



## “Humility for the Long Haul” (I Peter 5:1-6)

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Intro: Read the entire chapter.

vv.1-4 Elders should be, first and foremost, shepherds. It is God’s flock, not my flock. It still bothers me a bit when pastors call the fellowship where they serve “my church.” One of the greatest examples of a true shepherd to me is David. Remember what he told king Saul before he went out and defeated Goliath? I Sam.17: 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

John 10: 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

Elders should be willing servants (Jesus came to serve not be served; also Luke 17:7-10), not in ministry for the money (how many have allowed greed to ruin their ministries), not lording over the flock but leading by example.

There is one word I could use to describe an elder who has these characteristics, and it is the word that is the central theme of this final chapter. That word is HUMBLE. Verse 5 should be a tremendous motive to be humble!

v.5 This is from Prov.3:34. The last thing in the world I want is for God to oppose me! Did anyone hear the amazing thunder from some of the thunderstorms we’ve had in the area this past week? I was laying on the couch taking a short nap Wednesday afternoon and was suddenly awakened by one of the loudest bursts of thunder I’ve ever heard. Our dog Hushai was literally shaking in his fur. There were several more loud claps after this one, and I sat there with a fresh awe and reverence for my heavenly Father. I thought about the story of when God came down upon Mt Sinai before Moses and the people of Israel (Exodus 19:16-20; Hebrews 12:18-21).

In this passage God is calling the young and the old to a life of humility, and for good reason – God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. You might say God is encouraging “humility for the long haul.”

There are some people who humble themselves when they are young, but then after they are older, they become filled with pride. And there are those who are not humble when they are young, but after they are older, they become humble.

I do not know of a place in the Scriptures where we are encouraged to pray for humility. What we are encouraged to do is humble ourselves. People that will not humble themselves will eventually be humbled by the Lord.

Prov.16: 5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

Prov.21: 4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!

Prov.6: 16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren.

Isa.2: 12 The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled)...

Any idea what the original sin was? See I Tim.3:6; Ezekiel 28.

Proverbs 16:18

Note: God does not want to oppose us. He wants us to humble ourselves so that He might shower us with grace.

Rather than give us a definition of humility, let's look at some biblical characteristics of a humble person:

1. Servant

- See Philippians 2:7; Matthew 20:28; Luke 12:37.

2. Submissive/Obedient

- See Philippians 2:8; James 4:7.
- The biblically humble person is willing to suffer for the will of God.

3. Dependent

- I Sam.17: 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

4. Don't think highly of themselves

- Romans 12:3; This does not mean they are not confident, but that their confidence is not in themselves but rather the Lord.

5. They do not focus attention on themselves.
  - Matt.12: 19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.
6. They give all glory to God.
  - They realize that everything they have and everything they are is because of the Lord.
  - See Psalm 115:1.

#### SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE PRIDEFUL LATER BECOME HUMBLE

- Moses
  - Acts 7:22; Great orator, educated, grew up in the palace as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
  - After 40 years of humility training (Numbers 12:3; Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13).
- Nebuchadnezzar
  - Daniel 4:4-16, 20-27, 29-37
- Saul of Tarsus

#### SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE HUMBLE LATER BECOME PROUD

- King Saul
  - See I Samuel 10:10-11, 20-24; 15:10-11 (insubmissive, disobedient), 12 (self-glory), note v.17, vv.20-21 (excuses for sin, blameshifting).
- Uzziah
  - See II Chron.26:5 (submissive, obedient), 16 (independent), 17-19 (responds in anger when confronted), 21.
- David
  - II Sam.24: 2 So the king said to Joab and the army commanders with him, "Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are." 3 But Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?"

#### SOME PEOPLE ARE PROUD AND REMAIN PROUD

- Rehoboam – "My little finger is thicker than my father's waist."
- Herod
  - Acts 12: 21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not

- of a man." 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

#### ANYONE, AT ANY TIME, CAN *CHOOSE* TO HUMBLE THEMSELVES

- Ahab (I Kings 21); thief on the cross
- They will get victory over the enemy (the devil).
- God will shower them with His grace.
- They have the privilege of laying all their anxiety on the Lord.
- Matt.6:31-34
- They will be lifted up "in due time."

#### CONCLUSION

- Biblical writings that never made it into the canon of Scripture are called the Apocrypha. One of these writings is called The Acts of Peter, and it is the first to say that Peter's death came by inverted crucifixion. Through the years, other church leaders held that this was true. Origen wrote, "Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, as he had desired to suffer." Eventually Michelangelo painted it into stone in a chapel at the Vatican. If this is true, we can say that Peter's hope for exaltation, his entrance into glory, came after one brief and final season of human humiliation and suffering. One commentator said "In the end, for the apostle Peter, Heaven's inheritance was gained only after being crucified head downward upon the earth. Ironically, according to the Christian faith, the way up always comes by going down." Hughes commentary on I Peter, p.167.
- Luke 14:11...all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.