

September 14, 2008 by Steve Brandon



Counsel to the Flock

1 Peter 5:5-7

1. Submit yourselves (verse 5a).
2. Humble yourselves (verses 5b-6).
3. Cast yourselves (verse 7).

Wayne House and Kenneth Durham wrote the following, ...

On May 1, 1991, two significant milestones in baseball were reached almost simultaneously. The way the two athletes responded brought comment from scores of sportswriters, and provided a lesson on both ends of the humility spectrum. The first was Ricky Henderson's shattering of Lou Brock's record for stealing bases. When Henderson passed the long-standing mark of 939 by stealing third base, he immediately pulled the base up from its anchor and held it over his head like a hero's booty. Brock had traveled across the country so he could be there when his record was broken. He congratulated Henderson, who proclaimed, "Lou Brock was a great base-stealer, but today I am the greatest of all time." One major league player commented, "It made me want to puke."

Half a continent away, forty-four-year-old Nolan Ryan of the Texas Rangers spent the evening pitching a no-hitter -- the seventh of his amazing career. When the last fastball was thrown and the final batter went down swinging, Ryan simply smiled and began making his way toward his catcher to congratulate him on a game well played. As his fellow players mobbed him and the crowd cheered, Ryan looked almost embarrassed by all the fuss. He then said he was most happy for his hometown fans and for his team. It is arguable whether one athletic feat can overshadow another. What is certain, however, is that humility always upstages pride. [\[1\]](#)

In our study of 1 Peter, we come this morning to a passage of Scripture that addresses the issue of pride and humility. My prayer this morning is that all of us might learn the lesson that "humility always upstages pride."

Last week, we looked at the first four verses in this chapter, in which Peter addressed the elders of the scattered churches to which He wrote. In those verses, he instructed the elders how it was that they were to lead the church. If you remember, I had three points last week. The elders are to (1) demonstrate humility, by not exerting their authority, but rather, by showing themselves worthy models to be followed. Second, the elders are to (2) shepherd the flock, willingly, sacrificially, lovingly. Third, the elders are to (3) remember the reward that awaits all who are faithful to the Lord's leading in their lives. Completely giving themselves to the work.

This morning, our text will cover verses 5-7. At this point, Peter's audience will change. Whereas the first four verses focused attention upon the elders, Peter now addresses his attention upon those in the church. Verse 5 begins with an address to the "younger men." And in the middle of verse 5, the address comes to "all of you," that is, all who are in the church. And so, this morning, unlike last week, these words will be directly applicable to all of you. Last week, my message was entitled, "Counsel to Shepherds." I trust that you can see how my title this morning is appropriate, "Counsel to the Flock."

Let's consider the text.

1 Peter 5:5-7

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. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Did you notice how many times Peter mentioned humility? He mentioned it three times. Twice in verse 5 and once in verse 6. But, with a little bit of thought, you can see that this thought of humility permeate beyond the times in which the word itself is mentioned. First of all, you can see in verse 5 that Peter calls the young men to "be subject to your elders." The act of submission is a display of humility. It's showing that you believe others to be more important than yourself, as you follow the counsel and direction of those that are older than you are. That's humility. You can see humility in verse 6, where the word, "pride" is mentioned. Pride is the opposite of humility. Where pride seeks the high place, humility seeks the low place. You can also see humility in verse 7, where we read, "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." Casting anxiety upon the Lord is a demonstration of your humility. It says to God, "God, I cannot handle these circumstances on my own. I must hand them over to You, letting you deal with them."

And so, the concept of humility pervades this entire text. It is worthy to note at this point that Peter's progression through these verses. He begins in verse 5 with humility that is to be demonstrated to those who are shepherding the church, namely the elders. Then, he continues

with humility that is to be demonstrated among all in the church body, namely all of us. Finally (in verse 7), he shows how humility is to be expressed toward God. In each of these areas, the application is a bit different. But, it's all an expression of humility.

It's almost as Peter is helping them to see how humility ought to permeate all aspects of their lives. Whether it's the elders in the church or fellow members of the congregation or God, Himself. Bottom line is that humility ought to be manifest in all that we do.

