

## **“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”**

### **Lesson #9 “Shepherd the Flock of God”**

#### **1 Peter Chapter 5:1-4**

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

#### **Introduction:**

I used to be a construction superintendent and I want to tell you about it because it really applies to today’s message. Overseeing a construction project is really a cool thing because you are responsible for building something....maybe a school, a church or a manufacturing facility.

The first really important thing for me was to sit down with the plans and job specs and make sure I had a clear understanding of what I was going to build. This included talking with project managers, architects and building engineers.

Then I had to figure out the steps and what order they had to happen to accomplish this great feat. For example you can’t put the roof on before the structure is up. And you can’t raise the structure till you pour a slab, and you can’t pour a slab before you pour a footing and so on.

Then I had to create a schedule and keep all the sub-contractors aware of how things were progressing and when they were expected, because the job had a time it had to be completed by.

Along the way I had to solve problems because nothing ever goes quite as planned. This took patients as I was continually communicating back and forth between sub-contractors, the architect, my bosses and the owner.

I had to make myself available at all hours when a sub wanted to call my house they were welcome to.

I had to inspect sub-contractors work and sometimes talk with them and get them to shape up.

#### **Transitional Statement:**

Church we are being built into the house of God and God has set forth overseers among us in this building process. Today God is going to give our overseers/elders some direction and remind them of some responsibilities.

## Lesson:

### I. First thing to mention in regard to this scripture is that the audience has changed

- A. Peter has been talking to those Christians living as aliens scattered among the Gentiles.

-Which all of us as a whole can gain great application from.

- B. But here in chapter 5 Peter takes pause to speak to the elders specifically using the term presbuteros for the elders, which calls attention to fact that they are older and wiser in the faith.

1. I thought of pulling our elders off to aside and sharing this message with them in private and moving on.

-But, how silly would that be? Because one thing is true in Christianity, the more we understand the responsibility and purpose of our elders the more able we will be to work along side these guys and be able to utilizing their gifts from God in helping to grow our relationship with God.

2. So today the elders are going to get some instruction from God through the text, while the rest of us get to listen in and consider how we should be working along side these God given servants to promote spiritual growth in ourselves and those around us.

### II. With a view of Christian struggles

*1 Peter 5:1a*

*“Therefore,...”*

-In regard to everything mentioned so far

-Born of imperishable seed.....existing in the spiritual sense

-Living stones being built into God’s house

-Chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation

-A people for God’s own possession

-Our responsibilities to:

-Government

-Employers or masters

-In the Home

-Arming ourselves with the same purpose as Christ

-Living with the end in mind

-Rejoicing even in the face of suffering

\*Christianity is very Complex

-Many struggles and difficulties

## II. Elders encouraging other elders

*1 Peter 5:1b*

*“...I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,”*

- A. Here you have an elder encouraging another elder
  - 1. Elders need to encourage other elders
    - a. Tendency of exhausting ...of burned out
    - b. You guys need to take time for each other
      - Have dinners together
      - Only other elders understand your exact pressures
      - \*Who better to minister to you
  - 2. You need to sharpen each other Prov. 27:17
- B. Many times elders are so busy taking care of others that you don't always take care of themselves.
- C. Elders should take time to plan for elder growth
  - Attend workshops
  - Read material related to your responsibilities as an elder
  - Meeting with other elderships in our area for discussion
  - \*Elders need other elders in their lives

## III. Shepherd the Flock of God

*1 Peter 5:2a*

*“shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight...”*

- A. Shepherd here means to tend or take care of
  - \*So with the many struggles of Christianity in mind Peter turns to the shepherd and basically says “you've got to help them”
- B. So elders are to exercise oversight
  - \*Whether we are talking about managing a tractor line, a construction site, or running a bakery, oversight has some basics principles.

1. First of all, oversight in general demands:

a. Clearly understand the goal

-And that goal is helping the sheep of the flock grow and become spiritually mature.....and be pleasing to God.

-Understanding the goal gives clear direction

b. Being commitment

-Even in the face of trials

-Even when some of us might not agree

-Even in the face of criticism

\*You should not let anything get in the way of helping the flock grow.

c. Keeping focused

Colossians 3:2 “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

-Don't let the busyness of life get in your way.

-Don't let stubborn Christians weight you down

-Don't let things that are out of your control burden you down.

-Don't let your own desires squelch your effectiveness

\*Rather give your full attention to God

-Elders, Satan wants you to get bogged down and he wants you to loose your focus and forget the goal.

\*Church, just maybe we should be prayerful for our elders

2. Then oversight means planning and organization

a. God is not the author of confusion

-The just let it happen scenario doesn't get it done.

b. If the church is to have a deeper relationship with God its going to take a lot of thinking, organizing and planning to make it happen.

