
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

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1 Peter 5: 5-9: "Submit to God and Resist the Devil!"

General idea: Peter is calling the church (and us) to be mature and faithful which requires us to submit and to be humble. The result is respect, cooperation, unity, community, and the power of His Fruit at work. But, if we do not submit, have disregard for unity, or have no respect for authority, our sinful nature will win out; the result will be quarrels (because of pride), discord, and shame. We have to see that God wants us to submit; this is best for us both individually and collectively as a church. Being a Christian and a church is about relying on Him, not ourselves; it is about His mighty power at work in us--not our feeble ways! His favor and power will be poured out on us when we are faithful, obedient, and meek (strength under control). Nevertheless, be warned that pride is the opposite of these, and that it will destroy relationships and churches fast and furiously; that is why God hates it so much! Thus, to be confident in Jesus and be used by Him, we need Him to empower us. With this mindset and empowering, we do not need to worry or fret because our mind is not on our status, situations, possessions, or experiences, but on Christ! This comes about when we realize that Jesus does indeed care, and loves us ever so deeply!

The second aspect of this passage is about spiritual warfare. The devil gets a hold on us when we are not complying with the previous precepts! He will attack to discourage and sway us away from God and His ways. Our defense is simple; we are to stand firm in Christ, pray, and allow His work in us and not ours; what we would bring to the table is just fuel for the devil and his ways!

Vs. 5-7: Peter seeks to comfort his congregation that is experiencing great trouble, suffering, and being manipulated by friends, family, and society. This was causing them to be scattered and persecuted. So, he brings them back to the fundamentals, the basic attitudes of spiritual growth and maturity. The building blocks for spiritual maturity must be grasped and implemented by everyone who claims Jesus as Lord; the foundational block is an attitude of submission and humility. This will greatly affect how we think which influences who we are and what we do. It is all about centering ourselves to the root of the problem; our motives will direct our actions.

- *Young men be submissive.* The Greek is "hupotasso" which means to line up under. It is a military term that means to "get in line" under the leadership of those who are more mature.
- *Those who are older,* as in verse one. The term "elder" refers to church officers. To *submit to elders* means to give the church officials respect, but it actually applies to all (1 Tim. 5:1). Respect for elders was considered very important in Judaism, as those with more experience in life were considered to have more knowledge and wisdom; the younger people should learn from them and take heed. In practice this means having the elders speak first and younger people listen. It is about the attitude of

submission, because young people are inclined to be aggressive and enamored with their own will and ideas, and thus tend to be stubborn and ignore older, wiser people.

- *Clothe yourselves.* "Enkomboomai" literally means to cover something on yourself with something like a work apron. It refers to the apron that a slave would put on over his clothes to keep them clean. It means to submit to one another by putting on humble service just as Jesus did in John 13:1-18!
- *Humility* means our correct understanding of who we are in Christ and how we are to go before God. This does not mean we are to hate ourselves; rather, it means to have a right respect and relationship with God (Prov. 3:5). Our attitude toward God will greatly affect our attitude in how we communicate and how we act. These will be revealed by the motives of our heart. We learn humility by the spiritual disciplines of being in His Word, and practice--before God--our dependence on Him, seeking of His will, and being in prayer. Our motivation is to be the realization that we are saved by grace, and kept by His love (1 Kings 8:58; Psalm 25; Mark 1:7; Luke 9:23; 18:9-14; 22:27; Romans 12:3; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 1:18; Phil. 2:8; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:3-5).
- *Humble yourselves... God opposes the proud,* is a quote from Proverbs 3:34, and refers to the irrationality of foolish people who do not use wisdom, but choose rather to seek folly and thus bring adversity upon themselves. This also refers to submitting to the sovereignty of God (Proverbs 1:24-33; 6:16; 8:13, Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Micah 6:8). We remove our pride by "clinging" to the cross, confessing our sins, and seeking forgiveness from God and others whom we have offended. Our discipline in the faith will help strengthen our walk as we continue to grow in Him.
- *He will lift you up.* God alone deserves the right to be exalted and honored. God is the only One to exalt us! This is an essential attitude we must take before effective Christian character, maturity, or spiritual growth can be possible. God's plan for our life is far better than any desire--evil or good--we could ever have. His promise is relief from persecutions, either in this life or our life to come. The application is to trust Christ, to keep praying, and trust in our Lord, knowing that His love for us is real and true. God is merciful and is moved by our struggles; He does care (Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-9; Jug. 2:18; 10:16; Psalm 107:9; Prov. 3:34; Isa. 2:11-12, 17; Ezek. 17:24; 21:26; Luke 1:52-53). Thus, it is logical and beneficial to be humble in Him (2 Chron. 7:14-15; Prov. 3:34; 25:6-7; Isa. 2:11-12; 5:15; Matt. Mt 18:4; 23:12 Luke 11:43; 14:11; 18:14; 20:46; 1 Pet. 5:62)!
- *God's mighty hand* means God's covering power, God's controlling power, and God's sovereignty; God is in charge. The mighty hand of God is the loving, caring hand of God in charge of us. It can be a shelter, a deliverance, a testing, or a chastening. God's mighty hand is always His best love for us so we become our best for His glory (Duet 26:8; Phil 4:13)! So do not debate with God; humble yourself under His will, under His Word, and under His power.
- Humility is mutual. When we are faithful and humble to God and to others, it builds our