At this point, it would be well for us to spend some moments thinking about what humility is. Several verses in the Bible give us a good definition. Philippians 2:3 is a great verse to define humility, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." Humility is regarding others as more important than yourself. It's not acting in accordance with your own motives and desires. But rather, with desires of others.

Romans 12:3 gives a good perspective of this as well, though the word, "humility" isn't even used. There we read, "For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3). There's another perspective of humility. It's thinking properly of yourself. Not more highly than you ought. Humility is best seen in action. That's where you can understand it best. So let's look at a few examples. The Bible also gives us several examples of humble people. One that first comes into my mind is the apostle Paul.

Paul

Paul was a man with a mighty intellect. He had tremendous gifts. He was extremely disciplined and zealous. J. Oswald Sanders described Paul with these words, "Paul was 'one who could speak in Peking in Chinese', quoting Confucius and Mencius; write closely-reasoned theology in English and expound it in Oxford; and defend his cause before the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Russian in Moscow." [\[2\]](#)

And yet, when Paul described himself, he used these words, "I am the foremost of [sinners]" (1 Tim. 1:15), "[I am] the very least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8), and "I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle" (1 Cor. 15:9). Regarding others, Paul considered them to be more important than himself. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself" (Acts 20:24). When Paul faced death in the face, though he preferred to die, he was willing to remain to help serve the church (Phil. 1:24).

That's humility, not thinking highly of yourself, but rather thinking of others as more important than yourself.

Moses

Another good example is Moses. In Numbers 12:3, we read, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth." This verse is written in the context when his brother and sister were arising in complaint, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us as well?" (Num. 12:2). It wasn't a concern to Moses, whether or not the LORD was pleased to raise up others to lead the people.

In fact, shortly before this Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp (Num. 11:26-27). When others brought this "disturbing" news to Moses, who was told to restrain them (Num. 11:28), Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets."

That's humility! Moses was willing to allow God to raise up others to accomplish His purposes. Humility is not feeling that you have to be the conduit of God's blessing.

Jesus

Now, obviously, the best Biblical example of humility comes in the person of Jesus Christ. "Although He existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped [and held onto.] [Rather,] He emptied Himself taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). That's humility!

Certainly, the greatest display of the humility of Jesus came in the cross of Christ. It was there that He considered others to be more important than Himself. He gave His life so that others might live. But, the humility of Jesus doesn't display itself only in His death. He also lived as a humble man. Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).

When He came into the flesh, He could have come into any family. He could have come into the rich and wealthy. He could have come into the aristocracy. He could have come into the influential. But, He chose to come as the son of a carpenter, smack in the middle of the middle class. Such is the humility of Christ.

Throughout His entire life, you get a sense of His dependence upon His heavenly father. He said things such as, ...

"The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5:19).

"I can of My own self do nothing; My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will" (John 5:30).

"I receive not honor from men" (John 5:41).

"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will" (John 6:38).

"My doctrine is not Mine" (John 7:16).

"I am not come of Myself" (John 7:28).
"I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28).
"Neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me" (John 8:42).
"I seek not Mine own glory" (John 8:50).
"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not from Myself" (John 14:10).
"The word which you hear is not Mine" (John 14:24).

That's emptiness. That's humility. That's Jesus. But, the humility of Jesus wasn't merely displayed between He and God, the Father. It was also on display in the way that He served His disciples. Oh, He could have been served by His disciples. He was their leader. He had every right to request of them that they serve Him. But, Jesus served them.

One great example of this is told in the 13th chapter of John with these words, ...

John 13:3-5

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

This was such a lowly task, that Peter protested, "Never shall You wash my feet!" (John 13:8). In other words, "Jesus, you are my Lord and master. This task of washing feet is too low for You! You aren't supposed to do this. This is only for the lowly servants, not for You!"

But, Jesus prevailed and washed His feet. When He had finished, Jesus then addressed His disciples, ...

