and righteous life just like Christ lived. The minister is to live exactly what he preaches. He is to be a pattern and model for Christ, a pattern and model of just what God wants His people to be.

Mat 5:13 *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”*

Mark 10:42-44 *Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”*

John 13:15 *“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”*

1 Tim 4:12 *Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*

Titus 2:7 *In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.*

James 5:10 *Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

1 Pet 2:21 *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

III. 1 Peter 05:04 The Glorious Reward

The reward for elders or ministers is glorious. It is a crown of glory that never fades away. Note two things.

1. Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd and He is going to appear, that is, return, to earth. The idea is that nothing will stop His return: He is going to appear and reward His ministers.

Note the title of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (archipoimenos). Alan Stibbs says that it is the “Arch Shepherd” or “Archbishop” who is over all and to whom we shall all give an account (*The First Epistle General of Peter*. “The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” p. 168).

The work of Jesus as the Shepherd is fourfold.

- a. Jesus Christ is the *Good Shepherd*. He is called *good* because He risks and sacrifices His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11, 15; cp. Ps. 22).
 - b. Jesus Christ is the *Great Shepherd*. He is called *great* because He arose from the dead and He perfects the sheep (Heb. 13:20-21).
 - c. Jesus Christ is the *Shepherd and Overseer* of our souls. He is called the *shepherd and overseer* because He welcomes those who wandered off and went astray (1 Pet. 2:25).
 - d. Jesus Christ is the *Chief Shepherd*. He is called *chief* because He is to appear and return to earth with great glory and reward the faithful (1 Pet. 5:4).
2. The reward for elders is glorious: it is to be a crown of glory. What does this mean? It means that the faithful minister shall share in the glory of heaven and be crowned with a very special portion of glory. By crown is meant rule and reign, the assignment of heavenly service for Christ. (See note, 1 Pet. 1:4 for a list of all rewards.)

Mat 10:42 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Mat 25:23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

John 14:2 “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

Eph 6:8 Because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ■

THE DUTIES OF THE BELIEVER (I): HUMILITY AND SUBMISSION

1 PETER 05:05–07

Introduction

This is a great passage on humility. Humility is one of the very first duties of the believer. Some people shrink back when they hear the word humility mentioned. When they think of humility, they picture a shy, weak, unimpressive type of person. But this is not what God means by humility. The humility demanded by God strengthens a person and makes him one of the most striking and impressive persons around.

- I. Submit to the elders (v. 5).
- II. Submit to one another and be clothed with humility (v. 5).
- III. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God (vv. 6-7).

I. 1 Peter 05:05 *Submit to the Elders*

First, submit to the elders or ministers of the church. The word submissive (*hopotagete*) means to submit and to place oneself under the authority and leadership of the elder or minister. The minister is the leader of the church. God has chosen and ordained the minister to be the leader among the flock of God. Therefore, his leadership is to be...

- esteemed • followed • recognized • acknowledged
- obeyed • subjected to • honoured

But remember: the minister is not to be a lord over God's heritage, but an example to the flock (v. 3). He is to lead and exercise his authority by being an example, not by using authoritarian methods and bypassing people. It is this that gives balance to the minister's authority. But at the same time, the flock of God is to submit to the authority of the minister.

Note: the word *young* is used to describe the laity or believers of a church. The idea being conveyed is that believers are to be as youth who sit at the feet of the parent to be fed and to learn and grow. The very term conveys the idea of submission. This shows how important this charge is to God — so important that he terms believers the young. However, it should be noted that some commentators say that this refers to the young people of the church. They are to submit themselves to the older believers. But this does not seem to fit the context in light of two facts:

=> The preceding verses discuss the elder or minister of the church.

=> The rest of verse 5 exhorts all believers to be submissive toward one another.

The thrust seems to be that *young* refers to believers. Simply put, believers are to be submissive toward themselves to the minister as the parent of the church, the parent who shepherds and feeds them the Word of God and who willingly takes the oversight of their welfare (cp. v. 2-3).