character and community. This parallels James 4:6-10. James puts the emphasis on poverty and oppression while Peter's emphasis is on our being disillusioned from persecution and subsequently falling away from God.

- *Cast all your anxiety/your cares to Him.* Being humble denotes being active in our faith and trusting in Him, so we trust God to direct our lives. When He is in control, we need not worry. Life is not about our circumstances; rather, it is about how we learn and grow in Him by our trust, faith, and obedience! It also means being repentant of one's behaviors and attitudes; but, furthermore, it means that being totally dependant upon God produces a better attitude that creates better actions.

We are to accept His mighty hand; then, we will be lifted up. We are to endure the pain and difficulties that life brings, for He will lift us up. We are to endure the trouble and trials, for He will lift us up. We should never think that our circumstances are too difficult; rather, we should seek to cast our anxiety on Him because we have the confidence that He does care for us. Take heed; God will not lift us up until we are ready for it. Our grace came after the cross. Our crown comes after the cross. Suffering comes before glory.

Vs. 8-9: God is totally sovereign and Satan can do nothing to us other than what God allows. However, he still has power and has not been tamed yet. Consider that your will is the door through which he comes prowling and attacking; why give him an open door! Satan is still our adversary; he wants to not only take you away from God's love and precepts, he wants to utterly destroy you! Peter's point? Be on your guard and resist him; do not let Satan have that open door--as Peter has personally experienced (Luke 22:31-34; Eph. 6:10-20)!

- *Be self-controlled* means allowing God to be in control of our will and heart and seeking the Spirit to enable us. Then, we will know what not to do and be able to guard the areas in which we are weak. This will allow us to have discipline and restraint as we are obedient to God and others. It means not allowing distractions to derail or remove us from His will and plan; that way, we will not be held back from what Christ called us to do (Prov. 16:32; 25:28; Rom 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:25-27; 1Thess. 5:22; Titus 2:12; Heb. 12:2).
- Your enemy, *the devil/Satan* means "the slanderer," and "our adversary." His name here refers to being the accuser or the prosecutor (Job 1:6-12; 2:12; Zac. 3:1-2; Rev. 12: 9-10). Peter says Satan is seeking to accuse us of wrong so he can blind us to God's love and grace. He twists our mindsets to be ashamed or seek apostasy (because we think God does not care), or into not taking our faith seriously.
- *Roaring lion* was the most feared animal at that time, striking absolute fear into the people who had no real defense against them (Psalm 7:2; 10:9-10; 22:13). This refers to Satan's power and destructiveness. It was also a colloquialism meaning *someone who is out to get you or an enemy of God*. At this time, Nero was starting to use Christians as entertainment by having them fed to lions.

