

1 Peter 5

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4: We are continuing to encourage all members of the body of Christ worldwide to do their part to fit in where God appoints them to. Now Peter addresses the church elders and more experienced saints to do their part. He refers to them as elders and servants. It is uncommon for an elder to act like a servant. It has a very invigorating effect on the people he leads. I recently had to return to the field to take over a job for a Superintendent who had quit. One thing I did on my first day was to purchase brooms and cleaning supplies, and to start sweeping. My coworkers were shocked, because they had all given up, and were very defeated. They immediately jumped in and all started doing their part. Sometimes leadership has to come as being a service example.

What constitutes an elder or overseer? There are particulars that go with the position, but who is an elder and who is not?

1 John 2 provides a brief description as to how each stage of development is characterized.

I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2:2-14)

Little children in the faith are described as understanding and applying the fundamentals of repentance and salvation. A child really does not have to process anything too complicated. There is basic wrong and right that they can be clear on.

Young men in the faith are characterized as doing battle over the lust of the flesh, peer pressure, and public identification. There tends to be a lot of directed attacks to get them to withdraw or face the music of public scrutiny. The peak of peer pressure tends to happen during the teen years. Becoming a *Jesus Freak* takes a lot of maturity.

Fathers of the faith (elders) are described as having a knowledge of who God is (as opposed to just memorizing what he said). Some people are good at memorizing scripture (like the Pharisees), but they do not connect with God in a personal and meaningful way. It is God's word that leads us to understanding the inspiration behind the writings. A classic example is how some cults or teachers will lift a passage out of scripture to back their selfish plan. God's word leads us to *his ways and his heart*. His ways can transcend the hard boundaries of his Law. Jesus showed the Pharisees that it was ok to pick grain on the sabbath to obtain a meal. An elder can recognize the shepherd's voice or detect a false shepherd speaking perfect words.

Peter is appealing to the more experienced saints to take care of the flock. Early on Peter was competitive about earning that spot of being Jesus' 'righthand man'. God put Peter in situations showing Peter that he was not going to be strong enough to be a faith example. He was

redirected to serve and become a supporter of others to raise them up. Jesus put Peter on the spot, regarding how far he would go to prove his love to Jesus.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. (John 21:15-21)

Jesus asked Peter if he *agapes* him (Christian selfless love) twice. The first and second reply from Peter was that he, was fond (*phileo*) of Jesus. The first time he told Peter to feed his father's lambs (children of the faith). Then Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep (whole flock). Finally, Jesus lowered his target for Peter to make it comfortable, and asked Peter if he is just fond of him (*phileo* love). He repeated his instruction to regardless have Peter to feed the flock. In other words, to be a leader you have to be all about having the heart to be a servant to the needs of others...not to just really like everything about Jesus. You have to take on their spiritual growth as a personal effort. Peter wanted to prove his loyalty by his enthusiasm; but Jesus told him that his gauge was on his service to others. There is a transforming difference. It took the competitive side of Peter to relax to see what Jesus wanted.

Similarly, Paul was also constantly having to define himself to others in the church. On one hand he was in charge; but that meant that he had a lot of praying duty to do. In his first letter to the Corinthian Church, Paul gives us some insight into his heart of service. He proclaims,

"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:1, 2)

The Greek word Paul used that we translate as "servants" is *huperetes*. It is literally translated as "under rowers." In other words, the servant in the bottom of the ship. The Corinthians were familiar with the duties of the under rower as they were near a major Roman port city.

There were five aspects of the work of the *huperetes* that Paul and his companions could identify with when they referred to themselves as "servants" of Christ:

- First, the galley slave rowed to the captain's beat.
- Second, the slaves had to all row together.
- Third, they had to trust the captain.
- Fourth, they were committed for life.
- Finally, they received no honor. Only the captain of the vessel was visible to the outer world.

Therefore, may we all commit ourselves to serving without being seen so that all of the glory goes to the only one to whom it belongs; Jesus Christ, the only One worthy of our praise.

Peter was also an Apostle; which meant three things:

- He had to witness the resurrected Christ
- He had to be explicitly selected by the Holy Spirit, and
- He would have extraordinary gifts and powers to do good works to glorify God.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-13: Now Peter addresses the young men of the faith. Humility is a challenge with high aspirations and testosterone flowing through your body. Being respectful to others seems more like good manners than godliness. I am seeing that having a servant's heart opens all kinds of doors with other men for ministry. For me, God seems to always send helpers and sympathetic co-workers when I give 100% to helping others. Young men seek recognition and to improve their status. They are to forget about self-promotion, and wait on God the true *promoter of men*. Sometimes the opportunities that we long for come with an unforeseen burden.

God has put it on my heart to be more of a servant lately. I made more of an effort to pray for the responsibilities of this upcoming week last weekend. I had a very strange event take place this week. I was dispatched to a failing job to step in as Superintendent in the Bay Area. I had made solid relationships with that customer and had a chance to pray with the owner's rep when I arrived. The customer found out that I was concurrently a PM on 6 jobs. The company I work for has been under siege lately, with failing PMs and Superintendents. I also stepped into a mess; with way too many activities to address at once. The customer demanded that my company take all of those competing jobs off of my plate. They are accommodating that request.

It is interesting that I have gotten credit for incidental things, but I have not been recognized for things that I considered more significant. It is really evident to me that if I focus on my vertical relationship with God, all of my horizontal relationships with men go much better. The Devil is pitting men against each other. Don't react. Let the moment pass.

Mystery Babylon

It is interesting that Peter passes on a greeting from the *saints in Babylon*. It happens elsewhere in the New Testament as well. There is a good chance that this is not really Babylon. Many scholars tell us that it was the code name for Rome. It is described as a city on 7 hills; just like Rome. Peter could not openly speak about faith in Rome, without exposing saints living secretly in fear of martyrdom. The Romans' number one fear was insurrection and overthrows from other movements.

A lot of references to Babylon in the New Testament line up with Rome. Babylon in the New Testament was referred to as Babylon the Great. It was known as the city that reigns over the kings of the earth. Rome was the center of martyrdom of the believers. The woman in Revelation 17 points to the apostate church based in Rome (possibly the Catholic church). The name *Vatican* means *old woman of prophecy*. The teachings of Catholicism refer to the church as their *mother*. The Sun God is shown to be above the Popes golden cup on their own coin.



Saint Peter's Basilica is built on the same spot of the *Circus of Nero*. This was the first organized Roman-sponsored place of Christian martyrdom.