

May 24, 2026

Series: Be an Overcomer

Title: Overcoming Bad Leaders

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1-5

Speaker: Pastor Ian Bonthron



How do we overcome _____ in the church?

1. Know the _____ - WHO

1 Peter 5:1-3 ESV

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Elders

Plurality

Men

1. Men and women are created equal in God's sight.
2. God has given men and women great gifts and competencies to serve Him.
3. Because of His choice, God has set up and holds men responsible for overall leadership in the home and the church.

1. Know the role - WHO: Normal circumstances in the church call for a plurality of qualified male elders to lead the church.

1. Know the role - WHY: You are _____ with Jesus

1 Peter 5:1 ESV

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed,

1. Know the role - WHAT: Elders are pastors who _____ and _____

1 Peter 5:1-2a ESV

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly,

Servant leadership is the priority

Overseer - _____

Overseer - _____

Shepherd - _____

Shepherd - _____

Shepherd - _____

Elder - _____

Elder - _____

1. Know the role: Elders _____ the church through _____

2. Know their place: Elders serve _____ Jesus' _____

1 Peter 5:4 ESV

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

Elders seek to represent the mind of _____ to the church.

3. Know your response: Humbly choose to _____ the elders and _____ each other

1 Peter 5:5 ESV

5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. **Clothe** yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

How do we overcome bad leaders in the church?

Appoint _____, self-sacrificing elders and _____ follow them.

May 24, 2026 Group Questions:

1. Have you ever had a leader who was great at vision but terrible at details? Or the opposite — a detail-obsessed leader who couldn't see the big picture? Which one would you rather follow?
2. What's the most ridiculous reason a boss or leader has ever given for why something had to be done their way? ("Because I said so" doesn't count — we all know that one!)

Into the Bible Questions:

Read 1 Peter 5:1-5

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1. The passage uses three descriptions for the same leaders: elders, shepherds (pastors), and overseers (bishops). What do these terms together reveal about the role of church leaders?
2. The passage implies that the church is led by a plurality (at least two) of elders. Why might God design church leadership this way instead of one person in charge? What benefits or protections does it provide?
3. In the sermon, Pastor Ian shared some expanded ideas of how Elders shepherd and oversee the church: Overseer - visionary, details; Shepherd - care, accountability, evangelist; Elder - wise, teach. Which style do you most appreciate or relate to, and why?
4. In verse 2-3, Peter gives three contrasts for how elders should serve: not under compulsion but willingly; not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not lording it over but being examples. Which of these contrasts do you think is most counter-cultural today?
5. The flock or church belongs to God, not the elders (verse 2—"the flock of God"). How should this truth shape the attitude of both leaders and congregation members?
6. Peter says elders should be "examples to the flock" rather than domineering. What does being an example look like practically?
7. The sermon stresses that character (willing, eager, example) matters more than flashy gifts when choosing leaders. Why is this so important? What happens when gifts outweigh character?
8. The word "clothe yourselves with humility" pictures tying on a servant's apron. How does this imagery challenge the way we interact in church?

9. Peter reminds us that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” How does this promise apply both to leaders and to those who follow them?

Application Questions:

1. Have you ever served under a difficult leader (in church, work, or elsewhere)? How does Peter’s description of good elder leadership offer hope or a different model?
2. If you are in (or aspire to) any leadership role—in your family, small group, ministry, or workplace—how can you apply the “willing, eager, example” principles this week?
3. The sermon acknowledges that some people have been genuinely hurt by church leadership. If that’s part of your story, how can looking to Jesus as the chief shepherd help you heal?
4. When you disagree with a decision your church leaders make, how can you respond in a way that gives them “joy” in leading rather than turning it into “church hurt”?
5. For those who are younger or newer to faith/church: What does humble submission to godly leaders look like without blindly following?
6. If character is more important than gifts in leadership, how should that influence how we nominate, vote for, or pray for future elders in our church?
7. The passage says we are to “Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.” What would it look like for you to intentionally put on that “apron” this week in your relationships at church?