- *Resist him/ the devil.* This means to beware of the Devil and resist him, to be sober and vigilant (as in *alert*) of Satan's tactics and influences, to flee the Devil's kingdom, his values, and his wisdom, and embrace God's kingdom, values, and wisdom. This has more to do with moral values than spiritual warfare. The devil does not have equal authority or power as the popular "Ying/Yang" philosophy states; rather, he only has the power we give to Him. God has *absolute power*. The devil is not invincible; he is easily thwarted. We put on God's armor so we can fight his temptations and flee from him; we evade the lusts of our heart and world by running from it, not toward it (Eph. 6:11-18; James. 3:15, 17; 4:4, 7-10)!
- *Your brothers* means we are all the body of Christ, in community with one another and in unity by Christ and His work. Therefore, we are never alone, away from God, or away from one another (unless you isolate yourself).

Humbleness and submission help us to be accountable and to honestly assess our actions and performance. This attitude of humility is a parallel to an attitude of submission. Submission attacks self-promoting posturing and pride; the attitude of humility attacks and nullifies the self-love mentality that causes pride. Humility minimizes arrogance and removes pride. It is the misunderstanding of our fallen nature and weaknesses that causes us to think we are better than we are, and that causes us to strive to lift ourselves above others and God. Humility admits that, most importantly God, but also others are responsible for our achievements. Humbleness enables us to be a teachable person who is willing to have a good attitude of submission and servant-hood, a person who confesses sin and remembers how Christ served us! Humility is not self-hatred or having a "poor me" attitude. In contrast, arrogance lifts our self-interests and self-sufficiencies, which seem necessary and good. However, when we are self-sufficient, we not only fail to see our need for redemption, but also fail to see our need for growth in spiritual matters. Therefore, *self* becomes the god, and any work of the One True God is muted and put aside.

If you are looking for a solution to your problems, then search no more. If you feel life is overwhelming you, seek your comfort in Him. He does care for you! Receive His care, receive His love, and surrender your doubts, your frustrations, your concerns, and your frailty. Trust in God's love in all of your circumstances. Allow Him to be your inward peace and contentment! We are to have an attitude of accepting whatever God provides, and being happy with it. We are not to seek self-gratification or temporary happiness in the shallow things of life. The fruit of anxiety is discontent, distrust, selfishness, unhappiness, and stress, as the focus becomes your situation, and not who you are in Christ. Being discontented will prevent the work of God in your heart and your will (Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; Romans 9:19-21; Philippians. 4: 10-13; 1Timothy 6:6-9; Hebrews 13: 5).

So cast you anxiety, fears, trepidations, stress, and difficulties... upon Him! All of our cares are to be surrendered to our Lord. Not some, not a little, not *almost* all; all, but **all** of our cares--all that we have held in the past, the present, and will be in the future.

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. What do you do when you are anxious, worried or stressed? What should you do? How does this passage help you?
2. What does it mean to you to be mature and faithful? What do you think is required to submit and to be humble?
3. How does humbleness promote respect, cooperation, unity, and community? Consider your work, school, family, and church! Why does God honor these? Why would Christians--especially those in leadership--*not* want to use these foundational building stones of submission and humility?
4. What blocks humility from working and being exhibited in you? How does humility give God the "power line" to empower you with His Fruit? What would your life and church look like with these precepts at work?
5. What happens when we do not submit, we have disregard for unity, or no respect for authority? How does this collectively affect a church?
6. Why do you suppose that His favor and power will be poured out on us when we are faithful, obedient, and meek? How does being confident in Jesus help you in this?
7. Do you worry? Why? Why do you not need to worry or fret? What happens when your mind is on your status, situation, possessions, or experiences and not on Christ?

8. What will happen to your spiritual life and relationships when you realize that Jesus does indeed care and love you ever so deeply?
9. How does the devil get a hold on you? How does he discourage or sway you away from God and His ways? How does he twist your mindset? How can you form a defense to him?
10. How do the foundational blocks of attitude, of submission, and of humility help prepare you for life and leadership? How do they influence who you are and what you do?
11. Do you realize that your motives will determine your actions as well as your correct understanding of who you are in Christ? So, what can you do to make sure you have good, healthy, biblical motives? What are you going to do about it?
12. What do you need to do to more fully take hold of your dependence on God, seeking His will, and being in prayer? What does it mean to you to *cling* to the cross? How will confessing your sins and seeking forgiveness from God and others whom you have offended help you? Now, what are you going to do about it?

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19