1 Cor 16:16 *To submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labours at it.*

1 Th 5:12-13 *Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*

1 Tim 5:17 *The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.*

Heb 13:17 *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

II. **1 Peter 05:05 Submit to One Another**

Second, submit to one another and be clothed with humility. Not only are we to submit to our ministers, but we are to submit ourselves to one another. Note several things.

1. The word all means every one of us, all ages, sexes and classes (A T. Robertson. Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol. 6, p. 132). No person is exempt. All of us are to submit ourselves to all believers no matter who we may be: male or female, poor or rich, young or old.

Thought 1. Submission takes concentration and effort. It takes a deliberate decision to submit to someone else. But this is just what Scripture is demanding. Every believer is unique to God and has a very special gift and contribution to make to the world and to the church. All believers are to submit themselves to one another, to each one's uniqueness and gift. All believers are to acknowledge, respect and honour one another, all because of who each one is and because of the gift God has given each one of us.

2. Note: to be submissive toward one another is not enough, not for God. Scripture says that we must also "clothe [ourselves] with humility." The word "clothe" (egkombosasthe) means to gird oneself with an apron. It is the picture of what Jesus did in the upper room when He girded Himself with an apron and assumed the role of a servant and washed the feet of the disciples. Jesus, the Son of God and Sovereign Majesty of the universe, actually clothed Himself with the apron of humility and served the disciples. And, when he finished, He said:

John 13:13-15 *"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

Alan Stibbs states it well: "The exhortation here is not to feel humble, nor to pray for humility, but to act it" (The First Epistle General of Peter. "The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p. 169). The word "humility" (tapeinophrosunen) means

to offer oneself as lowly and submissive; to walk in a spirit of lowliness; to present oneself as lowly; to act of low degree and low rank. It is the opposite of being high-minded, above and better than others, prideful, arrogant, superior, haughty and self-assertive. The believer may have a high position, power, wealth, fame and much more; but he is to carry himself in a spirit of lowliness and submission. He is to deny himself for the sake of Christ and in order to help others. (See note, *Humility*, 1 Pet. 3:8. See *Humility*, Phil. 2:3.)

3. Note why we are to be submissive toward to one another and to clothe ourselves with humility: because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (cp. Prov. 3:34).
 - a. God resists the proud. He stands against all...
 - who look down upon others.
 - who discriminate against others.
 - who are boastful.
 - who feel superior to others.
 - who are prejudiced.
 - who are haughty.

God opposes the proud — all who oppress others — no matter who they are. The word “opposes” (*antitassetai*) is a strong word. It is the picture of an army being set and arrayed against the enemy. Marvin Vincent says that “pride calls out God’s armies. No wonder, therefore, that it ‘goes before destruction’ (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 668). God Himself shall destroy those who exalt themselves above others.

- b. God gives grace to the humble. Grace means the favour and blessings of God. The person who walks humbly before God, recognizing and acknowledging the value of others, shall receive the favour and blessings of God. He shall be highly favoured and blessed — rewarded beyond all imagination. The humble person shall bear the fruit of God’s spirit in this life...
 - love • goodness • joy • faithfulness • kindness
 - peace • gentleness • patience • self-control

In addition, the humble person has the full assurance of being cared for and looked after by God, that God will work all things out for his good while he is on earth. And then in the future, when Christ returns, the humble person will be abundantly rewarded with the glorious privilege of living and reigning with Christ forever and ever. (See note, 1 Pet. 1:4 for a list of the rewards.)

Mat 11:29 “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Mat 18:3-4 And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Mat 23:12 *“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

Eph 4:1-2 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Col 3:12-13 *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

1 Pet 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

III. 1 Peter 05:06–07 Humility Before the Mighty Hand of God

Third, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. There are three reasons for this.

1. God is to be feared, for He stands opposed to the proud. The very thing we do not want to be is prideful. The only way to escape the judgment of God’s hand is to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. If we stand up to His hand, we shall be stricken down, but if we humble ourselves under His hand, we shall be protected and lifted up, exalted forever and ever. The picture of God’s mighty hand is a different picture for the proud and the humble:

To the humble, God’s mighty hand means...

