

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

XIX. Church Administrative Relationships During Apostasy

(1 Peter 5:5-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 5:5-11 instructs us on church administrative relationships during apostasy. We view it for our insight:

II. Church Administrative Relationships During Apostasy, 1 Peter 5:5-11.

- A. Just as the elders are responsible before the Lord to shepherd and oversee God's flock in accountability to Christ (1 Peter 5:1-4), younger men who have not yet been elevated to elder roles are to subject themselves to the elders in accountability to the Lord, 1 Peter 5:5a with 1 Peter 5:4.
- B. Trials of times of apostasy can produce tensions even among elders and their subordinates in the local church, so Peter urged both elders and their subordinates to "clothe" themselves with humility, 1 Peter 5:5b:
 - 1. The KJV in 1 Peter 5:5c orders, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another," but for Peter to direct elders and non-elders to be subject to one another after directing non-elders to submit to elders in 1 Peter 5:5a would make Peter contradict himself and produce a recipe for administrative disorder in the church!
 - 2. The solution is found in noting that the verb rendered "subject" in the KJV translates the Greek verb *egkombosmai*, "put something on oneself," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 215.
 - 3. Those involved were figuratively to "clothe themselves" with *tapeinophrosune*, "humility," Ibid., p. 812.
 - 4. In urging elders and their subordinates to clothe themselves with humility, Peter gave the antidote to much of the tension that can harm administrative relationships in a church during the stressful time of apostasy!
- C. Not only does humility ease administrative tensions, it also results in God's reward of blessing, 1 Peter 5:5c-6:
 - 1. In 1 Peter 5:5c ESV, Peter cited Proverbs 3:34 from the Septuagint's Greek translation of the Hebrew text to teach that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 802.
 - 2. Accordingly, at 1 Peter 5:6, Peter applied that truth, urging both elders and their subordinates to humble themselves under God's mighty hand that He might exalt them in due time. This is a great promise for both parties: elders can face disrespect and insubordination from subordinates, making oversight difficult and unappealing even to lead, and subordinates can likewise suffer oppression under carnal elders. In either scenario, when the Lord desires to exalt either the afflicted elder or the oppressed subordinate, He can and will do so if the respective party has clothed himself with an attitude of humility.
 - 3. Meanwhile, disrespected elders or oppressed subordinates are often tempted to be anxious about their difficult relationship with the other party, so both parties must cast all the anxiety they have about such relationships upon the Lord, knowing that He cares about them, 1 Peter 5:7.
- D. Challenges in church administrative relationships open the door for Satanic activity, for Satan tempts subordinates to rebel against overseers (2 Tim. 2:24-26) and he tempts leaders to become proud upon getting into leadership (1 Tim. 3:6), so Peter taught elders and non-elders about overcoming Satan, 1 Peter 5:8-11:
 - 1. Peter urged elders and subordinates alike to be sober-minded and watchful, for their adversary the devil figuratively prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour in spiritual defeat, 1 Peter 5:8.
 - 2. Elders and subordinates must then overcome Satan by standing firm in the faith, realizing that similar trials in church administration are experienced by other believers throughout the world, 1 Peter 5:9.
 - 3. After having suffered a little while in an administrative relationship in the church and humbly waiting upon God to address the problem, the God of all grace who has called us unto His eternal glory will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish the troubled elder or subordinate, 1 Peter 5:10 ESV.
 - 4. Peter then ended this instruction with a brief doxology to the Lord in 1 Peter 5:11.

Lesson: *To ease tensions that can arise in church administrative roles, elders must lead and their subordinates must follow, what occurs successfully if all involved practice humility and trust in God's provision to provide the necessary honor or elevation to oversight without yielding to Satan's lure to sin dishonorably and destructively.*

Application: *May we follow Peter's directives for blessing in church administrative relationships during apostasy.*