

Dear Friends,

We seldom associate Biblical humility with Biblical submission, either to the Lord or to our brothers and sisters in Christ, but that is one of Peter's major thoughts in our study passage this week. As I recall, a Puritan poet wrote similar thoughts regarding the way up actually being, for us, the way down. Our spiritual crown, temporal blessings, occurs by means of our enduring our cross.

I definitely tend to worry. Over the years, Sandra has many times kindly nudged me, "Joe, maybe it's time for you to preach that 'Consider the lilies' sermon to yourself." And she was always right. In our study passage, Peter doesn't simply teach us to "Give" our worries, our "cares," to the Lord. He teaches us to "Cast" those cares upon Him. Literally, Peter's point requires us to "Throw" or "Hurl" all our cares off our shoulders and onto Him. Why? Not because He "Worries" for us. God doesn't worry. Because He tenderly is concerned for us and for what He knows is our best interest. If getting rid of my worries is in my best interest, He nudges me to "Cast" those worries onto Him, because He can resolve them when we can't.

Part of Peter's lesson on humility in this lesson surprises us by linking true humility with our submitting not only to the elders in the church, but submitting to Him as well. Yes, we submit to the Lord when we refuse to indulge the various sins and unhealthy attitudes forbidden in Scripture. We also submit to Him when we trust Him enough to bundle up our worries, throw them to Him, and leave them there. Refusing to cast our cares on Him constitutes a form of non-submission. Reluctant as my decision has often been, I have often learned--eventually--that truly letting go of my worries and giving them permanently and fully to the Lord was the most blessed relief I could have known. I can't do a thing with my worries. But He can dissolve them either by eliminating them or by giving me sufficient grace to endure them and go past them to serve Him and His people.

Lord bless,  
Joe Holder

### **Respectful Relationships**

**And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.** (1 Peter 5:4-7 KJV 1900)

We live in a culture that despises any form of submission to anyone or anything. While this culture thinks itself "Enlightened," Scripture teaches a different assessment of self-above-all-else.

**Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.** (Philippians 3:19 KJV)

In the context of this verse, Paul contrasts believers in Jesus with people whom he describes as "...**enemies of the cross of Christ.**" (Philippians 3:18 KJV) He briefly describes these people, but immediately turns to a heavenly "**conversation,**" translated from a word that refers to "Citizenship." All children of God are presently "Citizens" of God's heavenly country and family. Paul concludes the chapter with a reminder. Our Lord does not take His family lightly. He shall finally raise and glorify every one of His own. Paul's contrast is enlightening and encouraging to the Lord's people now. While we live with people who regard themselves as enemies to God and to all godly people, all they may say or do cannot in any way diminish our permanent "Citizenship" in heaven's kingdom, also the family of God. The Lord shall preserve His chosen family to the end of His eternal purpose for them—raised, changed, and for ever with Him in glory. So, when people speak cutting words to you about your faith, take their words as a nudge to remind yourself of your heavenly "Citizenship" and your final glorious and endless day with the Lord.

Peter opens this chapter with a charge to the "**elders among you.**" Given the details of his charge to these men, I believe he directed these words to the preachers and pastors in the churches to whom he wrote. The "elders" are to feed and care for the "**flock of God**" under their charge and care. Take care of them with loving attentive care as a shepherd would care for his sheep. He continues this lesson in our study verses.

**And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.** Many Bible students interpret this verse as referring to the Second Coming. Possible, but I suggest another possibility. The word translated "**appear**" means "...bring to light, to set in a clear light; to manifest, display." (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words) We need not wait till Second Coming to see our Lord clearly manifest or brought to light. In fact, Paul makes a similar point to Timothy.

Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is **now made manifest** by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath **brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.** (2 Timothy 1:9-10 KJV)

Peter's context deals with current spiritual matters, not with our eternity with the Lord. We can rejoice and praise our God that He presently "Appears," makes Himself clearly manifest, in the gospel.

Based on this interpretation, consider Peter's admonition to the "elders" in the churches to which he first wrote this letter. He taught them to care for the people tenderly and respectfully under their preaching, as a shepherd cares for his flock ("24/7"). The elders are not to look to the people they serve for their validation or approval. The Lord, their "Chief Shepherd," appointed them to that work. Therefore, when He appears clearly to them and to the people to whom they preach, He shall "Crown" their faithful and tender care of His "Sheep." Whenever a preacher begins to look to the people in the church for their accolades, ego corrupts their faithful ministry. Neither they nor the people to whom they preach are "Shepherded" or fed. But the preacher/pastor who faithfully serves the Lord's people, looking to the Lord for His approval and blessing, both he and the church receive the Lord's blessings as He sends the gospel to them with power. This interpretation, I believe, matches Peter's context fully.

**Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.** If we follow Peter's context, the "younger" to whom he addressed this point were likely the younger "elders" or preachers/pastors. When I first started my preaching journey, I was quite young. I was blessed with several older preachers, men whom I knew and respected as wise and caring "Shepherds" of the churches they served. They blessed me by tenderly taking me under their care. They mentored me with selfless and wise care. They earned my lasting respect and gratitude. On countless occasions, they would give me thoughts or suggestions for a sound interpretation of a passage that I had viewed differently. I asked lots of questions. Occasionally I would respectfully discuss their view, but, in the end, I submitted my novice mind and experience to them. Most of what they taught me I retain to this day. In a few passages, I studied over the years and eventually chose a different (Though not contradictory in doctrinal concepts) interpretation. I've known a few preachers who decided they were wiser than their elder mentors, and not one of those men survived the difficult charge of preacher/pastor. They went shipwreck by their own failure and bad choices.

To my preacher friends. Brothers, preaching to the Lord's people, to His "Sheep," is not an entitlement. Being ordained doesn't mean you are entitled to time in the pulpit. Preaching is a gracious privilege based on our feeding the Lord's people with edifying thoughts. (Jeremiah 3:15 KJV) Never stop studying your Bible and praying for wise and "**acceptable words.**" (Ecclesiastes 12:9-12 KJV. Every preacher should memorize these verses and recite them to himself frequently) Study alone does not guarantee a powerful sermon, but it does assure a beneficial lesson. The more we truly study the Scriptures daily the more the Lord will approve and make our study fruitful. You wouldn't think of serving left-over food that's been in your refrigerator six months, so why think it is acceptable to preach ideas that you studied six months ago and haven't refreshed or studied since? Gospel food should be high quality (Book, chapter, and verse), carefully and rightly

interpreted, and clearly linked to our daily life. How does this lesson teach me to live my faith today?

**Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.** A preacher who pridefully refuses to respect his fellow preachers and learn from them can't teach the church he serves about submission. We must practice it if we hope to preach it with conviction.

More important and to the point of the passage, we manifest our submission to the Lord by our submission to each other. The prideful believer who refuses to submit to his/her brothers and sisters likely also refuses to submit to the Lord.

Humbleness and submission draw a line in our conduct, but also in the Lord's dealings with us. If we refuse to submit and live in humility toward both the Lord and our brothers and sisters, Peter warns. The Lord shall also resist us. And, if we submit to each other and live the humble life toward the Lord and His people, He promises to give us grace. Do we need more grace in our lives? I do! Peter motivates me with the Lord's path to more grace. It is the lifestyle of submission and humility.

What is humility? How do you define it? Much of the correct meaning of humility relates to how we regard ourselves. Consider it a near opposite to pride or arrogance. If we are proud of self, think we know more and better than anyone else in our church, we are prideful, but we have no sense of humility whatever. If we think soberly about self, seek ways to serve others more than gain our own way with them, we are well on our way to learning the way of the humble and therefore blessed believer.

**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.** Study this verse in its context of humility and service, even submission, to other believers. Often the prideful person reveals much personal insecurity. "If I don't take control and gain it for myself, I'll never have it. No one else cares enough about me to give it to me." This attitude is occasionally described as "Dog eat dog." How can we think the Lord shall approve our conduct and bless us if we reduce our own conduct to the same low level as we accuse others of acting out?

The point Peter made—and we often miss—goes to the heart of this complaint. If we manipulate or bully (Physical or verbal bullying) others to gain what we want, how are we morally better than the other “Dog” of the cliché? If, however, God gives “grace” to the humble, what form does this grace take? Does it not appear in the form of our greatest needs, though not at all our greatest desires? The more we submit to our brothers and sisters, serve them, seek their interests above our own, the more we manifest our humility before the Lord. Peter assures us in this setting that the Lord shall exalt us and give us our needs “in due time,” His grace.

**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.** If we expect our desires to be satisfied by other believers, we shall never see them fulfilled. Never. However, if we humble ourselves under the Lord’s hand in well-doing, in doing what He teaches us is good, we trust Him to exalt us, should He regard our exaltation in our own best interest.

Peter teaches us the right process of living and serving the Lord by serving others, but he also reminds us. The Lord’s judgment and providence seldom operate on our timeline. If He chooses to exalt us, He will do so in His “due time,” not ours.

**Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.** In the process of living, serving, and waiting for the Lord’s “due time,” our human nature shall often weigh heavily on our decisions. Faith may give way to fear or worry. Sometimes we impose our ideas onto this thought. “Give God all your worries and let Him worry for you.” God worry? No, never. The first part of the thought is good. Oh yes, give God your worries. Take note. You can’t give them to the Lord and keep on worrying over them. If you truly give them to the Lord, you stop worrying and trust Him for a better outcome than you can produce with all your worrying. All the worry you do can’t alter a thing.

**Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?** (Matthew 6:27 KJV)

A cubit is the distance from your elbow to the tip of your middle finger, 18-22 inches. Can you worry yourself taller than you are? No? So why think you can worry anything else that concerns you out of existence? Instead of clinging to our worries, something we all have and often nurture, both Jesus and Peter taught us to throw our cares upon the Lord. How much we need this lesson! Instead of worry, Jesus and Peter teach us to throw our worries onto the Lord and manifest our true humility by submitting and serving our brothers and sisters. How may I serve you today?

Elder Joe Holder