- strength and power
- sovereignty and control
- salvation and security
- care and protection
- assurance and confidence

To the proud, God’s mighty hand means...

- strength and power
- sovereignty and control
- warning and fear
- anger and wrath
- judgment and condemnation

Note: God’s mighty hand provides two entirely different things for the humble and the proud. Right now the hand of God stands over the world in all of its strength and

power and its sovereignty and control. God's hand stands to save everyone, even the proud if he will only humble himself. But if he refuses to humble himself, then the hand of God stands for something entirely different than salvation. The mighty hand of God stands...

- as a warning and a threat
- in anger and wrath
- in judgment and condemnation

This is the reason we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God — to escape the terrifying judgment of God.

John 10:29 *“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.”*

Rom 16:25 *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past.*

1 Pet 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

Josh 4:24 *He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.*

Psa 89:13 *Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.*

Psa 98:1 *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.*

Psa 118:15-17 *Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: “The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! The Lord's right hand is lifted high; the Lord's right hand has done mighty things!” I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.*

Isa 59:1 *Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.*

2. We should humble ourselves under God's mighty hand because He is going to exalt the humble. Note that the humble are not yet lifted up. But in due time they will be. The day is coming when they shall be lifted up, exalted in all the glory and majesty of Christ. They shall be exalted to live with Christ and to rule and reign with Him and to serve Him throughout the universe. They shall be with Christ, worshipping and serving Him forever and ever — all to His glory and praise, honour and grace. (See note, 1 Pet. 1:4.)
3. We should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God because God cares for us; He cares about all our anxiety. Remember: the believers of Peter's day were suffering terrible persecution. They had been forced to flee for their lives, leaving everything behind: homes, jobs and possessions. They had only what they could carry by hand,

and they fled to whatever places they felt were safe. They were, so to speak, an underground people, having to live, work and worship in secret and to find housing and food wherever they could. They never knew when they would be discovered and forced to flee again.

The point is this: imagine the anxiety, the pressure, tension and stress being experienced by the believers. Yet there was great help: God was available to help them. Note that the exhortation is not only clearly stated; it is a command: “cast all your anxiety (merimna) on Him, because He cares for you.” God’s mighty hand will...

- save and deliver you
- look after and care for you
- strengthen and secure you
- provide and protect you
- give you assurance and confidence

Heb 13:6 *So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

Psa 40:17 *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.*

Psa 55:23 *But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Mat 6:25, 33 *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

Luke 12:7 *“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”*

Luke 21:34 *“Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.”*

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Rom 8:35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor*

anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Phil 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ■*

THE DUTIES OF THE BELIEVER (II): VIGILANCE AND RESISTANCE AGAINST THE DEVIL

1 PETER 05:08–09

Introduction

This is one of the most important duties of the believer. The believer must be vigilant in this duty or his life and testimony for Christ will be devoured and destroyed. What is the duty? Vigilance and resistance against the devil. The believer must constantly watch for and resist the devil.

- I. The way: be self-controlled and alert (v. 8).
- II. The reason: the devil is your adversary, a roaring lion seeking to devour all whom he can (v. 8).
- III. The duty (v. 9).

I. 1 Peter 05:08 *Be Self-controlled and Alert*

How can we stand against the attacks and temptations of the devil? There is only one way: we must be self-controlled and alert.

1. First, be self-controlled (nephate). The word means...
 - not to become intoxicated with drugs or alcohol of any kind.
 - to be self-controlled in mind and behaviour; to be controlled in all things; not given over to indulgence, license or extravagance. It is the opposite of indulgence in anything such as eating, drinking and recreation, it means to live a sober, solid, controlled and strong life.

The believer has to be sober as he watches for the attacks of the devil. If he is not sober, he will not be alert enough to conquer the attacks and the temptations of the devil.

The believer will be overcome and led into sin and destruction. And no believer can be alert enough to stand up against the devil if he indulges and gratifies his flesh in...