John 13:12-17

Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

And if our Lord stooped to wash the feet of His disciples, who are we to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think?

With that as an introduction, let's dig into our text this morning. I have three points this morning. I believe them to be simple and straightforward. They all come straight from the text. My first point will be short.

1. Submit yourselves (verse 5a).

This comes right from verse 5, "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders." These words bring up a common theme in the book of 1 Peter, the theme of submission. In fact, I was recently speaking with a pastor who had preached through 1 Peter. He thought that the theme of 1 Peter was, "submission." Though I'm not quite sure that this is the case, it still shows how prominent a theme submission is in the book. You can see it in several places.

For instance, in 2:13, Peter addressed all of us as citizens of our country, ... "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." In 2:18, Peter addressed those in the work force, "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable." Later, Peter addressed the wives, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

This is the life of a Christian. We are not anarchists. We are called to submit to our authorities. Children, you are called to submit to your parents. Workers, you are called to submit to your bosses. Citizens, you are called to submit to the government. Wives, you are called to submit to your husbands.

Here in chapter 5, Peter's attention is particularly focused upon the young men in the congregation. I believe that the reason why Peter addresses the young men in this situation is because they are often those who have the most difficulty submitting. When you are young, you are strong, and you think that you know everything. It's then that you need to be humble and realize that you are not all-wise. You need to learn how to submit to your elders.

In J. C. Ryle's little booklet entitled, "Thoughts for Young Men," he wrote, ...

How common is it to see young men heady, high-minded, and impatient of counsel! How often they are rude and uncourteous to all about them, thinking they are not valued and honoured as they deserve! How often they will not stop to listen to a hint from an older person! They think they know everything. They are full of conceit of their own wisdom. They

reckon elderly people, and especially their relations, stupid, and dull, and slow. They fancy they want no teaching or instruction themselves: they understand all things. It makes them almost angry to be spoken to. Like young horses, they cannot bear the least control. They must needs be independent, and have their own way. They seem to think, like those whom Job mentioned, 'We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us' (Job. 12:2). And all this is pride. ^[3]

J. C. Ryle then points out the example of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. When he took over the kingdom from his father, Solomon, many from Israel came to him and said, "Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you" (1 Kings 12:4). He requested three days to think it over (1 Kings 12:5)

First, he brought in the elders and sought their counsel (1 Kings 12:6). They said, "If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, and speak good words to them then they will speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever" (1 Kings 12:7). Then, he brought in other young men, who told him, "Thus you shall say to this people, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions'" (1 Kings 12:11). In his youthful pride, he followed the advice of the young men and brought disaster upon the land of Israel. A civil war ensued and the Israel was never the same.

It all came about because a young man didn't humble himself and submit himself to the counsel of the elders. And how many more stories could be told of young men who forsook the counsel of the parents and have ended up in difficulties. How many there are who share the testimony of the prodigal son? Many are wayward and rebellious in their youth, refusing the counsel of the elders, which has led them to destruction in the end. Young men, submit yourselves to your elders (verse 5a). Now, let's turn our attention to our second admonition.

2. Humble yourselves (verses 5b-6).

You can see this very clearly in the middle of verse 5, "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." Within these words, there are three calls to humility. The first focuses upon the attitude of humility, "clothe yourselves with humility." The second focuses upon God's disposition toward the humble and proud. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." The third focuses upon the result of humility. "God will exalt you at the proper time." All of these words are calling us to a life of humility.

Now, when Peter says, "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." Literally, this word means, "to tie the apron of a slave upon yourself." With these words, I'm sure that Peter was thinking about the time in the upper room when Jesus girded Himself with the towel to wash the feet of the disciples. Just as Jesus humbled Himself to serve others, so also does Peter call us to humble ourselves to serve others. You are to tie humility all around yourself, so that you are ready and willing to serve others, in whatever way you can.

