

TITLE: "The Greatness of Being Least"

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:5

THEME: Subjection to the elders and humility toward each other

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{{Read 1 Peter 5:5}}

[i] We come to a single verse (v. 5) that is in the middle of an extended section that runs from 4:12 to 5:11

If you will forget for a mom. that t/Bible wasn't written w/verse and chapter divisions - they came over 1000 yrs. later.

What we have is a long, extended section of thought that runs from 4:12 (beloved do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you) and continues to the benediction of 5:11 (to him be the dominion forever and ever amen).

[ii] Then we have 5:5 which stretches both ways

BTIM the first half points backward to t/preceding topic of CH elders; t/2d half points forward to t/following topic of humility.

Some scholars feel that we have here an awkward v. break & that t/first half of t/v. should really be t/end of v. 4; while t/2d half of t/v. should be t/beginning of v. 6.

Then you have commentaries that treat vv. 1-5 together

Others that address vv. 5-11 together

Some that address vv. 1-5a and then go on to 5b-11.

Still others that address v. 5 separately. That is, they treat vv. 1-4, then address v. 5, then 6-11. (What I have done.)

Suffice to say that 1 Peter 5:5 looks both ways (bridge).

[iii] Key word is humility

Every believer in JC is to be clothed w/an attitude of humility.

[iv] Be sure God likes what you're wearing

That you're clothed with humility and not pride. He's against those who are arrogant but is gracious toward t/humble. Again, be sure God likes what you cloth yourself with.

We're going to look at this v. 2 ways. Looking up and Looking out.

I. Looking Up: Humility as Submission to the Elders (5a)

Peter works from the lessor to t/greater. What I mean is that he addresses humility as submission to spiritual authority. Then he expands his thoughts to humility as a "one another" responsibility. Much like Paul who says in Romans 13:8 owe nothing to one another but love. ISW - an attitude of humility is to permeate our very lives

I. Looking Up: Humility as Submission to the Elders (5a)

You young men, likewise, be subject to your elders. . . .

A. The word "likewise" (ὁμοίως) which is the first word in the Greek text marks a transition

Same word is used in 3:1, 7 where the NASB translates "in the same way". But here "likewise."

B. Big question is "who are the 'young men' and who are the 'elders?'"

1. We saw that the "elders" of v. 1 refer to local church pastors

They are those who "shepherd" or "pastor" the flock (v. 2).

While the same word for elder (πρεσβυτερος) is used here some think

that Peter has shifted his attention away from leaders per se to all of the older men in the congregation. View of Calvin.

a. While that's possible it seems unlikely

Most natural to understand t/two words in so close proximity to one another to refer to t/same thing.

2. Who are the "young men?" that are to be subject to the elders?

There have been some who believe that these young men were a class of young male leaders in the church, either deacons, a separate group like deacons, or young men training for the eldership.

a. They are literally νεώτερος – from νεος = young (where we get our English Word "neophyte")

Could simply be younger believers within the congregations to whom Peter writes.

The Epistle of Polycarp (5:3) uses the same words in expressing the need for those who were younger to be subject to their elders and deacons, "as to God and Christ."

(1) Same word "submit" or "be subject" that we have seen several times before in this letter (verb ὑποτάσσω)

2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect . . .

3:1 . . . wives, be submissive to your own husbands . . .

3:22 angels and authorities and powers (being subject to X)

ὑΠΟ + τασσω (to arrange under). Military word that means to arrange oneself under the authority and charge of another.

b. Why does Peter specifically target the young here?

I think the reason is that those who are younger, especially during times of difficulty and stress (context of suffering) may tend more toward being impatient or impulsive – esp. in dealing with that persecution.

When I was younger I had much more of a "Just kill em' all" mentality– I was like James and John in Luke 9:54 who wanted to call fire down on the Samaritans!

3. This submission is not limited to those who are younger

While the younger men may be more apt to grow impatient or rebel, Bible is clear that all members of t/CH church are to be in submission to t/elders of t/CH.

1TH 5:12-13 **12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.**

HEB 13:7 **Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.**

a. I've contended for years that today for most Xns the idea of submitting themselves to their pastors is meaningless

We default to a American rugged individualism where our priesthood as an individual believer trumps any need to submit to anyone.

Same biblically grounded Xns who would argue that a wife's submission to her husb. is required during those times when she doesn't agree w/him are often t/first to jump ship in t/CH when t/leaders do something they disagree with.

"So that means we just give our leaders free rein then?" I dunno.

Is that what it means for husbands? I think it means you trust them; you love them; you support them; you trust God in them.

