

1 Peter 5:1- *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:*

The word *exhort* comes from the Greek *parakaleō*, which means *to encourage, comfort, strengthen, and come alongside*. Peter's entire letter is written with this purpose—to encourage and exhort the believer to stand firm in grace amid suffering.

When Peter refers to himself as a *witness of the sufferings of Christ* (1 Pet. 5:1), several possibilities exist.

It is indeed possible that he observed Jesus' suffering on the cross from a distance, especially after his three denials (Luke 22:54–62). The Gospels show that many disciples and followers watched from afar (Luke 23:49).

However, it is also possible—and textually consistent—that Peter is speaking of being a witness to the persecutions, hardships, and opposition Jesus endured throughout His earthly ministry. Peter walked with Jesus closely as part of the inner circle. He witnessed firsthand the rejection, hostility, and continual pressure Jesus faced long before the crucifixion.

Notice that Peter links suffering and glory together. This is a repeated New Testament theme. We are not only observers of Christ's sufferings but also partakers of His glory. Jesus prayed, "*The glory You have given Me I have given them*" (John 17:22). Paul affirms the same truth.

1 Peter 5:2- *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;*

The word shepherd means *to nourish, tend, care for, or feed*. This reveals the true nature of spiritual leadership—; it is not positional dominance but servant-hearted care. A shepherd's role is one of continual nourishment and responsibility. Jesus Himself is the ultimate Shepherd, for He "*did not come to be served, but to serve*" (Matt. 20:28).

Peter goes further by addressing the motive behind shepherding. Leaders are not to serve out of mere obligation, pressure, or compulsion, but willingly, with a willing and joyful heart. Ministry done reluctantly or forcefully misrepresents the heart of Christ. Likewise, shepherds must not serve for "dishonest gain," but with eagerness; a genuine, God-inspired desire to care for His people.

In this verse Peter highlights that the heart posture of the shepherd is just as important as the actions themselves. True leadership reflects Christ's nature: willing, eager, and rooted in love.

1 Peter 5:3- *nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;*

It is possible to misuse authority and fail to faithfully steward the people the Lord has entrusted to us. Peter warns that true spiritual leadership is never about control, domination, or "lording over" others. Instead, biblical leadership is modeled after servant leadership, which is one of the highest and purest forms of leadership. Shepherds lead not by demanding obedience, but by demonstrating it—embodying humility, faithfulness, and Christlike character.

Being an example means the flock learns not merely from our instructions but from our lives. It is leadership through demonstration, not domination. Shepherds reflect Christ when they show the way rather than simply say the way.

Jesus always taught then He did, or He did then He taught (Acts 1:1). A true leader will not just tell someone what to do, but will demonstrate it.

1 Peter 5:4- *and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

Who is the Chief Shepherd? It is Jesus; our leader, and more than that, our Standard. Every earthly shepherd ultimately answers to Him. Peter reminds leaders that their service is not merely toward people but unto Christ Himself.

In this verse, Peter shifts the focus to eternal reward. There are many achievements, accolades, and rewards we may receive in this life that have no lasting value. They fade, perish, and carry no eternal weight. But the works that flow from our relationship with God—works that are not burned up like wood, hay, and stubble—carry an eternal reward. These are the works done from a place of righteousness, identity, and obedience, not effort to earn God's love.

We do not work to become right with God; rather, because we *are* made right with God through Christ, good works naturally flow as a byproduct of our new nature. The question Peter presses into is this:

What are you doing in this life that carries eternal value? Is Christ truly the center, or does everything revolve around you? Paul understood that life is a race—one to be run with intention, passion, and purpose. He did not aim merely to participate but to *win* (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

Peter's point is clear: Those who follow the Chief Shepherd in humble, faithful service will receive a crown of glory that will never fade; a reward untouched by time, corruption, or decay.

1 Peter 5:5- *Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

Peter expands the call to humility beyond leaders to the entire community of believers. Submission is not about inferiority but about honoring the order and wisdom God has established. Yet Peter goes even further; everyone is to be submissive *to one another*. Mutual honor is a hallmark of Christlike community.