Peter is here addressing far more than merely the act of service. He is addressing your entire attitude in service as well. We are to consider ourselves as slaves, who serve our masters willingly, because we feel that it is our calling. There's no self-pity in these words. There's no "woe-is-me!" in these words. There's no sorrow in these words at the station in life we have chosen. Rather, there is a willingness to serve and an eagerness to lighten the loads of others. There's no expectation for others to take notice. There's no looking for the reward. There's no looking for expecting of thanks. Rather, there is a delight in the realization that you have helped other people.

Perhaps you remember the story Jesus told about the humble slave.

Luke 17:7-10

Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come immediately and sit down to eat"? But will he not say to him, "Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink"? He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, "We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done."

That's the humble one, who takes the apron of a slave, performs his service, and merely says, "I've merely done that which I ought to have done."

Do you have any idea how hard this is? We want to be served. We want pats on the back. We want to be recognized. We want others to see us as spiritual. But, true humility doesn't concern itself with those things. The truly humble person takes the apron of a slave and willingly serves others, not needing recognition from others. When God sees such an attitude, God is well pleased, and will bring blessing. But, for those who refuse to humble themselves, the Lord will bring a curse.

This is spelled out clearly in the next phrase in verse 5, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." These words are a loose translation of Proverbs 3:34. The Proverbs are so full of such quotes, that there are many passages that Peter could have quoted, each of them containing a similar truth with only a slightly different flavor than the one Peter used. For instance, ...

"When pride comes, then come dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2).

"The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, but He will establish the boundary of the widow" (Proverbs 15:25).

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but humility goes before honor" (Proverbs 18:12).

"A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor" (Proverbs 29:23).

All of these Proverbs have the same idea. God's favor is upon those who are humble. God's displeasure is upon those who are proud. There

will be some result from the path you are on. If you are humble, you will find wisdom, protection, and honor. If you are proud, you will find dishonor, destruction, and abasement.

This is the same idea here in 1 Peter, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." I want for you to let these words sink deep into your souls. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Say it a few times to yourself, so that you can memorize it.

Which among you want the opposition of God? As John Piper says, "Nothing could be worse than to have an infinitely powerful and holy God opposed to you." ^[4] See, it's one thing for a presidential candidate to debate another presidential candidate who is opposing him, but it's another thing entirely to debate against the Almighty God when He is opposing you. It's one thing for a football team to play the reigning Super Bowl champs, but it is entirely different to battle against a God who is opposing you. It's one thing to go into a war zone in Iraq with enemies waiting to blow you up, but it is entirely different to fight against a God who is opposing you. And that's what you receive if you are proud. You will fight against God.

Now, the flip side of this is wonderful. Which of you want the favor of God in your life? As John Piper says, "nothing could be better than to have an infinitely powerful and wise God treat us graciously." ^[5] See, it's one thing for a conflict to take place at work with someone and you try to deal with it alone, but it's another thing all together, when God gives you the grace to deal with the situation. It's one thing for Satan's temptations to come upon you as you try to stand against him alone, but it is entirely different when God gives you the grace to withstand against the schemes of the devil. And that's what you experience if you are humble. God will be on your team.

"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Which do you want? Do you want the opposition of God? Or, do you want the favor of God? The choice is yours, do you want divine assistance or divine resistance? Your heart attitude toward God will determine whether God will resist you or will help you? See, God is like the police. To the stranded motorist, there is no more delightful sound in the world than the sirens of police cars approaching, because the sound means that help is on the way. But, to the bank robber, the same sound is terror in his heart, because the sound means that his gig is up. Your attitude and your actions will determine whether God is coming to help or to hunt.

Proverbs 6:17 identifies seven things when the LORD hates. At the top of the list are "proud eyes" that think highly of oneself. A few chapters later, God says, "I hate pride and arrogance" (Prov. 8:13, NIV). God hates the proud of heart. He will resist them. They will face turmoil all their days. Proverbs 16:5 says that "everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; assuredly, he will not be unpunished."

The Bible is full of illustrations of God's opposition to the proud. It doesn't take long to come up with the names of a few proud men and God's opposition to them.