You may disagree with a decision your pastors make, but you need to adopt the attitude that, *"They are the ones that will give an account for my soul and I will submit to them."*

Back when we were living in AZ and I was not formally a pastor we were members of a CH and I made it clear to the elders that I was in subjection to them and recognized t/God-ordained position that they had. These were guys that often asked me for help on theological questions or interpretive issues. I wasn't thrilled w/everything t/CH did or w/everything t/leaders did. That's okay. It's good for me not to have my way. After all, who am I?

Is there a time to complain? No! Philippians 2:14.

Is there a time to express concerns? Yes!

Is there a time when one's concerns are so great that one has to leave a CH? Yes. But only as a last resort and only for significant reasons like false or heretical doctrine; the failure to address sin; disqualified leadership; or God's leading to a ministry opportunity elsewhere.

We don't rebel against God-ordained leadership for secondary or petty reasons, or because it's not just as exciting as it used to be.

HEB 13:17 **Obey your leaders, and submit {to them}; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.**

Does that mean you have to drink t/cool aid? **"We may lawfully disobey any authority when that authority commands us to do something God forbids, or forbids us to do something God commands."**

4. Remember 5:2-3 - Key again is humility

Humility is inherent in Submission.

I. Looking Up: Humility as Submission to the Elders (5a)

You young men, likewise, be subject to your elders. . . .

Second Point==>

II. Looking Out: Humility as Consideration for One Another (5b)

. . . And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another . . .

A. "All of you" means every one of you regardless of age or class

No exceptions. Elders, deacons, young, old, rich, poor, mature Xns, new Xns – We are all to be clothed in the garments of humility.

B. What is "humility?"

1. The word describes an attitude (it starts in the mind)

Starts in the mind and demonstrates itself in attitudes and actions.

a. It's to have the attitude of a servant

Don't cop an attitude; adopt an attitude. Philippians 2:1-8 (note the exaltation)

JAM 4:10 **Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

MIC 6:8 **He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the \Lord\ require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?**

a. It's to have the attitude of a servant

MAT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MAT 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

MAT 5:5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Romans 12:3

b. It's to act like the servant

This was radical; humility was the mark of a slave in Greco-Roman culture. We are "slaves" of Christ!

c. In that regard when Peter writes ==>

... clothe yourselves with humility toward one another ...

He uses a vivid word ==> ἐγκομβοομαι.

From κομβος, a *roll, band, or girth: a knot or roll of cloth*, – something tied up or girded up. A related word referred to a slave's apron.

How fitting. Put on humility as a uniform. Not the uniform of a general or a king, but of a slave.

Like what we saw in 5:4 - Not διαδημα (the king's crown). στεφανος a victory wreath.

Bengel paraphrases the thought as: "Put on and wrap yourselves about with humility, so that the covering of humility cannot possibly be stripped from you."

(1) It's to be girded with the mind of a servant

What does that bring to mind?

What may it have brought to Peter's mind as he penned these words?

(a) Cf. Jesus girding himself with a towel in John 13:1-17

If only we could really, really focus on humility. Humble people are gracious and merciful.

If we could always adorn ourselves with humility! When we see who we are as creatures and sinners, we would be so less prone to be offended or to offend others.

C. Peter closes this verse with a warning to the proud and a promise to the lowly

. . . FOR GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Peter quotes the Greek version of Prov. 3:34 verbatim except he substitutes the word $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ (Lord) in the LXX for $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ (God). So here he has {cite} Same as in James ==>

JAM 4:6 **But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."**

What's at work here?

III. **Why does God give grace to the humble even as he hates pride?**

A. **Pride is treason against God's sole claim to worship**

It's worshiping the creature rather than the creator.

To be proud and arrogant is to forget who one really is before God. That all one has is by God's grace; that all credit and praise and glory belongs to Him.

Who are we to think we're anything when our very existence is a gift of His grace!

B. Pride is an affront to His sufficiency

For the believer it's to say "I need to find satisfaction in myself and my accomplishments rather than in Jesus Christ."

1. As such pride demonstrates a lack of faith

Do we really believe that God hates our arrogance? Our pridefulness? Do we really believe that it's okay to be the least, the servant, for that is the one whom God blesses with his grace?

a. Paul knew from life experience that God gives grace to the humble (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

7 . . . to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (cf. Acts 23:3).

b. Do we believe that God sets his face against arrogance?

The word "oppose" was a military term meaning to set in battle array against an enemy. A strong / graphic word. Pride calls out God's anger.

Augustine truly noted: "That which first overcame man [pride] is the last thing he overcomes"

We need to be continually watching and praying and fighting our pride.

