

Serving in Christ's Presence

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, 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; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time (1 Peter 5:1-6, NASB).

Peter spoke from a unique perspective. He had personally witnessed Christ's suffering and glory (1 Peter 5:1). He was present at the Transfiguration and at the Ascension. Peter had watched Jesus' ministry, had looked into His face as He taught, and had lived with Him for three years. To Peter, Jesus was a very real human being.

Here he says, "In light of Him – remembering how He ministered and suffered – this is how you should minister." His words impact not only pastors, but everyone in all areas of ministry. These words are relevant to our personal relationships as well.

The longer I serve the Lord, the more I feel the need to hear these truths again. They ring so true to experience.

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 (v.2).

It is easy to slip into doing "good" things for selfish reasons, even in the work of the church. But selfish motivation will eventually turn to bitterness and smallness.

All that changes when we perform every service for Christ himself. Ministry is then a work of love, and it is natural to do it "voluntarily" and "with eagerness".

...nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock (v.3).

Lead by example, not by domination. This ties into the next point.

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God (vv.5-6).

Probably Christ's most remarkable quality as a leader, as a King, as God Himself, was His utter humility. When Isaiah looked ahead and saw the outlines of the coming Messiah, he described this quality:

*He will not cry out or raise His voice,
Nor make His voice heard in the street.
A bruised reed He will not break
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish* (Isaiah 42:2-3, NASB).

Jesus was so humble with the humble. He treated them as persons, as loved ones, as brothers and sisters. When we receive leadership responsibility, we tend to puff ourselves up as a way of commanding authority and getting our way. Peter's simple words are penetrating reminders.

They apply not only on the job and at church, but on the home front as well. Raising teenagers as they grow into independent adults, remember this scriptural wisdom:

serve with a willing, unselfish spirit
lead by example
relate to them in humility
 treat them respectfully as fellow human beings,
 not as persons lower or less than you

Lord, thank You for Your example. As I live before You, continue to teach me to serve others in Your Spirit.

Hymn: [Here at Your Feet, Lord](#)

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