Babel

Early on in the history of our world, there were some men who lived in Babel. As the city was increasing in number, the people said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). The LORD had clearly instructed the peoples of the earth to "Populate the earth abundantly and multiply it" (Gen. 9:7). But, rather than spreading out across the earth, those in Babel, in their pride, decided to build high, up to the heavens. And so, God humbled them. "The LORD confused [their] language and ... scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:8, 9). God was opposed to those in Babel.

Kings

As you trace the history of Judah, you find that there were many proud kings, Amaziah (2 Chron. 25:19), Azariah (Uzziah) (2 Chron. 26:16), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:25), Amon (2 Chron. 33:23), Zedekiah (2 Chron. 36:12) are five kings of whom the Old Testament who experienced downfall because of their pride. Certainly, there are many others who experienced a downfall because of their pride. However, these are some for whom the Bible gives a clear demonstration of God's opposition to the proud.

Nebuchadnezzar

But, no king shows this as dramatically as Nebuchadnezzar. He was the king of Babylon. He was the king of the most powerful nation in the world. And what was his downfall? Pride.

There was a day in which he was "walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon" (Dan. 4:29). As he looked out upon the mighty city, he reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my Majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). What was this, but pride?

God resisted Nebuchadnezzar. For the scripture says that "while the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes" (Dan. 4:31-32).

Only after Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself did God graciously return him to the palace of the king. At that time he said,

"Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride" (Dan. 4:37). "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Herod

Another example of this is King Herod. He reigned over Israel in the days of the apostles. At one point, he had "put on his royal apparel, [and] took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address" to the people (Acts 12:21).

So majestic was his appearance and his dress and his speech, that the people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" (Acts 12:22). He loved the cries, taking the glory to Himself and not to God. And for this very reason, "an angel of the Lord struck him, ... and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). God is opposed to the proud.

Others

We could pull up many other examples. The Pharisees were proud about their religious achievements, and God cursed them. The men and women of Israel were proud, and faced the curse of God (Is. 3:16-17; Deut. 8:14). Nations, like Edom (2 Kings 14:10) and Moab (Jer. 48:29) were proud. They all faced the hand of God against them.

But, in opposition to all those who were proud, there are many examples of those in the Bible who are humble as well. To those who are humble, God's favor is upon them. Isaiah 66:2 describes God's heart very well, "To this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." God loves the humble of heart. He will help them. They will go through life with God's hand helping them. In many ways, this was the purpose of my recent sermon series on the greatness of God (in the stars, on the earth, and in our hearts). When we view the greatness of God, we are led to humility.

Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of those who are humble. In my message, I have already mentioned Moses and Paul and Jesus, all of whom were humble, and all of whom knew the mighty blessing of God upon their lives. There are certainly more.

Ruth, Hannah, and Mary all come to my mind. Ruth decided to return with Naomi, her mother-in-law, to Israel, saying, "Your people shall be my people, and your God" (Ruth 1:16), which was an expression of humility. Hannah prayed Psalm 113:7-8, "He raised the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with nobles" (1 Sam. 2:7). She prayed it, because she experienced it. Mary acknowledged how the Lord "has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold" (she says), "from this time on all generations will count me blessed" (Luke 1:48).

There were humble kings as well, like David, who was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). I love the story when Shimei cursed David, who was fleeing the city after Absalom had usurped the throne. He threw stones at David and his men saying, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed and worthless fellow" (2 Sam 16:7). When Abishai wanted to go and cut off his head (16:9), David said, "If he curses, and if the Lord has told him, 'Curse David', then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?' Perhaps the Lord will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day" (2 Sam 16:12).

Other humble kings may be mentioned, like Solomon, who didn't ask for wealth, but for wisdom (1 Kings 3:6-14); like Jehoshaphat, who feared the LORD (2 Chron. 19:7); like Joash, who listened to the counsel of Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24); like Manasseh, who "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" (2 Chron. 33:12); like Josiah, who reformed Judah when they found the Bible in the temple (2 Chron. 34). And all of these men received grace from the LORD, because they were humble.