The Scottish Presbyterian of Generations ago, Robert Leighton ==>

These are the ways in which you are to be humble in your life. First, look into yourself earnestly. Make a true evaluation of yourself. People select the good things in themselves but overlook their own defects. Every man is naturally his own flatterer; otherwise flatteries and false cries from other people would make little impression. They succeed because they are met with the same conceit. But let any man see his ignorance and set what he does not know against what he does know. He should place his secret follies and sins alongside his outward appearance of a blameless life. Then it will be impossible for him not to abase and abhor himself. Second, look on the good in others and the evil in yourself. Make that comparison, and you will walk humbly. Most people do just the opposite, and that foolish and unjust comparison puffs them up. Third, you are not required to be ignorant about the good that you genuinely possess. But beware of imagining that you possess what you do not. Fourth, pray much for a spirit of humility, which comes only through the Spirit of Christ. Otherwise, all your vileness will not humble you. When people hear about this grace or that grace, they soon think they possess it themselves and do not consider the natural enmity and rebellion of their own hearts and the necessity of receiving these graces from heaven. Therefore, in using all means of grace, be most dependent on the Divine Influence, and draw that grace to yourself through prayer. [Leighton, 230-31]

Good advice. 1) Take a good look at yourself; 2) , look on the good in others and the evil in yourself. 3) Beware of imagining that you possess what you do not. 4) pray much for a spirit of humility.

At the feast of ego everyone leaves hungry.

IV. We said that humility is an attitude that demonstrates itself in actions - Two Questions

A. What Does Pride Look Like?

Specifically in someone's life?

1. Prideful people are self-centered

The focus of their lives and their comforts surrounds themselves.

These people love to talk about themselves. They love to share with others their accomplishments.

I've known people like that. They are the hero of every story. All that the touch turns to gold (so they say).

2. Prideful people always has to be right

Generally they have to be right because they are insecure. They would hate for anyone to think that they could be wrong about something.

3. The Proud Have to Have things their way

They get angry or complain when their desires aren't met or if they have to be inconvenienced in some way.

4. Prideful people are self-righteous

They hate the sins of others more than they hate their own sin.

5. Prideful people are in a never ending search for self-significance

a. Like the disciples in Luke 22

24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.'

26 “But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.

b. This is a point that really hits home for me

There is within my flesh a desire for significance. I hate it. I often can't discern my own motives for what I do, particularly in my role as a preacher and theologian.

Why do I want to pursue advanced education? I do want to learn; it's a goal to get my Ph.D. But is there some desire for self-signif.?

Why do I want to preach & teach w/excellence? To please my God? Yes! To serve you? Yes! But is there some desire for self-signif.?

Why do I hate the celebrity status we place on our Christian heroes today?

Something I've long been concerned about.

1 Corinthians 1:12-13 is very much alive.

Instead of

“I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”

Today we have

"I am of Sproul; I am of Washer; I am of Piper; I am of MacArthur."

I'm thankful for the gifts God gives to different men, but granting them celebrity status does no one good.

When a congregant says to the preacher, *"Oh, my iPod is filled with John Piper's sermons."* I get so much out of them. *That's all I care to listen to."* He tends to feel, "What am I? Chopped liver?" I may not be a Piper or a Swindoll, but I work hard in my own right.

Years ago, as a young man aspiring to the pulpit, I asked John MacArthur how he deals with the pressure "to be good." By that I inwardly meant, "to keep up with the preacher-celebrity-Joneses." His response has stuck with me: "God does not call you to be good, He calls you to be accurate."

In that regard, how popular would the Apostle Paul himself be in our contemporary "did you hear that great message by so and so!" mentality?

I thank God for how He sovereignly gifts and uses His chosen vessels. But this is His doing, not man's. Let's encourage those who labor over us, be they well-known or not, but let's be sure that the glory is directed heavenward.

Those who know me know I don't do two things: 1) Golf; 2) Blog. I still haven't golfed, but someone did direct me to a good blog article a few months ago.

Porn and paper pastors - by Dan Phillips

Decades ago, I read a disturbingly candid essay by a pastor about his struggles with pornography. It was in Leadership magazine. Years later, two of his realizations still stand out to me.

The author came to see (as I recall) that he was attracted to these images because they were unreal. The women in the pictures never had bad days, were never crabby and demanding, never disrespectful and demeaning. No mood swings. They always suited his mood, his needs, his wants. They were unreal.

He came to see that he had no actual relationship with these women whatever. If (he named a female celebrity) had sat down next to him in an airplane, she wouldn't know him from Adam. Whatever may have happened in his sinful fantasies, the two of them had no relationship in the real world.

Of course, this is why so many women resent actresses and models. It isn't catty pettiness or smallness. It is that they know how visually-tempted men can be, and they know that they can't compete with a fantasy - if their man is fool enough to chase one.

And they're right, in a way. They can't compete with these women. Because these women don't exist in the real world! They may not even look like their pictures! Thanks to computer wizardry, the pictures we see may actually bear only the slightest resemblance to the actual women. Nobody can compete with a fantasy.

