
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

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1 Peter 5: 1-4: "Be a Good Leader!"

General idea: We are called to follow the Good Shepherd in order to be a good shepherd! Peter is addressing those in church leadership who had the same problems we have today. Thus, he extols them to clue themselves into Christ and follow His example--to care and pastor others with excellence and fortitude. Peter does not ask them to do something that he has not done; rather, he uses himself as an example and points them to the Ultimate Example.

The Church has always been riddled with strife and conflict, because our fallen nature causes us to fight with one another using the ways of the world, while the devil also uses us for his means. When we do this, we forget who Christ is, and we forget what the Church is here to do--to know Him and make Him known. We leaders can easily be tempted to chase what is not godly. So, when we are not following the Good Shepherd, we are not being a good shepherd. We will then get our lead from our desires; consequently, we will seek means to get what we want and not what God has called us to. Then, *wham!* The sheep are in conflict and strife because the shepherd is leading them astray.

Another way we can cause dysfunction in the Church is to "lord it over" people by micro-managing them, and seeking to belittle, exploit, and manipulate while we are clearly called to lead by the example of our Lord. We must see leadership as helping people draw near to Christ as we eagerly seek to know Him better ourselves so we can be a good example. The fruit of this will be a sense of a willingness, of humbleness, unselfish servitude, and encouragement by discipleship (Matt. 20:20-28; Luke 22:26; Gal. 5:19-26). All with the goal that we will share His glory in eternity!

Vs. 1: From the context of this chapter, we are urged to have the attitude of Christ! We are called to live in the Spirit! We need to see what He has done for us: He brings us to God, He makes us alive, He cleanses us, and He is our continual Example! Therefore, we do not need to waste any more of our life with evil deeds or have evil desires. This will translate into our conduct and our prayers (as these will become more serious), as well as our fervent love for one another (John 16:33).

- *Elders* generally refers to those who are older and wiser in life, those able to share wisdom and advice. This was also a specific title for community leaders who ruled their provinces and/or who were judges. These people held great respect and responsibilities in their communities (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim. 3:1; 5:17; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).

- *Fellow elder.* Peter is assuring his solidarity that as an Apostle, he is not above them in exercising God's love. He will not ask them to do what He has not done himself. This was to encourage and identify with them in the midst of sufferings and discord.
- *Witness of Christ's sufferings.* Peter is reminding them of his ties and personal ministry with Jesus and all the wonders he witnessed (Matt. 16:27; 17:8; 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:60-62; John 1:14; 2:11; 18:10-11, 15-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 2:21-24).
- If we are claiming Christ as Lord, we need to be living the life--not just talking about it or just showing up for the club meetings (church)!

I urge you to seek God's Will by recognizing God's love for you. In that way, you will be able to apply biblical principles to help you become a much better leader. Additionally, if you are already a leader, you can use the principles of His Word to spruce up your attitude so your character becomes good in action. You can take a look at what you have done wrong, and then correct it by removing your false thinking and realigning your behaviors.

Vs. 2-4: Conflicts have buffeted the early church and Peter is seeking to restore them to a proper perspective and call. The leaders were also experiencing the first waves of persecution and were the ones being tortured and imprisoned. The call is simple, yet so not followed in most churches! The call for us is to exercise watch and care over God's people, to encourage and shepherd them in a godly direction from a godly example. Leadership is never about what we get out of it or a force of our will; rather, it is about the mobilization of His precepts from His Word in our life so it flows and it is "happening" onto theirs! We will have an eagerness to know Him more powerfully so we can serve with more humility.

- *Shepherds* is a term that had great depth and meaning for an agrarian society. *Sheep* and *shepherd* are often-used words in Scripture; they denote a concerned guide who describes God, the church, and His people (Eza. 34: 1-10; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-18; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25). A shepherd does not lead by being harsh or the sheep will refuse to go with him, and perhaps will even die. Rather, he leads and guides them in the right direction with gentleness; then the sheep will follow him. The sheep do this out of a need to be protected, to be led to food and water that they cannot find on their own. Humans are to lead others to the precepts of His Word and character. We are to lead by being a shepherd.
- *Overseers* refers to and implies the leaders of the leaders, such as bishops (Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:5-7). This word however, also applies to all those who are supervising others such as elders, pastors, or anyone in any leadership capacity. We are all to carry out the principles of these offices.