So, you tell me, Which do you want? Do you want the opposition of God? Or, do you want the favor of God? God's favor is good. Look at verse 6, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." Now, we don't know when the proper time is. It may be after some trial. It may be upon your death. This blessing may come only after Christ returns. Now, in many ways, it can be all of these. You receive a blessing after trials; wisdom and perseverance Upon your death, you will be welcomed into the kingdom of Christ. When Christ returns, the marriage supper of the Lamb will be unlike any celebration that you have experienced.

These words of verse 6 are so consistent with Peter's theme, "Suffer Now, Glory Later." Our humility comes now and God will exalt us later. Also, we may not know when or how you will be exalted, but, the promise of humility is exaltation. Just as "pride goes before destruction" (Prov. 16:18), so also does "humility go before exaltation."

So, which do you want? The destruction or the exaltation? Now, I doubt that there are any who are here who wouldn't want the blessing. We all want the blessing, right? But, you only get the blessing through the path of humility. It begs the question: are you humble? Or, are you proud?

Now, humility is a delicate thing. It's a bit like the word, "silence." "Silence" is such a delicate word that if you say it, you break it. And so also with humility. If you claim to have humility, you have just lost it.

Now, what's very interesting about this question is that we can easily be deceived about these things.

We can easily detect pride in others, but we have a hard time detecting pride in ourselves. If the case is ever true about detecting a speck in your brother's eye, while having a log in yours (Matt. 7:3-5), it is true in this matter of detecting pride. Think about it. Can you think of someone that you know who is prideful? I'm sure that you can think of several. And yet, do you think that they think that they are prideful? Probably not.

I remember a time before I was married. I spent the summer with a college group in some intensive discipleship and training. At one point, we were given a questionnaire to fill out, in which we evaluated our own character as well as the character of others. We evaluated our character on areas such as the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc. We also evaluated other things, such as humility and compassion and knowledge and godliness. I remember one thing particularly shocked me. When I evaluated myself, I rated myself as having much humility. But, when the evaluation of several of my friends came through, my humility rating was the lowest of anything. It was shocking to me! I had no idea that others thought me to be prideful! I remember spending some time talking with a pastor about it. He gave me some reading material and helped me with some skills in interacting with people, so as not to draw attention to myself.

Here's what it showed me: we can easily be deceived when thinking about our own humility.

I also remember a time early in our marriage, when I was still in graduate school. I had come home from a class, having just received a good grade on a test in a class that I was taking. I shared the test with Yvonne and proceeded to tell her how easy I was finding the class and how difficult others were finding the class. I remember Yvonne breaking down in sorrow over my pride. I think that she was genuinely concerned with the direction that my life would take, should I continue to exhibit such attitudes in my life. And I had no clue that I was being prideful. I was totally blind-sighted.

I'm just telling you that we can easily deceive ourselves when thinking about our own humility. But, everyone can see the reality. Remember Ricky Henderson and Nolan Ryan?

Over the years, I have been told on a number of occasions of how proud I am. In some measure, I see my pride. In great measure, I'm sure that I don't see my pride. But, I know that it's here in my heart, greater than I even know. But, let me tell you, I want to be humble. And I would suspect that all of you want to be humble as well. I want to give you an assignment for those of you who are really interested in growing in this area. Because you are unable to detect pride in you life, you need to ask others.

In light of all of these things, I have an assignment for you. I want for you to ask your spouse in what ways he or she sees humility in you. Also, ask your spouse for ways in which he or she sees pride in you. If you don't have a spouse find other who can help, like your father or mother. You may also want to ask a few close friends who you trust.

Now, when you ask the question, be sure to do enough in preparation, so that your spouse won't be defensive or scarred to share their real thoughts with you. Express your love for your spouse. Express your commitment to your spouse. Express your heart to grow in godliness. Express how you are blind to this area of your character and that you need help. Promise that you won't defend yourself. Tell your spouse that you really want to know, because you really want to grow in Christlikeness. Perhaps you will want to spend some time praying before you talk about these things. Certainly, it would be appropriate to pray together after you have such a conversation. Perhaps you want to give your spouse some time to think about it. Schedule a time to talk (like Thursday night). And when you are told areas of humility and pride in your life, plead before the Lord that he might change you.