He then gives the command: *"be clothed with humility."* The only true way to clothe yourself in humility is to clothe yourself with Christ (Rom. 13:14). Humility is not self-deprecation; it is Christ-dependence. In God's kingdom, the way up is down—the path to exaltation is the path of surrender. Jesus Himself said, *"I came down from heaven"* (John 6:38). He descended in order to serve, showing us what greatness truly looks like.

In contrast, it was Satan who said he would exalt himself (Isa. 14:13–14). Anytime we push ourselves upward in our own strength, or seek to promote ourselves, we are mirroring the very attitude that led to the enemy's downfall. Humility aligns us with Christ; pride aligns us with the devil.

Peter closes with a spiritual law: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. While we already have grace abounding toward us (2 Cor. 9:8), Scripture makes clear that greater measures of grace; greater empowerment, wisdom, and divine enablement—flow to those who walk in humility.

Humility positions us to receive. Pride blocks what God is freely offering.

1 Peter 5:6- *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*

Because God gives more grace to the humble, Peter urges believers to intentionally humble themselves under God's mighty hand. Humility is not weakness; it is alignment. It positions us to receive God's empowerment, direction, and timing. Exaltation is God's responsibility, not ours.

Importantly, exaltation is not ungodly. Scripture gives multiple examples of God exalting His servants. Joshua was exalted before Israel (Josh. 3:7), and Paul was exalted through the signs, wonders, and revelation he walked in. Exaltation simply means God publicly affirming, promoting, or validating what He has done in and through a person.

Paul himself mentions that a “*messenger of Satan*” was sent to buffet him lest he be exalted above measure (2 Cor. 12:7). This opposition did not come from God; it was sent by the enemy. The devil wanted to hinder Paul's influence, revelation, and ministry because Paul's exaltation meant the gospel was spreading with power throughout Asia. The miracles, teachings, and growth of the early church were evidence of God's hand upon Paul, which is exactly why Satan tried to resist him.

Peter's point is clear: If you walk in humility, God Himself will exalt you; at the right time and in the right way. The enemy may try to oppose that exaltation, but he cannot stop what God has ordained.

1 Peter 5:7- *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

The word casting comes from the Greek *epirrhuptō*, which means *to throw upon, to hurl, or to cast forcefully*. It is an aggressive term—not passive or gentle. Peter is not telling believers to *slowly hand over* their worries but to throw them onto God with intentional force, refusing to carry what God never designed them to bear.

What many do not realize is that holding onto care is actually a form of pride. Why? Because verse 6 just taught that humility positions us under God's mighty hand. A humble person believes what God has said and obeys it. If God commands us to *cast* our cares and we choose

instead to carry them, we are acting independently; trusting ourselves rather than trusting Him. That is the essence of pride.

A humble person says, “If God told me to cast my care, then I’m going to do it, because He cares for me.”

Peter not only gives the command, but he gives the reason: “...because He cares for you.” The motivation for releasing care is not obligation but relationship. God’s deep, personal care for His children is the foundation for our confidence. When you know you are loved, you can let go of the weight.

1 Peter 5:8- *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

The word sober comes from the Greek *nēphō*, meaning *to be calm, sober-minded, and collected in spirit*. This is a call to spiritual clarity—no confusion, no panic, no emotional impulsiveness. The word vigilant is from *grēgoreuō*, meaning *to watch, stay awake, and give strict attention*. It paints the picture of a guard on duty—alert, aware, and spiritually awake.

Peter makes an important observation: The devil is *seeking whom he may devour*. This means he cannot devour everyone. He is looking for openings—places where believers are unaware, spiritually distracted, or unguarded. Only those who are not mindful or watchful become vulnerable.

This does not mean a believer should walk in fear or paranoia. Rather, it is similar to a soldier who remains aware that he is in a war. He is not terrified—he is trained, alert, and prepared. Being mindful of the enemy’s intention keeps us from being careless, not fearful.

Peter’s instruction is simple and empowering: Stay calm. Stay watchful. Stay spiritually awake. A believer who is sober-minded and vigilant is one whom the enemy may not devour.

1 Peter 5:9- *Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

Peter calls believers to **resist** the enemy—not fear him. The word “resist” means to stand against, oppose, and refuse to yield. James 4:7 echoes this same command but adds an essential key: “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Submission to God comes *before* resisting the devil. Many believers attempt to fight the enemy while ignoring God’s authority in their lives. But we resist from a place of surrender, not striving.

