



2/24/26

*I just want to say... I love our church. The building is nice, of course, but I'm talking about the people. Tim and I have been here almost 18 years. Time has flown by. This church is so much more to me than a place to go on Sundays (or the rest of the week since I'm on staff.) It's seeing family. It's encouraging others in their walk and being encouraged in mine. I just love our church. I'm so thankful for God's plan that we don't have to do this life alone. He's here, and He gives us tangible relationships with other believers who love Him. That's just cool.*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*1 Peter 5:1-11*

*Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Here's something so key to that. God builds THE CHURCH. We are individual members of the church, the body of Christ, but we have to see ourselves as part of the church and not just our single selves. We need to be about serving Him IN His church. It's also really important for me to ask, "How? How does He build His church?" He gives His children, the members of His body, opportunity to cooperate with Him in His plan. So... I never can say, "God doesn't have a purpose for me." No matter who I am, God has prepared works for me to do for His glory (Ephesians 2:10).*

*1 Peter 5 gives me a picture of how God is building His church...*

*Vs. 1-4 ~ God starts with the elders of the church... those who have grown in the Lord for a long time, especially those who are helping lead the church. Before I move on, this is a really big deal for me as someone who is NOT one of the assigned elders of the church. I need to be praying for my elders. If I'm supposed to be learning from their example, as I will see in vs. 3, I need to pray for them. The enemy will try to take them out first. Their fall would cause the most damage. Instead of judging them or how they lead, I need to pray these verses for them.*

*Also, before I move on, I need to recognize my role here. I have a shepherding role at this*

*church. I need to take what Peter's going to say to heart. Truly, all believers have influence over someone. We all need to take these directions from Peter to heart. And notice, the elders are supposed to be an example to us... to help us know how to live our walk with God. They're not just there to carry the whole load. We all have a part in... the church.*

*So... for the elders... follow Peter's example. He was a fellow elder. He was also an apostle, which gave him a lot of authority over the church. He was a witness of everything HIS example, Jesus, went through including His suffering. And he was one who got to share in the glory that was coming... a glory he is fully sharing in right now as he's at home in the presence of God.*

*What example does Peter want the elders to model for us?*

- Shepherd the flock of God among you... shepherd them, feed them, guide them. So I, in a shepherding role, need to care for whoever God places before me... not showing partiality to anyone. This is hard, and I need God's help. As a sheep, I need to let my shepherds lead... not judging them over preference, but only voicing real concern when I see actual sin.*
- Exercise oversight... care for their souls as God cares for mine. If God cared for me the way I care for others, would I be thankful? O Lord, I praise You that You don't measure Your care according to mine, but I do pray that You will help my care to be given according to Yours.*
- Not under compulsion, but willingly... not feeling forced to care, but wanting to care for the sheep. Some sheep are harder to care for than others. Care for them anyway. Ask the Lord to help me love and care for ALL His sheep.*
- Care for them according to how God willingly cares for me. Let God be my measure for my care. DO NOT base my care on the sheep. They will give reason to back away from care, just as I give God plenty of reason to not want to care for me... and yet He does. Follow His example.*
- Not for shameful, greedy, selfish gain... like doing it for the power. But be eager to care for them.*
- Not domineering over the sheep, but being an example to them. If they follow my example rather than my words, what will they do? Actions speak louder than words. My job is to be a servant leader just as Jesus was.*

*This is HARD to live. This is why there were strict guidelines for those who were called to be official elders and pastors of the church. Their faith needed to be tested so that they would not allow their position to be used to bring down the church. People are in the church. People matter to God. When a leader does not lead as God wants him to lead, God takes it personally. O Lord, when I do not care for others as You want me to care, You take it personally. Please help me to be careful, to lead well.*

*God calls the shepherds to a high calling, but He also blessed their faithfulness with high*

*reward. When God comes to take us home, they "will receive the unfading, everlasting crown of glory." It always blows my mind that God not only wants me to see HIS glory, but His plan is to give His children glory. It's not just the shepherds who will receive His glory. It's all who have been born again to a living hope in Him. He is so generous!!!*

*Vs. 5 ~ God wants the younger believers to be subject, to be under the leadership of the elders. Why? So they can learn from them, grow in faith, and someday lead the younger generation... to build His church!*

*For ALL believers, God wants us to clothe ourselves with humility TOWARD ONE ANOTHER! Truly, to say we're humble before God, but we're unwilling to be humble with others, whether we're an elder or a younger believer, is to NOT be humble before God. We will know if we're truly humble before God by how we treat others. O Lord, please grow my humility and crush my arrogance and shame. Neither arrogance or shame bring me closer to You OR others.*

*We MUST be clothed in humility for GOD'S sake. He opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. There is only ONE obstacle that keeps us from experiencing the fullness of God's grace... His favor toward us... and that is pride. Why? Pride makes us refuse to come to God. It is not that God is unwilling. It's that pride makes ME unwilling. O Lord, please crush my pride!!!*

*Vs. 6-9 ~ Let me not forget. I have an adversary, the devil, who is LIKE a roaring lion, seeking to devour anyone he can. He is LIKE a roaring lion, but he only has a roar. His roar intimidates, but for anyone who stays close to the Lord, his roar has no power. And he cannot crush God's people. His only hope is to make us ineffective for the gospel.*

*So how do I, no matter what my role is in Christ, stay out of the way of the devil's roar?*

- *I MUST humble myself before God. God's roar is louder than the devil. Mine is not. God CARES for me. He is the GREAT SHEPHERD. Humbly stay close to Him.*
- *When I hear the roar of the devil, as I humble myself before the Lord, cast all my anxieties on Him because He CARES for me... He tends to me. He guides me. He shepherds me. I can acknowledge to Him that I'm anxious. I can pray and ask for help. I can thank Him for helping me. I can experience His peace. The biggest part is, I can CAST my anxieties on Him. He can handle it. That means I release them to Him. I say, "I don't need to worry about this because I've already released it into Your capable hands."*
- *Be sober minded and watchful. Stay alert. Pay attention! Understand that this time on earth is NOT my heaven and there are MANY minefields. But if I stay alert and focused, God will navigate me through them.*
- *Resist the devil's fake roar. How? Stay firm in my faith... my trust... my confidence in the Lord. He will not leave me to fight the battle alone.*
- *Know that I'm not alone in this battle. All believers are facing the same challenges. This is so important for me to understand! It's so easy to think, "I'm the only one going through this." When I do that, I shut down and wallow in self pity. But when I know*

*that others are facing it, too, we can mutually encourage and support each other, and pray for each other.*

*Vs. 10-11 ~ God sees what we're going through. He knows this is a battle, and He guards us through our faith. Being distracted and not paying attention keeps us from standing firm in faith.*

*But when I stand firm in my faith, I have the promise always before me that this suffering is not wasted and it is only temporary. God has called me to HIS ETERNAL GLORY in Christ Jesus. He has NOT called me to be devoured by the liar and father of lies. The LORD is the God of grace, of generous love and favor without making me earn it. He WILL restore and perfect me. He WILL confirm me and set me on His solid ground. He WILL give me the strength to keep going. He WILL firmly establish me and guard me for my hope of heaven. My God has all power and all authority... and no one can stand against it. He CANNOT be devoured. To Him be the rule over all, for all, forever and ever. This earth is NOT my heaven. It is NOT my home. But for now... God, who has all authority and power, IS building His church and the gates of hell WILL NOT PREVAIL against it! O Lord, I am Your servant, praying that You'll make me humble before You and toward others no matter the cost. I will stand firm in my faith.*