This past week, I had a conversation with my wife about these things. I asked her for areas in my life where I demonstrate my pride. Her response was very helpful to me. I know of some things that I need to change. I do need to speak with some of my children about some of the things that she discussed with me. However, I do believe that she was easy on me.

Men, you will probably discover in having such conversations with your wives that they will probably go gentle on you, until they see that you won't respond badly to hearing these things. If you respond well on the easy things, perhaps the next time you have such a conversation, she will go a bit deeper. And if you continue to respond well over the years, perhaps she will go deeper and deeper. I don't think that your wife will go for your jugular vein in the first such conversation. But, what a wonderful thing it would be if the marriage relationships at Rock Valley Bible Church were such that these sorts of questions were often on the table.

Furthermore, this past week, I also had a conversation with a few men that I respect, who know me pretty well. And I asked the same question of them. Their responses were also helpful to me. I see ways in which I need to change. I see areas in which I can improve, and I'm pleading before the Lord that He would help me in these matters, that I grow in my humility.

If you are interested in growing in humility, I have several other suggestions for you. Regarding us as a church, we will be gathering in smaller groups this evening in fellowship groups discussing these things. I urge you to make such a time a priority in your life. Attending this sort of event will put yourself in a situation where others might help you foster a heart of humility in your life.

I also have a document that you might consider studying. It's entitled, "The Fifty Fruits of Pride," written by Brent Detwiler. It will help provoke in you thoughts of how your pride might be manifesting itself in your life. Here are the first few fruits of pride that Brent Detwiler gives, ...

1. Want to be Well Known or Important (Isaiah 14:13-15; James 3:13-16; Romans 12:6).

"I am *selfishly ambitious*. I really want to get ahead and make a name for myself. I want to be someone important in life. I like having a position or title. I far prefer leading to following."

2. Sinfully Competitive

"I am *overly competitive*. I always want to win or come out on top and it bothers me when I don't"

3. Want to Impress People (Luke 10:38-42)

"I want people to be *impressed with me*. I like to make my accomplishments known."

4. Draw Attention to Myself (Proverbs 27:2)

"I like to be the *center of attention* and will say or do things to draw attention to myself." [6]

That's only a sampling of the fifty fruits of pride that Brent Detwiler identified. Perhaps this is a good document to use in conversation with your spouse regarding the pride in your lives. Perhaps each of you could pick out the three biggest examples of how pride manifests itself in the life of your spouse. Then, you can talk about it.

Peter exhorts his readers to (1) Submit Yourselves (verse 5a) and (2) Humble Yourselves (verses 5b-6). And now, we come to our third point this morning:

3. Cast yourselves (verse 7).

Look at verse 7, "... casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

This is how we demonstrate our humility before the Lord. We give all of our troubles and our worries and our struggles to Him, and entrust that He will help us at the proper time.

Perhaps for you, the big battle will come in how your spouse responds. You need to cast your anxiety up on the Lord! When John Piper preached a message on this passage (1 Peter 5:5-7), he entitled, his message, "Are you humble enough to be care-free?" What a great question. The truly humble person casts all of his cares upon God and is care-free.

This is exactly how Jesus lived. In His humility while being led to the cross, He "did not revile in return while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). In the greatest point of humiliation, dying naked upon a cross, He entrusted all of His anxieties upon the Lord.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 14, 2008 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Wayne House and Kenneth Durham, Living Wisely in a Foolish World, p. 92.

[2] J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership, p. 50.

[3] J. C. Ryle, Thoughts for Young Men.

[4] John Piper, from a sermon on 1 Peter 5:5-7, entitled, "Are You Humble Enough to Be Care-Free?" preached on November 20, 1994.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Brent Detwiler, "The Fifty Fruits of Pride." You can find it [here](#). In the morning before preaching this message, I emailed this document out to all in the church, so that they had it in their inbox as they returned home. It is a great reference for you to use