It is also important to remember that the devil we resist is already a defeated foe (Col. 2:15). Jesus disarmed principalities and powers, stripping them of authority. Therefore, resisting the enemy is not a battle of equals; it is the enforcement of Christ’s victory.

Peter again clarifies the type of suffering he is referring to—persecution, not sickness or tragedy. These sufferings are not strange or unusual (1 Pet. 4:12). Believers throughout the world experience similar opposition because darkness always resists the light.

The way to remain unshakeable is to be steadfast in the faith; firm, grounded, anchored in what Christ has done. Stability comes from confidence in Jesus, not from our own strength. Peter's message is both realistic and empowering: You will face resistance, but you are equipped to overcome it by standing firm in faith and submitting to God's authority.

1 Peter 5:10- *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

Peter closes this section by reminding believers of who is working in them; “*the God of all grace.*” Every form of empowerment, ability, and divine help flows from Him. This same God has called us to His eternal glory in Christ, meaning His plan for us ends in glory, not defeat.

When Peter says “after you have suffered a while,” he is speaking first of persecution, which is consistent with the entire context of the letter. But there is another type of suffering believers experience: the suffering of the flesh.

This is not sickness or tragedy—it is the inward discomfort that comes when your flesh wants one thing and the Word of God commands another. Have you ever been in a situation where Scripture says *forgive*, but your flesh wants revenge Or the Word says *walk in love*, but your flesh wants to withdraw or retaliate?

That tension is a kind of “suffering.” The flesh does not like to yield. But it is through the Spirit that we put the flesh under subjection (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16). This suffering is temporary and purposeful; it shapes Christlike character in us.

Peter lists four outcomes God produces in us:

- Perfect — to mature, restore, equip
- Establish — to make firm, unshakable
- Strengthen — to empower with might
- Settle — to lay a foundation that cannot be moved

In other words, God uses seasons of pressure, not to break us but to build us, solidifying our faith so we stand firm in His victory.

1 Peter 5:11- *To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Peter ends this section by turning the focus back to God, acknowledging that all glory and all dominion belong to Him. The word *dominion* comes from the Greek *kratos*, meaning *power, might, and manifested strength*. It speaks of God's active, ruling power—the kind of strength that is not merely theoretical but demonstrated.

Everything Peter has instructed up to this point; humility, resistance, steadfastness, perseverance, and spiritual growth, is only possible because God supplies the power. All that we need flows from Him, and all honor returns to Him. His dominion is eternal, unchallenged, and unending.

Peter's closing "Amen" seals the truth: so be it.

1 Peter 5:12- *By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.*

Peter closes his letter by affirming that everything he has written from their identity as God's chosen, righteous people to the authority they carry in Christ is the true grace of God.

He reminds believers that they are not trying to earn God's favor or fight for a position with Him; they already stand in His grace. Their entire life, strength, endurance, holiness, and victory flow from this foundation.

1 Peter 5:13- *She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.*

When Peter refers to "she who is in Babylon," he is not speaking about an individual woman. This is widely understood to be a symbolic reference to the church the body of believers located in the region he calls "Babylon." In the early church, the word *Babylon* was often used as a metaphor for Rome, because of Rome's corruption, world power, and opposition to God's people. So Peter is essentially saying, "*The church in Rome, chosen by God just like you, sends greetings.*"

When he adds, "*and so does Mark my son,*" he is referring to John Mark, the same Mark who traveled with Paul and Barnabas and who later wrote the Gospel of Mark. Peter called him "my son" in a spiritual sense Mark was a close companion and someone Peter had personally mentored in the faith.

1 Peter 5:14- *Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

In the early church, a kiss was a cultural expression of honor, affection, and genuine fellowship among believers, a sign of unity and purity of heart. It's interesting that Judas also used a kiss when betraying Jesus, but his kiss carried the opposite meaning. What God intended as a symbol of love and peace was twisted into a sign of deception and betrayal. Peter's instruction reminds the church to restore the true meaning: affection without hypocrisy, honor without hidden motives, and peace flowing from hearts that are genuinely united in Christ.