- sex
- clothing
- food
- possessions
- alcohol and drugs
- relaxation
- recognition
- position
- pornography
- power

The believer is to live a sober and controlled life. He is to stay alert to the devil and his temptations at all times. He must be alert enough to see the temptations and attacks coming and have a mind and spirit strong enough to stand against the temptations and attacks.

1 Th 5:6-8 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get

drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

1 Tim 3:11 *In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.*

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

1 Pet 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

1 Pet 4:7 *The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.*

2. How do we stand against the devil? Second, be “alert” (gregoresate). The word means to be watchful and awake. It has the idea of being constantly aroused and on the lookout; to always be aroused, awake and watching for the devil and his attacks. Again, if a person’s mind and body are dull, flabby and weak from drink, drugs, overeating, slothfulness and indulgence in sleep, recreation, pleasure or in anything else — that person cannot be watching and waiting; he cannot be constantly aroused to look for the devil’s temptations and attacks.

The believer must be sober and serious about the devil; he must be alert in looking for the devil’s temptations and attacks. It is the only conceivable way the believer can conquer and overcome in this life; it is the only way he can keep his life and testimony from being destroyed by the devil.

Mat 26:41 *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

Luke 12:37 *“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”*

1 Cor 10:12 *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!*

1 Cor 16:13 *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.*

Col 4:2 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

1 Th 5:5-6 *You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.*

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Rev 16:15 “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

II. 1 Peter 05:08 Reason for Being Alert

Why should we stand against the attacks and temptations of the devil? There is one strong reason: he is our adversary, a roaring lion who seeks all whom he can devour. Note three points.

1. The devil is our “enemy” (antidikos). The Greek word means a legal opponent such as an opponent in a lawsuit. It also means a common day-to-day opponent like a neighbour who opposes and stands as an enemy against us. The picture is that of the devil opposing us in every conceivable way.
=> It is the picture of Satan standing in a law court, standing as an adversary in the court of God and accusing us before God.
=> It is the picture of Satan standing here on earth, standing against us and doing all he can to trip us up and to defeat and destroy us.
2. The word “devil” (diabolos) itself means slanderer or false accuser. The devil is a malicious enemy who accuses us before God and makes false charges against us. Scripture teaches that Satan is constantly bringing up our sins and transgressions before God, that he is constantly reminding God of our disobedience. But note: the accusations against us are false. The charges are not true. How can they not be true when we are sinners, for no true believer denies his sin? By Christ. We believe Christ and we have cast ourselves upon Christ, upon the glorious fact that He died for our sins. We have trusted Christ for forgiveness of sin, and when He forgives us, our sins are removed from us. We are no longer guilty of sin. Therefore, the accusations and charges of Satan against us are false. Why then would he accuse and charge us before God? Why would he remind God time and again of our sins? To hurt God, to cut the heart of God. He is the devil, the one who stands opposed to God and to all that God stands for. Eons ago, sometime before the world was ever created, he was apparently the highest angel in all of creation. God had created him as the highest spiritual being in the universe. At that time his name was Lucifer. But he did what so many men do — rebelled against God — and he led other angelic beings to rebel with him. Therefore, God judged him and cast him from his exalted position in heaven. From what we can glean from Scripture this is what happened to Satan, how he became the devil, the terrible opponent to God. (See Deeper Satan, Rev. 12:9. Cp. Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-19. Also see note, 2 Cor. 4:4.)

The point is this: the devil does all he can to cut and hurt the heart of God. Therefore, he constantly reminds God of our sins. This, of course, means that he does all he can to tempt and lead us into sin, for the more we sin the more he can hurt God.

Thought 1. Think what this means: how deeply God's heart must be cut and hurt when we sin. We are believers, persons for whom God gave His Son to die. When God paid such a price — actually cast His wrath against His own Son because of sin — think about how much He must hurt when we sin, especially when we profess to love Him. The devil is a slanderer; he will constantly slander us before God. He will use our sin to hurt God as much as possible. This is the reason we must stand against the devil: we must protect the heart of God. We must not bring hurt and pain to our Father's heart.

