

GEMS FROM THE ENDINGS OF THE EPISTLES
Part XVII: Gems From The Ending Of 1 Peter, A. D. 64
(1 Peter 5:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The epistle of 1 Peter was written by the Apostle Peter from Rome “just before or shortly after the beginning of Nero’s persecution of the church in A. D. 64” (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 434, 838).
- B. In view of this trial, Peter “prescribed conduct designed to bring honor to the One” believers under stress “represented,” that One being the Lord, *Ibid.*, p. 838. The 1 Peter 5:1-14 ending section discusses church leadership in view of stressful times for the church, a subject that is very applicable for us today.
- C. We thus view 1 Peter 5:1-14 that focuses on this theme for our insight, application and edification:

II. Gems From The Ending Of 1 Peter, A. D. 64; 1 Peter 5:1-14.

- A. When people are under stress, they are tempted to be more defensive and more volatile.
- B. With this fact in mind, Peter wrote to church leaders who were responsible to guide God’s flock under the duress of persecution from Rome’s Emperor Nero, and Peter’s instruction focuses on the need for leaders to seek to diffuse tensions in the local church, 1 Peter 5:1-14:
 - 1. To introduce his instruction to church leaders, Peter wisely avoided referring to his apostolic authority over these leaders to identify with his readers as an elder like them, a humble fellow servant of God, v. 1a.
 - 2. Peter also noted that he had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, thus hinting of his own imminent death by crucifixion like Christ had died as predicted by the Lord, 1 Peter 5:1b with John 21:15-19. This statement would cause Peter’s readers to respect his admonitions to them as a man who understood their stress.
 - 3. The apostle added by stating that he would partake in the glory to be revealed at Christ’s coming, what every believer will experience by God’s grace, 1 Peter 5:1c. Peter thus gave hope for his readers’ future.
- C. Having gained a hearing from church elders, Peter taught them to minister as stress relievers, 1 Peter 5:2-4:
 - 1. The elders were to shepherd God’s flock that was among them, taking the oversight of the people not just because they were required to do so, but willingly, as the Lord desired, 1 Peter 5:2a. God’s people under stress needed leaders who were willingly devoted to their welfare, not men who felt forced to lead!
 - 2. The leaders were to shepherd God’s flock not greedily for pay, but with eagerness to serve, 1 Peter 5:2b. God’s flock under duress needs leaders who value them over the money they earn from leading them.
 - 3. The leaders were to shepherd God’s people not in a dictatorial way, but by the power of an excellent example, 1 Peter 5:3. God’s flock under stress needs to be handled gently, but with strong leaders, and the route for that kind of leadership is the path of being a great example.
 - 4. Those who shepherded this way would be rewarded by Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, at His return, His reward being an unfading crown of glory, 1 Pet. 5:4. The Greek word for “crown” is *stephanos*, a wreath an athlete won for achievement (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 774-775).
- D. However, believers under stress who were subject to these leaders were often tempted to be insubordinate, so Peter urged the younger men under the elders to submit to their leaders, 1 Peter 5:5a. Indeed, all believers in the church – leaders and subordinates alike – were (literally) to “clothe” themselves with humility in relating to one another, for God resisted the proud but gave grace to the humble, 1 Peter 5:5b. (The KJV phrase “all of you be subject one to another” is a mistranslation where “clothe yourselves, all of you . . .” [ESV] is correct.)
- E. If subordinates and leaders alike humbled themselves under God’s mighty hand, He would exalt them in due time as a reward for that humility, 1 Peter 5:6. Meanwhile, concerns about being oppressed by leaders or by subordinates who were insubordinate were to be cast on the Lord, for He cared for each believer, 1 Peter 5:7.
- F. Indeed, since Satan sought to create divisions between leaders and subordinates under stress, believers in the church were to resist Satan’s wiles by being steadfast in the faith, realizing that the same trials were experienced by believers everywhere who were under duress at that time, 1 Peter 5:8-9.
- G. Leaders and subordinates alike were to realize that after they had suffered for a while, God would mature, strengthen and settle them, regardless what tensions they faced, 1 Peter 5:10-11.
- H. In closing, Peter exhorted his readers to walk in this true grace of God in love and peace, 1 Peter 5:12-14.

Lesson: *Leaders and subordinates alike in local churches during times of stress for the church are to rely on God to relate to one another with gentle humility and godly living for God’s blessing and reward.*

Application: *May we leaders and subordinates in the church under stress relate to each other with gentle humility.*