-God apparently though structure was a good thing as he set forth the pattern for the New Testament Church

c. Things to remember

-Any plan or organization requires a lot of discussion.

-Not done lightly

-Research is a part of that

-You guys must gain all the knowledge and facts that you can about the goal, God has set before you

-You've got to think about potential hazards along the way

-Explore possibilities

-Utilize all your resources

-Sizing up progress

-When it is lacking you must address it.

-Maybe we need a state of the church address.

-Prayer... allow God's direction

\*Make room for faith.

\*Try to see the unseen

3. Oversight also includes working with folks one on one, taking into account each persons spiritual maturity and reach out to them at their level

a. So there is a broad direction and focus for the church in general and then there is the individual level.

-Sometimes helping people means tough decisions.

-When to help someone and when to allow them to struggle a bit more for growth.

-This is a difficult thing for sure

- b. You've got to set challenges for the flock, help us stretch when we need it, make sure opportunities are in place to help us grow.
- c. What I am saying is you have to help the flock stay on the right path.

\*Nine times out of ten we have our head down grazing and not paying much attention.

\*As you've already found out its not always easy being a shepherd.

\*But left to the wind spiritual growth would not happen!

4. Then overseers must prioritize their time

- a. Time is limited....

-Last time I check the fountain of youth has not been found.

-We are getting older every minute

-And the end is much closer than it has ever been before.

\*And many Christians find themselves just a step away from spiritual disaster.

- b. There is no way you guys could meet every need of every person here even if you worked at it full time.
- c. So you have to prayerfully pick and choose what needs to be done next.

-Even if criticism comes

- d. Ask God to help you prioritize your efforts.

5. Overseers must divide up the work load

-Don't get duped into the idea that you have to do it all.

-Think about what Jethro told Moses to do

-Divide up the work

-The weight of all the responsibilities among us is too great for any one man

-That's why God demands more than one elder

6. Overseers must be able to Delegate

-Just because you have the ability to do something doesn't mean God wants you doing it.

-Don't wait on tables

-That is don't spend your time focused on the physical thing.

\*It can be a real temptation at times

7. Overseers must communicate skillfully

-Listen carefully

-Prod because people aren't always quick to say what is really bothering them.

\*You would think that people would be jumping through hoops to open up but it's generally not that way.

-You've got to ask yourself at what level spiritually is the person you're talking with... i.e. at their level of spirituality, what are they able to understand.

-Does the person you're talking with have any unique perks?

-Do they get mad easily

-Do they get hurt feelings easily

-Misunderstand easily

-Your response, in fact, carries much weight

-With your experience and maturity in Christ when you speak the flock listens carefully.

-Being an elder is kind of like living in a glass house...everyone is watching you.

-Listening to every word you say,

-How you say it,

-And to what end it is said.

-I was talking with Ward about this and he said this:

-“You’ve got to think before you speak”

-Elders I think Ward is on to something here.

8. Overseers must manage problems

-Not turning a blind eye to problems hoping they will go away

-Not so focused on keeping the peace that truth is neglected

-Willing to address spiritual problems even in the face of obstinacy

-They must always be honing their problem solving abilities

-Remembering not taking problems personally

9. Overseers must be Patients

-Elders work can be frustrating

-Sometimes people don’t want help

-Sometimes we don’t listen to you

\*But patients is the Fathers Workshop

\*These are a few things in regard to management or oversight that you should be reminded of.

**Then, Shepherding is Not:**

1 Peter 2b-3

*“...not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*

1. Not under compulsion

-Not because they have to or feel forced to

-But, motivated from the heart to

-Voluntarily ....Because you want to!



2. According to God's will

-Not trying to make things your way

-But, seeking God's desires through His word

-After all it is His flock ...Verse 2a

-Its not your flock.....its God's

3. Not for personal gain

-Not for pride of position

-Or power

4. But Shepherding is done with eagerness

B. Not lording it over them

-Not controller....but example setters.

-God hasn't put you in your position to drive the heard like a cowboy with a whip

\*Sometimes as a sheep myself I can be a real not-head and I'm sure it's a real temptation for the elders to want to ring my neck.

-But as a shepherd to maintain gentleness, leading and guiding by example.

#### **IV. The shepherds reward**

*1 Peter 5:4*

*4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

A. Elders don't forget you have shepherds also in each other.

-And you also have the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ and when he returns and finds his sheep well tended you will receive your reward.

**Conclusion:**

In view of all the elders are called to do for us what is our responsibility in this as a church?

-I hope this can be the focus of our groups today.

**READ WITH ME PLEASE !**

*Hebrews 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.”*

-What does this mean?

-And have you embraced it?