Rev 12:9-10 *The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."*

Job 1:6-12 *One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

Zee 3:1 *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.*

2. He is like a roaring lion seeking to devour all whom he can. The roaring lion is a picture of anger, strength, fierceness and cruelty. Satan is being pictured as angry (against God and all believers), strong, fierce and cruel. Note: Scripture says he roams about roaring in anger and cruelty and in the roaring ferociousness of his strength, seeking someone to attack and devour. How can Satan devour a person? Jesus tells us in one of the most shocking statements ever made about man. He said that a person who does not trust and follow God as his Father is actually following the devil as his father. In other words, Jesus says that all unbelievers have the devil as their father.

John 8:44 *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

Note that Jesus is telling us how the devil devours man. He consumes man by leading him to do four things.

- a. The devil leads us to lust, crave. He tempts us to give in to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of our eyes, and the pride of life (boasting in what we have and do).

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

- b. The devil leads us to murder. The devil is behind the murder of human life and behind the loss of man experiencing real life here on earth. The devil destroys life and all abundant living when he can: all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Mat 13:19 *“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”*

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Job 1:9-11 *“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”*

Jesus was saying that one thing is certain: God is not the father of murder — the devil is. They who commit murder are children of the devil. But note the real meaning of murder revealed by Jesus (see note, Mt. 5:22). Murder is...

- anger
- bitterness
- an uncontrolled spirit
- enmity
- desiring a person's ruin
- striking out at a person
- slandering, maligning, speaking ill about a person, and destroying a person's image (who is created in God's image)
- envying and killing a person's happiness

- c. The devil leads men to reject the truth.

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

1 John 3:8 *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

d. The devil leads men to lie and deceive.

2 Cor 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Cor 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

III. 1 Peter 05:09 Duty of the Believer

What is our duty in standing against the attacks and temptations of Satan? Our duty is twofold.

1. We must resist the devil; we must resist him standing firm in the faith. The word “resist” (antistete) means to withstand the devil; to stand firm against him; to strive and struggle against him. Note that we must stand firm in our resistance. We must not...

- let our guard down
- slip one step
- look one time
- touch at all
- taste a single bite
- listen to one word
- think a single thought
- give way to any desire
- loosen the restraint

It might look good, taste good and feel good, but we must resist the desire and lust and be steadfast in our resistance. We must not give in at all. Giving in one step leads to a second step, and before we know it, we have caved in and are engaged in the sin. Satan has devoured us.

Our duty is to resist the devil and to stand firm in our resistance. Note what it is that Satan is after: the believer’s faith. He wants the believer to deny his faith, to turn away from Christ. The devil’s crowd may say...

- “Oh come on! It won’t hurt you.”
- “Do your own thing.”
- “You’re a fool if you don’t get all you can.”
- “Live, drink and be merry.”

A person’s desires and lusts may want more and more of the possessions and pleasures of this world. The temptation will always be there to turn away from Christ and His righteousness, to turn away from one’s faith and to return to the world and its ways. Our duty is to resist the devil by standing firm in the faith, trusting God for the necessary strength to conquer the temptation.

2. The believer is to keep in mind the fact that other believers are suffering the same kind of sufferings and they are conquering them. When a believer refuses to go along

with the world and its ways, he is misunderstood, withdrawn from, ridiculed, mocked, abused and persecuted by unbelievers. In addition he is attacked and tempted by the devil. The believers of Peter's day were suffering terrible attacks from Satan, attacks that had broken out in severe persecution. How do believers stand against so much? By keeping in mind that other believers are also being attacked, and many are faithfully resisting the devil. They are standing firm in their faith. Therefore, their example encourages us. We are not alone in the world. There are others suffering the very same kind of sufferings of the devil as we are, and they are resisting ever so faithfully. They are standing firm for Christ. Therefore, we must let their example stir us to firmly resist the devil. We must use their example to arouse us to stand firm for Christ.

Rom 6:13 *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Eph 4:26-27 *"In your anger do not sin:" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*

Eph 6:13 *Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

1 Pet 5:8-9 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

Prov 1:10 *My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.*

Prov 4:14 *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. ■*