

- I. I. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness
 - A. I Peter 5:5-11 . . . You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. [6] Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, [7] casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. [8] Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. [10] After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. [11] To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.
 - B. Pride is our enemy, just as much as the devil is our enemy. And pride will do as much harm to our character, to our relationship with God, and to our relationships with others as the devil could ever hope to do through any other of his wiles and temptations. Therefore, we are wise to run from pride and pursue humility, for humility is our friend just as much as God is our friend. And humility will develop the kind of character, relationship with God, and relationships with others that promote mutual, intimate, and lasting love.
 - C. Pray
- II. Practical ways to live a life of humility
 - A. I Peter 5:6-7 . . . Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time . . .
 - 1. I know we looked at verse 6 last week, and what we talked about last week had to do with our part and God's part. Our part is to humble ourselves. God's part is to exalt us. We are to focus on our part and leave God's part to Him. If our focus is God's part, it is probably because we are trying to use the path of humility to satisfy a pride motivated desire for exaltation.
 - 2. Today, I want us to return to verse 6 in order to consider two more truths that are essential to gaining and building humility – a humility that is of the quality and depth God intends for us to have.

- a. First, we are to humble ourselves before God and humbly submit to God. Why? Because He is incomparably great, and in comparison to His greatness, we are nothing. He is holy and just and full of love, while we have a hard time reigning in our selfishness, fleshly desires, unholy fears, and wayward thoughts.
 - (1) He is the One who created us and sustains our life.
 - (2) He is the King of kings, and He is our Lord and Master.
 - (3) He reveals Himself and His will to all mankind, and He invites us to draw near to Him and fellowship with Him.
 - (4) He is the Savior, rescuing everyone who believes in Him from their foolish rebellion and the destructive consequences of their self-rule.
 - (5) He is the patient loving Father to all who will be His children.
 - (6) He is the supreme provider – for whatever good we have, we have because of His provision and care.
 - (7) And I could go on, but I think you are getting the picture. God is everything good and eternal, and in comparison to Him, we are nothing, and therefore have every reason to humble ourselves before Him and humbly submit to Him.
 - b. Second, God himself is humble and He humbles himself for our sake. Added to that, Jesus, who is God in human flesh, said of Himself that He is meek and humble of heart (Matthew 11:29).
 - (1) We read about God's humility in Psalm 113:5-6 . . . Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, [6] Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?
 - (2) We read about Jesus' humility in Philippians 2:5-8 . . . Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
3. What I want us to see here is that, because God is both incomparably great and humble of heart, we are to humble ourselves before Him and toward Him. And to further reinforce the reasons this the only rational response to God, and the reasons this is vital to our spiritual health and the health of our church, I would like you to consider these following truths:

- a. True humility begins and ends with our view of God and our treatment of God. If we treat God as if He is here to serve us, or if we condemn God's behavior, or if we think we know better than God knows what is best for us, it is because we are yet clinging to pride.
 - b. True humility exalts God, and debases self. Pride exalts self.
 - c. Humility trusts in God and nurtures submission and obedience to God. Pride trusts in self and nurtures self-rule.
 - d. Humility measures the condition of its heart, its mind, and its behavior in the light of God's holiness. Pride measures the condition of its heart, mind, and behavior in light of the failures, foolishness, and sins of others.
 - e. Humility knows it is unworthy and therefore undeserving of any good thing from God. Yet humility is confident in its trust in God and forever grateful for every good thing it receives from God. Pride believes it is worthy and therefore deserving of better things and more things from God. And should God fail to live up to pride's expectations, pride complains against God, and speaks against God, and eventually abandons God.
4. As should be obvious from these few truths about humility and pride, pride is our enemy, for it turns us first against God and then against the people around us. Humility is our friend, for it drives us toward God and compels us to love our neighbors.
- B. To my knowledge, no one is born with a predisposition toward humility. And sadly, few of us are taught during our early years to think in right and spiritually beneficial ways about humility. Therefore, to give us some ideas of how we ought to think so as to measure your progress toward humility, consider these following statements.
1. To endure injustice with joy, to patiently do good to your enemies, to lay down your life for your neighbor – these things not only mean you are living according to God's will as expressed in His word, they also mean you have humbled yourself and are nurturing humility.
 2. True humility does not purposefully assume humble looks or learn to speak in humble ways. True humility is a condition of the heart which profoundly affects your view of God, your relationship to God, and your thoughts, words, and behavior toward others.
 3. According to the [*Church*] fathers: true humility is to deem yourself the lowest of all beings and to ascribe to God all your good actions. To deem yourself the lowest of all beings is the beginning of humility.

4. To ascribe to God all your good actions is the end. (St. Gregory of Sinai – Texts on Commandments and Dogmas no. 115)
5. A person who suffers bitterly [*deeply hurt and offended*] when slighted or insulted should recognize from this that he still harbors the ancient serpent in his breast. If he quietly endures the insult or responds with great humility, he weakens the serpent and lessens its hold. But if he replies acrimoniously [*angrily, resentfully, defensively*] or brazenly, he gives it strength to pour its venom into his heart and to feed mercilessly on his guts. In this way the serpent becomes increasingly powerful; it destroys his soul's strength and his attempts to defeat pride and restore humility, compelling him to live for sin and to be completely dead to righteousness. (St. Symeon the New Theologian – Practical and Theological Texts no. 31)
6. He who hates dishonor, hates humility, and he who avoids those who grieve him, flees from meekness. (Dorotheos)

C. Because of the statements I just read, I want to remind you of the devil's part in tempting Christians toward pride and away from humility, so that you can spot his wiles and resist his efforts.

