

“Clothe Yourselves with Humility”

1Peter 5:5–7

notes by Tim Hegg

Connecting with the Previous Context

- In the first section of Chapter 5, Peter is giving exhortations to leaders in the local Messianic communities.
- His exhortations are specifically directed toward the “elders” of the community, including those who have been appointed to the office of overseer or deacon, but also including all who bear leadership responsibilities within the local community of believers.
- He reminds those he exhorts that he too is a leader, and that he was privileged to walk closely with Yeshua during His earthly life, and that he therefore is in a unique position to reinforce the very things that Yeshua taught and demonstrated as the Servant of the Lord.
- He exhorts leaders:
 - to shepherd the flock of God, remembering that the flock belongs to Him and not to the leaders.
 - to shepherd willingly, not as matter of duty, but according to the will of God.
 - not to shepherd the flock of God in order to gain riches, but voluntarily, as serving the Lord.
 - to shepherd in such a way as to be an example to the people who make up the “flock of God.”
- Peter ends the previous paragraph by reminding all who are in leadership, that their full reward in serving the Chief Shepherd, Yeshua, will be received when He returns, that is, an unfading crown of glory, as the commendation of Yeshua Himself: “well done, good and faithful servant.”
- Now, in the remainder of the chapter, Peter expands his exhortations to the entire Messianic community.

1Peter 5:5

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.

- The word “likewise” (*ὁμοίως, homoiōs*) is actually the first word of the sentence in the Greek. It links this paragraph with Peter’s former exhortations.
- The connection to the previous paragraph is obvious: even as the elders/leaders are to shepherd the flock of God by humbly serving Him, so the “younger men” are likewise to demonstrate their humble spirit by submitting to their leaders.
- The word for “younger men” is *νεώτεροι (neōteroi)*

- This is the comparative form of the noun *neos*, which means “new,” “recent,” “fresh,” etc.
- Most often in the Apostolic Scriptures the comparative form means “younger in age” and that would seem to be the primary meaning in our verse.
- Yet while the word seems primarily to focus on age, in our context it could also refer to recent converts, those “young in the faith.”
- Submitting to authority: Why is this often difficult?
 - It is contrary to our sinful nature.
 - “Nothing is more adverse to the disposition of man than subjection.” (Calvin)
 - Submission means becoming a servant.
 - Submission means putting my desires in second place.
- Why does Peter speak specifically to the younger men?
 - Youth may often think that the elders are out of touch with the current times.
 - While youth often excel in physical energy, the lack of experience and learning leaves them short on wisdom.
 - Youth are sometimes attracted to positions of authority, but wisdom knows that true authority means being a servant.

and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

- This is essential for true community.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Phil 2:3–4)

- The human body cannot function unless each part is willing to work together with the other parts.
- Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe the functioning of the Messianic assembly.

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah, from Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph 4:15–16)

- “clothe yourselves with humility” – what is the meaning of this metaphor?
 - the Greek word (ἐγκομβόμαι, *engkombomai*), found only here, in classical Greek means “to put on clothing that is bound by a sash or belt.”
 - It is used particularly of a slave or worker tying on an apron or outer cloak for work.

- “clothe yourselves with humility” means “always be ready to serve one another within the body of Messiah.
 - Such service involves
 - ~ genuine love (including “tough love”)
 - ~ speaking the truth in love
 - ~ bearing each other’s burdens
 - ~ rejoicing with those who rejoice
 - ~ weeping with those who weep

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

- Our primary motivation must be first and foremost to live in obedience to God.
 - Peter quotes Prov 3:34 (from the Lxx) as the foundation for his exhortation to serve one another in humility.
 - Hebrew would be translated as: “Though He scoffs at the scoffers, yet He gives grace to the afflicted.”
- Both in the Hebrew as well as in the Lxx translation, it is clear that God actively opposes or resists the person who acts in pride or arrogance.
- In contrast, God gives His grace to the humble.

1Peter 5:6–7

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

- Surely God is the One Who brings forth that which is good out of our service to one another.
- And it is when we serve one another out of a primary desire to serve God, and do so in accordance with His instructions, that we can rest assured He will accomplish what we on our own cannot.
- If our primary purpose is to serve God first and foremost, and out of this desire we learn to serve one another, then ultimately the commendation we seek is from God, not from man.
- “at the proper time” means “as God has planned it.”

casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- Living the life of an obedient servant to God, and thus serving each other, is not a guarantee that “life will be a bed of roses.”
- Serving each other requires growing in faith because we will inevitably come to the end of ourselves, requiring us to trust Him for things we have not yet experienced.
 - able to trust Him for that which is beyond us and that which is yet future.
 - able to give Him our cares or anxiety, trusting Him fully with the outcome.

- We must grow in our understanding that God, in truth, has our lives in His hands—that He genuinely cares for me.
- And as we grow in our understanding of this great truth, we must affirm it in our daily lives.

Summary

- Humility, the willingness to allow others to think less of ourselves than who we are, is the primary theme of this first part of Chapter Five.
- Humbly serving means doing it for God’s glory, not for applause of people or even for their appreciation.
- Humbly serving each other is to walk in the footsteps of our Messiah, Yeshua.
- In order to serve one another in this way, we must first understand and commit ourselves to the truth that serving one another is ultimately the result of serving God.
- Humbly serving each other requires growing in our faith in God, for it is by Him that we are able to serve as He desires.
- Serving each other will sometimes be a difficult task, but we must persevere, keeping our focus on serving God and relying upon Him to supply the strength we need.
- Knowing and affirming that God cares for us means that we can cast our anxieties upon Him, knowing that He is able and willing to carry that which weighs us down.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

(Psalm 23:1)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁעָשָׂה לִּי כָּל צְרָכָי:

Baruch ata Adonai, Melech ha'olam, she'asah li kol tzar^eki

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the universe,

Who has provided me with all my needs.