

Living in Humble Obedience

When Peter came to the conclusion of the Epistle of 1 Peter he was brief and to the point. Like any good writer he summarizes his main points on how to handle suffering and says goodbye in the name of Christ. In his final message on from 1 Peter 5:6-9, we learn how to deal with the troubles of our lives.

1st Be Humble! *“Humble yourselves therefore under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”* (1 Peter 5:6) To be humble is to understand We Are the Created, not the Creator. There is a difference between positive self-esteem and arrogance. To be humble is to know that we are the created, not the Creator of the universe. To be humble is to imitate Christ Jesus! Peter had the lesson driven home dramatically that night in the Upper Room when Jesus stooped to wash Peter's feet. It was almost more than Peter could stand. It was surely something he would never forget, his Master on His knees washing Peter's feet. So should it come as any surprise to us that this old apostle would say to struggling Christians in Asia Minor Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may exalt you in due time. Humble yourselves. It is how to handle trouble.

2nd Be Worry Free! *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:6)

Twenty-five percent of Americans suffer from mild to moderate depression, anxiety, loneliness and other symptoms related primarily to stress and about half of all diseases including ulcers, high blood pressure, and cancer can have stress related origins. Unmanaged stress is a major factor in homicides, suicides, child abuse, spouse abuse, and aggravated assaults. Americans are spending 64.9 billion dollars a year trying to deal with the stress in their lives. (The National Mental Health Association)

In reality we can do one of three things with the worry in our lives, We can run away, take a pill, get drunk, do drugs, divorce, quit; We can repress it, suck it up, push it down, deny its existence, freeze our feelings, isolate our emotions, bottle it up, bury it deep and it will come back to haunt us; or *We Can Release It To The Lord!* Jesus said in Matthew 11:28. *“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am humble and gentle in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Bring your burdens to the Lord and leave them here”*

Proverbs 3:5 says, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.”* Cast All Your Cares On Christ, Because He Cares For You! The God who put the planets in place and flung the stars in space, who causes the sun to shine by day and the moon to glow at night — that God cares about you. If He cares for a sparrow that are two for a penny, how much more does He care for you? Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you. His eye is on the sparrow — you are worth more than sparrows.

3rd Be Alert! *“Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion, your adversary the devil prowls around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).* Our struggle is not just against flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places. Siegfried and Roy put together an amazing magic and animal act that thrilled packed houses night after night. They performed together for years. Then one night, not long ago, Roy, stepping into the spotlight, accidentally slipped. The action startled his 600 pound co-star tiger. The tiger attacked Roy and dragged him off the stage like a piece of meat. That night Roy Horn lost his career and almost lost his life. When asked what happened he gave this simple answer — *“I slipped.”* It is so easy to slip we MUST be watchful. Be alert.

4th Be Strong in the Faith! *“Stand firm in the faith because you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering”* (1 Peter 5:9). Courage is expressed in a variety of ways. Courage is the power to endure in unchangeable situations of life. Courage is the ability to give a reason for the hope that lies within us. Courage is seeing a wrong and trying to right it. Courage is standing up for the least, the last and the lost around us. To stand firm is Jesus not fledging in the face of a cross. To stand firm is early Christians not recanting under threats from Rome. To stand firm is the Church today recovering its real purpose for being. To stand firm is Christianity not becoming a pawn of modern day politics. Stand firm in the faith regardless of the circumstances of life.

I close with these words of Peter, *“The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”* (1 Peter 4:7-11)