1. The devil, having fallen from his heavenly rank through pride, strives to bring down all those who wholeheartedly desire to live for the Lord; and one of his primary means is the same as that which caused his downfall – pride and the love of vainglory (*praises of others*). It is not as if he only tempts toward pride and vainglory, but when he does tempt in this direction, his goal is to lure us into thinking highly of ourselves in hopes of separating us from God.
2. In addition, knowing that when we love our brother it means we also love God, the devil tries to bring conflict and dissension into our relationships – which is another manifestation of pride. He even tries to puff up our sense of self-righteousness to the degree that we despise or hate those with whom we are in conflict. His goal is to use pride to turn us against each other, and in so doing, turn us against God.
3. Many Christians have done great things for God, including mighty acts of love toward the poor and needy. Yet these same Christians have given way to pride – the pride of thinking themselves great in God's kingdom and even greater than most of God's servants. And though they may still appear great in men's eyes, they have lowered themselves in God's eyes and brought upon themselves God's opposition. Therefore, beware of the devil's wiles, for he wants to infect all God's people with his devilish disease – the disease of pride.

4. And this brings us to Peter's specific example of humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Now Peter's example is not just one of many that he could have selected. It is both the beginning and foundation of true humility. But it is also the ultimate test of true humility, for our cares is where humility toward God is challenged to its greatest degree.
- D. I Peter 5:7 . . . casting all your [care] anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.
1. There are two words in this statement that make this the place where true humility begins and ends, and where humility toward God faces its greatest test. And those two words are ALL and CARE or ANXIETY.
 2. The word ALL is all-inclusive. It leaves nothing out. Which means we to hold nothing back when it comes to casting our cares or anxieties on God.
 3. Which brings us to the second word – CARE, or anxiety, or concern, or worries.
 - a. The use of this word CARE or anxiety means that God measures our humility by who we let carry and manage and bring to a good end our cares and anxieties, or concerns and worries. This is an important truth, for we will either let God carry them, or we will carry them ourselves – even if we take only a supervisory role.
 - b. You see, our cares and anxieties, our concerns and worries represent what truly matters to us – either for the moment, or for a number of years, or for a lifetime.
 - c. Therefore, if you look honestly at what cares you carry, or what you commonly worry about, or what anxieties you have, or what you easily get upset or even angry about, or what commonly hurts your feelings or threatens your sense of security, then you will see some of the things that matter the most to you.
 - d. And it is at this place where something that matters so much to you is being threatened, that you are powerfully tempted to take matters into your own hands and act on your own behalf instead of casting your care on God and limiting your part to what you can do or what God's word tells you to do.
 4. Now what God is telling us here in I Peter 5:7-8, is that if we let God carry ALL, not some or even most of the major ones, but ALL of our cares and anxieties and concerns and worries, then that is proof we have humbled ourselves under His mighty hand.

- a. And why is this proof that we have humbled ourselves before God and toward God?
 - b. Because it takes the strength of faith that can only come from true humility – a humility that sees God for who He is and ourselves for who we are – to give up the control of self-care in order to let God carry and work out those things that matter so much to us.
5. However, if we let God carry only some of them while we shoulder the rest, then that is proof that pride is still alive and functioning within us – such as
- a. the pride of believing that we can count on ourselves more than we can count on God when it comes to securing our good;
 - b. the pride of believing we know better than God what is best for us;
 - c. the pride of believing that we can take care of ourselves better than God can or will take care of us;
 - d. and the pride of believing that we are somehow able to see and know enough about God and what God is doing to judge Him as inferior or as failing, and ourselves as superior and able.
6. As I alluded to already, true humility before God and faith in God go hand-in-hand, because wherever you do not trust God, you will fall back to trusting in yourself – which means you will take matters into your own hands and work things out according to your wisdom and ability.
- a. In other words, humility is trusting God to care for you. Pride is the belief God cannot be trusted to do what is right or best for you, and therefore you must depend on yourself to look out for your best interests.
 - b. The point here is that by the time worry starts building and anxiety comes, you have already stepped into the pride of judging God a failure and believing you are can do what God can't or won't do. In other words, your pride has already driven you to choose self-care over God's care.
 - c. And the reason anxiety and worry build within you is because the pride of self-sufficiency has hit a wall and does not know what to do, or because it has lost control and no longer believes it can bring about the desired outcome, or both.

III. Conclusion

- A. Therefore, casting ALL your CARE or ANXIETY on Him is the ultimate test of the of humility before God and toward God that clearly recognizes His strength and your weakness.
- B. And so the first question is, will you humble yourself enough to gain the conviction that God does care for you as only God can care for you?
- C. And the second question is, will you humble yourself enough before God, that is, will you think so little of yourself and your knowledge of what is best for you and your abilities to manage situations or people to cast ALL your care upon Him?
- D. Will you trust God enough to believe that your life is perfectly safe in His hands – even when it appears He is doing nothing, or when what He is doing seems to be working against your good?
- E. Will you humbly place your life, your cares, your worries, your concerns into His hands and wait on Him to bring about He deems to be best for you?
- F. Surely, God is worthy of our trust, and we are wise to humbly trust Him.