

Why Humble Yourself?

1 Peter 5:5-7

Introduction

Background context

Peter had been working in this letter to encourage his readers who live in the midst of a culture hostile to Christianity. The hardships of life as a Christian are not glossed over. They are unapologetically pointed out.

His counsel included reminding them of the glory of their salvation and the hope it gave them for a glorious future. He also challenged them how to understand and how to deal with the hardships of persecution.

In chapter 5 Peter put their focus on how they must live together in order to have thriving congregations.

1. Exhortation to Younger Men, verse 5a.

Submit to your Elders.

Give deference to your leaders and exercise restraint of your impatience with them. Illustration: Rehoboam's young advisors, 1 Kings 12:7-16.

2. Exhortation to every Christian, verse 5b.

Take action and put on humility toward one another.
Don't just feel humble, act it.

"Clothe yourselves" is reminiscent of Jesus washing the disciples' feet before the last supper (John 13:4-15).

Definition: Humility means to act toward others with the goal of cooperating with their authority, or contributing to the betterment of another person's situation by helping them with their needs. It is a point of view which thinks of the desires, needs, and ideas of others as equally, if not more worthy of attention, than your own. Expounded by Paul in Philippians 2:3-4.

Humility grows out of the perspective that I am important to God because I am His child. God has provided for the most important need of this life—the saving grace of Jesus. Therefore, beyond basic food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual companionship, I have no other real needs.

I am thereby free to serve others and assist them however I can with securing these needs in their lives.

The Christian idea of humility arises out of Christian values. It teaches me that eternal life and spreading access to the message of Christ is the chief purpose for every Christian's life.

Humility is both proactive and responsive. There is also false humility.

3. How humility is cultivated.

A. By recognizing the universal truth that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Proverbs 3:34 reads:

Proud people live against the current of divine order. They do not know what divine grace is because God withholds it from them. Deut. 8:17-18.

The principle was part of Israel's heritage.

Jesus amplified this principle in His teaching, Matthew 23:12; Mark 9:35.

If you don't cultivate humility that could be a reason why your Christian life feels flat, uninteresting, or a struggle. God is resisting your preoccupation with yourself.

B. By humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God, 5:6a

"Bowing to God's wisdom, accepting the twists and turns of his providence, and entrusting all your concerns to him" (Grudem TNTC 1988, 201).

It is part of Christian maturity to learn that God is sovereign in our hardships. He knows what pressures we need in order to turn from sins or to intensify our efforts to grow.

The purpose of God must be our confidence in the midst of hardships. Reference to the "mighty hand of God" recalls the power of God to deliver His people, and to judge their enemies, Exodus 3:19-21.

God promises that every child of His will triumph at the end of hardship, verse 6b.

Triumph may come at the end of earthly trials or when the Lord returns.

C. By casting all your anxieties on God, verse 7.

Anxiety and worry should not be allowed to oppress us.

These false comforters should be thrown off—thrown to God.

Whether worldly cares or righteous concerns, burdens need to be cast off into the mighty arms of the Lord, Psalm 55:22.

This is not saying that crying out to God in the midst of trials will remove them. It is saying that we can transfer to His caring hands the concerns and fears that our trials bring.

That is the prayer of faith—a cry of trust that pleases God.

But how are we to cast our cares onto the Lord?

Paul exhorted the Philippians to escape their anxieties by prayerfully putting them into God's hands: Philippians 4:6-7.

Summary: why humble yourself?

1) So your Elders will be effective. 2) So you will avoid the resistance of God and enjoy His grace. 3) So you may experience triumph after hardship. 4) So that you may better know God's personal care for you.

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