- *Not by compulsion/not because you must.* Many Greek philosophers and teachers and some Jewish leaders were very strict and controlling; this created a negative, non-enriching atmosphere that led to discord and strife. Real leaders are real examples that exemplify true virtue (Matt. 16:24-27; Mark 10:42-45; Philp. 2:6-11; 2 Thess. 3:9)!
- *Greedy* refers to the breaching of trust with others--catering solely to our personal needs; in so doing, we usurp God's will in favor of ours, for manipulating others. Leading is never by compulsion; rather, it comes from a willing heart. This is not about pastors not needing to get paid, as fair compensation is biblical; any worker is worth a decent wage. It is about how dishonesty devalues the Kingdom (1 Cor. 9:9-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
- *Lording over* means haughtiness, arrogance (which is to abuse one's power), to be controlling, not leading by example, to "lord over" and not encourage, to micro-manage, to not serve. Humbleness is essential in leadership (Job 41:34; Psalm 10:5; 18:27; 101:5; 131:1; 6:17; Prov. 16:18; 21:4; 30:13)!
- *Be examples* means to show others and influence them--not just tell them. We are to shepherd the flock of Christ with wise conduct through the exercising of humility and the demonstration of wisdom. The light we use to guide others needs to be His Light--not ours. Our light is pride versus the Light we are to follow, which is Christ (Mark 10:42-45; John 13:1-17; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 4:12). As leaders, we are responsible to care for God's people with faithfulness and honor, and never out of severity or improper motivations (Matt. 23)!
- *Chief Shepherd* means a shepherd who is over other shepherds. This is a name for Christ, and refers to how he cares for and gently guides us. He, as God, serves as our prime example, the One to whom we are responsible for the people he has entrusted to us. We can trust Christ to lead us (John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:25).
- *Appears* is a reference to Christ's return, and that He will reward those who have served with distinction and judge those who led people astray. We can look to the return of Christ for our hope!
- *Crown of glory* was not like the gold medals we have today, but still were praised for their significance. They were bound olive leaves, formed as a garland, and given to sporting and soldier victors. These were perishable; our reward is never ending and will not perish!

If you are in leadership, then be a good leader! Our attitude and behaviors will be closely watched and mimicked! We are the ones who will encourage others to seek and know Him more, or distract them away from the Church and our Lord. We must be growing in the faith with conviction and fortitude so we will have good

motives. Good motives are essential to good leadership; otherwise, all you have are power plays, strife, and dysfunction! Churches that have problems, for the most part (in my experience), are mainly because the leadership has forgotten who Christ is in their personal lives, and they do not practice His precepts. They are not willing to be good followers and therefore end up leading the people with personal agendas and trends. Christ is left out of the loop (1 Kings 3:9; Luke 22:25-28; Matthew 25:21; Mark 9:33-37; John 5:19; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 13:17)!

Leadership embodies the fruit and character of our Lord. It must be Christ-directed in a godly, purposeful direction. It requires being a servant before attempting to direct others. The leadership for the Church must come from the Jesus model, not the business model! It is never a force of personality; it is earning that respect because of your love and care. It must come from Him, disseminating through our personal disciplines of growing in Him by faith and His Word, and modeled from good mentorship. This will mean we serve unselfishly so we influence, equip, and empower people to accomplish God's purpose and plan. Disintegrating or bad leadership is more destructive to a local church than a legion of demons, as it corrupts godly principles and displays a skewed understanding of our call to follow Christ. It seeks its own, and not the Word.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever led a group that was unruly or uncooperative with you? How did you feel? What did you do?
2. What does it mean to have the attitude of Christ? What would your church look

like if the pastors and leaders did this to the best means possible?

3. How would you define church leadership problems? Have you experienced them? How so? What was done? What should have been done?
4. Does it make you feel secure, distressed, or..., that church leadership has faced the same problems and been riddled with strife and conflict all though its history?
5. What does it mean for a leader to follow the example of Christ? How would this translate into better care and pastoring? How would excellence and fortitude be shown? What would your church look like if this were true of her leaders?
6. What happens when leaders do not follow Christ (when we forget who Christ is and what the Church is here to do)? What would your church look like if this were true?
7. Have you experienced or seen leaders easily tempted to chase what is not godly? How so? What was done about it? What should have been done? How can we guard against bad motivations and false thinking?
8. Do you firmly believe that by following the Good Shepherd, we can be good shepherds? If so, then why does it seem most Christians forget this?
9. What would it take for the leadership in your church to be helping people draw near to Christ and desiring with eagerness to know Him better and make Him known? What would your church look like if this were so?
10. Why is it important for leaders to be good examples? What happens when we get our lead from our own interests and personal motivations?
11. How does the goal that we will share His glory in eternity help facilitate better leadership? What about living in the Spirit? Allowing Him to cleanse us? The application of fervent love for one another? What would your church look like if all these were applied? What are you going to do about it?
12. What can be done to effectively apply, by example, a sense of willingness to be humble with unselfish servitude? What do you need for this to happen in your life? How do encouragement and discipleship apply? What are some of the false thoughts that need to be removed? What behaviors need realigning?

If we are claiming Christ as Lord, we need to be living the life--not just talking about it!