

1 Peter 5

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4: We are called to be self-duplicating examples of faith who make disciples.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The world's system places your authority with your accountability to make sure that others are doing their jobs completely. Peter is telling us that in God's Kingdom there is more of an emphasis on being an example. In other words; we have to have a passion for building up the saints.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-7: Today we see people exerting their rights; to the inconvenience of other's. Many advocates are declaring their people to be victims of society or victims of government. These verses are telling us to be more humble than that. Put the other person's interests first. Those who rise up to force their agenda will meet God's resistance. We are to quietly do our part; and let God raise our cause. We are to serve others.

And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. (Ecclesiastes 4:4)

All of the bickering and infighting stops when you serve your neighbor.

1 Peter 5:8-14: The very things previously-described are connected to the roaring lion. The conflicts with our neighbors are bait to draw us out to the influence of the roaring lion. Even our mindless pastimes (which seem benign) are squandering our precious day. Our self-will is the root of our bickering and muttering and strife. The self-will also is the part of us that procrastinates our responses to the LORD's commands. The setbacks and disappointments are pathways of development for us. It is more difficult to maintain civility, and look out for your neighbor when you are getting walked on or neglected. We need these things to be strengthened. Our reactions to bad news more or less lets us know who sensitive we are to having our needs and expectations met.

2 Peter 1

Read 2 Peter 1:1-4: Peter is trying to convey how valuable our faith in Christ is. He calls it precious. That word in Greek translates as valuable and honorable.

What do we lose as we have walked with the LORD for many years? Perhaps a reminder of the value and worth of what a special gift has been given to us. The joy of our salvation is a little less apparent than when we were young in the faith.

Read 2 Peter 1:5-11: We receive basic salvation package when we receive Christ as our savior. That is not to lie dormant. The Holy Spirit will not give us rest if we try to hide our faith. There are improvements that we can make, which go beyond becoming part of a holy and eternal tribe.

We have to be diligent with our faith. What does that mean; if faith is a gift? It is like having a membership to a yacht club; without knowing how to sail. There are skills and disciplines to develop. We are expected to exercise our spiritual giftings. There are means and methods that need to be learned as we carry out God's commands with our opportunities. We may not be sharing our faith because *nobody asked us to*. That is a somewhat insincere, but real answer. Whose fault is that? It is God who provides the opportunity and the ability in the moment. At the same time, we will not get that opportunity if we are not asking God for them; as we go deeper with him. We have to see these things as opportunities; not as though we are doing God a favor.

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12-13)*

Moral excellence is to become an example to those around you. They may not know you are a Christian; but they should see that you are fair and merciful and responsible. Our life is a platform. How much impact will I have in evangelism if people see me as lazy or to be a hypocrite?

We learn how to deal with different situations as we apply our faith. It is all just theoretical if we are not making moves in people's lives. Some missionaries are not good administrators. That has an impact on their effectiveness.

Self-control is to keep your eyes on the target and have a thankful heart at all times. The word disciple comes from being disciplined in our discovery of Jesus. Many Christians appreciate God; but they do not do a good job feeding their own spirit.

We have to continue moving forward in the face of resistance, rejection, depression, pain, poverty and intimidation. The fear of commitment is always a

bigger allusion than the reality of the step forward. Perseverance can be defined as progress despite logic or outward appearances.

For we live by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

...through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (2 Corinthians 6:8-10)

It seems like a dichotomy to be resolute and unhindered and also be merciful and loving. That is like godliness. It has to come from something other than our emotions and motivations. The Holy Spirit provides the power and insight and tools to do these things in each situation.

Brotherly kindness and love are the tenderness and hospitality and servitude to help your fellow man. We won't be too strong in these departments if we are caught up in our own grief and commitments.

The alternative to our spiritual development, according to Peter is to be ineffective and unproductive. We have to apply some intellectual honesty to the implied question. Am I an island; or am I building up people in their faith? Do I fit into the world in a way that nobody would wonder if I had something special going on? Am I on a track that blows past opportunities to share Christ?

We can become mesmerized and find our responses to the world around us to prevent Kingdom priorities. Peter describes being spiritually nearsighted us to get caught up in only playing tennis with everything that comes our way. There is no time left for anything else.

"Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴and as he sowed, some seeds fell ...Others fell ^[v]among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.... And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the ^[v]world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Matthew 13 various verses)

Making our election sure translates to: making our faith walk to be stable. We don't want to be like the Christian who is bouncing from one crisis to the next. We want to become overcomers in Christ.

2 Peter 5:12-18: Sometimes our energy is not so much for our own issues. We are on earth to equip others. Otherwise God could just bring us home right now. Peter is pounding on the fundamentals to his disciples. Moses did the same thing right

before he died on Mount Nebo. The book of Deuteronomy is a restatement of the entire Law; before the new generation entered the Holy Land.

Peter reflects on some of the most-impressive moments from his time with Jesus. He remembered the voice from heaven at his baptism. He also remembered the voice from heaven on the mount of transfiguration. He was also a first-hand witness. Most of the Bible is either written from first-hand witnesses, or by those who interviewed the first-hand witnesses.

Peter reiterates that there are no special prophets or gifted teachers who can uniquely interpret deep meanings of scripture. There have been people who have spent energy discovering secret codes and messages within scripture; but God has made the information direct and obvious to all who make a sincere search. When you study the scripture be very careful about trying to fill in the blanks.