And this post is not about pornography, men, women, nor marriage. It is about people with paper pastors.

Now, some professed Christians sin outright, by never physically attending an actual, in-person church. We've talked about that, and they aren't our focus.

But others do attend a church - physically. They come in, they sit down. They sing, they may give financially. They may look at you, Pastor, as you preach. But you know their heart belongs to another.

Their real pastor isn't you. It's Dave Hunt. Or it's John Piper. Or it's John MacArthur, or Ligon Duncan, or Mark Dever, or David Cloud, or Joel Osteen. Or it's Charles Spurgeon, or D. M. Lloyd-Jones, or J. C. Ryle. Or Calvin, or Luther, or Bahnsen, or de Mar, or R. B. Thieme, or

J. Vernon McGee. And they're such better pastors than you are! You know they are!

Why? Well, paper pastors are never in a bad mood. They're never cranky, or sleepy or sick. (Especially the dead ones.)

They've never just had someone else pull their guts out with a rusty fork, and then had to turn and listen graciously to your complaint about the translation they preach from, or argue about a Greek word you can't even pronounce. They don't have a family who loses the time you use. They never half-listen, never have an appointment that cuts short their time. Their office hours are your office hours. They're available 24/7, and everywhere, at your whim, and you always have their undivided attention.

What's more is they always have all the answers! They can tell you with complete confidence and masterful eloquence. They never stammer, guess, nor search their memory. And they can prove it - whatever they're saying! With footnotes!

And these paper pastors maintain the perfect distance. If you don't want to hear something, they don't press it - or you can instantly shut them up, snap! They never ask you to do something uncomfortable and follow up on you. They never persistently probe an area of sin, in you, in person, eyeball to eyeball... nor will they. Church discipline will not be a threat with them. Ever. Because they don't know you from Adam.

Yet how many pastors know that there are people in their flocks, thinking, "John Piper would never say it that way. Dave Hunt says that what he just preached is heresy. John MacArthur isn't like that. Mahaney says that... Mohler says that... Lloyd-Jones said...."

So, because it's awkward for your pastor to say it to you - and because I've no church who'd suspect I'm talking to them, at the moment - I'll just tell you plain:

Brother, sister: John Piper isn't your pastor. John MacArthur knows nothing about you. Dave Hunt never got on his knees and prayed for you. Lloyd-Jones won't come to your house when you're recovering from surgery, or one of your children shatters your heart, or your marriage is shaking and rocking and barely hanging on. Charles Spurgeon won't weep with you as you weep.

You could buy or not buy [so and so's] next book, and he'd never know it. But if you're in a manageable-size church with a caring pastor and you're suddenly gone next Sunday, he'll be concerned. He may call. He may ask if everything's okay.

God gave you the pastor [pastors] He gave you.

God told Paul to tell you: We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

God told the writer to the Hebrews to tell you: Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Your flesh-and-blood pastor can't compete with these paper pastors for the same reason you can't compete with paper women and paper men. Because they're not real.

1. *Prideful people are self-centered*

2. *Prideful people always has to be right*

3. *The Proud Have to Have things their way*

4. *Prideful people are self-righteous*

5. *Prideful people are in a never ending search for self-significance*

6. *Prideful people are like Diotrephes (3 John 1:9)*

Here's a man whose name is recorded in Holy Scripture for all eternity as "someone who loves to be first."

All of the proud and arrogant have Diotrephes as their spiritual father.

B. What does humility look like?

1. **Those who are truly humble hate their own sin more than the sin of others**

"I cannot pray," wrote Bishop Berkeley, "but I sin; I cannot preach, but I sin; I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of: and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ."

John Bradford, martyred under the persecution of bloody Mary in 16th century England, while yet in prison concluded his letter to fellow prisoner: "The sinful John Bradford; a very painted hypocrite; the most miserable, hardhearted, and unthankful sinner, John Bradford."

2. **Those who are truly humble are servants to others**

Who am I not to serve others?

3. **Those who are truly humble aren't out to make a name for themselves but for God**

Spurgeon and J. Oswald Sanders both were greatly impacted early in

their ministries by the same passage.

Jeremiah 45:5: **“Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!”**

Why did I say that? Why am I concerned about what others think about my ministry? Would it not be better to be an unknown that God be glorified.

4. Those who are truly humble don't always have to be right

They are secure enough to be wrong; to be teachable; to be correctable.

5. Those who are truly humble demonstrate genuine love and care for others

You can sense that. When I'm hurting I want encouragement from someone who genuinely cares.

6. Those who are truly humble are most like Christ

Matthew 11:29 **“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.**

You young 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.

God's showers of grace slide off of the mountains of pride into the valleys of humble hearts making them fertile for his blessing.

"For the Lord bestows his blessings there, where he finds the vessels empty" (The Imitation of 'Christ).