

Ln 12 ... What God Requires When Life Is Tough

1 Peter 5:1-7

Peter wrote this letter just before the Roman emperor Nero began a horrible persecution of Christians. Peter knows the persecution is bad but about to get much worse. We can see the same thing happening in America because our culture is becoming more and more anti-Christian and anti-Bible. Part of this passage is written to church leaders but it applies to all believers because church leaders are to model what God requires of all believers. When life is tough, God requires **three** things.

A Stirring Witness (5:1)

During tough times, it is critically important for God's people to have good spiritual leaders who faithfully preach and teach the Bible, without watering it down for political correctness. Therefore, Peter begins this section: *The elders which are among you I exhort* (5:1a).

The word translated **elders** (*presbyteros*, pres-boo'-ter-os) refers to men who served as pastoral leaders of the congregation. The words elder, overseer (bishop), and pastor (shepherd) are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

For example, in [Acts 20:28a](#)-b what does Paul say to the elders of the church at Ephesus?

Peter includes himself in this group by calling himself *an elder* (5:1b). After Jesus' resurrection, Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost and continued to preach and teach about Christ and the resurrection. Peter reminds his readers he was *a witness of the sufferings of Christ* (5:1c).

The word translated **witness** (*martus*, mar'-toos) is the word from which we get our word "martyr." It means "to bear witness."

In [Acts 1:8b](#), how does Jesus use the same Greek word to describe what His disciples will become when the Holy Spirit comes upon them?

Because so many were killed for being *witnesses*, the Greek word "martyr" became a reference to one who was killed for his or her faith.

Peter is writing not only as a *witness* but *also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed* (5:1).

This probably refers to Peter's experience at the Transfiguration, where He saw Christ in His glory ([Mk 9:2](#)), which is yet to be *revealed* so every believer can be *a partaker* in it.

Every church leader and believer should be a *witness* of what Christ has done for them.

When life is tough, God requires **a stirring witness** and ...

A Serving Spirit (5:2-4)

Peter, who was himself called by Jesus to be a shepherd ([Jn 21:16](#)), exhorts the elders to *feed the flock of God which is among you* (5:2a).

The word translated **feed** (*poimainō*, poy-my'-noh) means to tend sheep.

The Greek word can also be translated “**pastor**” ([Eph. 4:11](#)).

A shepherd, or pastor, leads and feeds the church—leading them from pasture to pasture to make sure they have adequate food.

This means leading the flock from scripture to scripture, or Bible book to Bible book, so they will be well-fed.

A faithful pastor must obey what command in [2 Timothy 4:2a-b](#)?

This means preaching God’s Word when it is popular and when it is not. A pastor must preach the word *taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly* ([5:2b](#)).

This means a pastor must not be lazy nor need people in the church to constantly compel him to do his work effectively. Instead, he should shepherd the church *willingly*, as God leads him, because of his love for God and the flock over which God has made him overseer.

Shepherding cannot be *for **filthy lucre***, which means not out of greed nor a desire to enrich oneself, *but of a ready mind* ([5:2c-d](#)). This doesn’t mean a pastor shouldn’t be fairly paid; it means money cannot be the motivation for pastors carrying out their ministry.

A church has the responsibility to provide the pastor with an equitable salary and benefits.

Quoting from *Deuteronomy*, how does Paul express this fact in [1 Timothy 5:18b-c](#)?

When a church doesn’t adequately compensate a pastor, it has been my observation God will move that pastor to a church that will take care of him. He will then send the previous church the kind of pastor they deserve.

Peter writes that shepherding is not *being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock* ([5:3a-b](#)). This means pastors are not only to preach and teach the Bible, but to live it.

Elders are under-shepherds who are accountable to *the chief Shepherd*, Jesus Christ ([5:4a](#)).

One day, *the chief Shepherd* will *appear*, or return.

When He does, what will faithful pastors receive ([5:4b](#))?

Crowns are often used in the Bible to represent different kinds of rewards.

There is the *crown of righteousness* ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)) and the *crown of life* ([Jas. 1:12](#); [Rev. 2:10](#)).

When life is tough, God requires **a stirring witness, a serving spirit**, and ...

A Submissive Attitude (5:5-7)

Peter writes, *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder* ([5:5a](#)). Everyone in the church is to be submissive to church leaders, or elders, unless the leaders are guilty of dishonesty, teaching false doctrine, or immorality. The reason *younger* believers are specified is they may lack maturity and want changes that violate doctrinal integrity.

For example, there is a “worship war” going on in many churches between *younger* and older believers concerning music and style of worship.

Concerning worship, what does [Psalm 29:2](#) tell us?

Two things are required in worship: **giving *glory* to the Lord and revering His *holiness*.**

In any church there will be disagreements about preferences concerning music, worship times, etc.

Therefore, Peter writes: *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility* ([5:5b](#)).

This means there must be mutual submission and respect between young and old believers.

The word ***clothed*** translates a Greek word that refers to a servant putting on an apron before serving.

Peter may have been thinking back to the Last Supper when the disciples were arguing about which of them would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven ([Lk 22:24](#)). In the midst of that debate, Jesus gets up from the meal, takes off His outer garment, and ties a towel around His waist like an apron. Then, He begins to wash His disciples’ feet and dries them with the towel.

When He finishes, what does Jesus tell His disciples ([John 13:15](#))?

In many churches today, disciples of Jesus are still arguing about which of their preferences are greatest. However, the Bible teaches we are to put on the “**apron of *humility***” and be concerned about serving one another. To reinforce his exhortation, Peter quotes [Proverbs 3:34](#): *for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble* ([5:5c](#)).

God resists *the proud* because arrogant people trust in themselves and always think their opinions and preferences are superior to everyone else’s. Being *proud* keeps older people from trying to understand younger people and younger people from trying to understand the concerns of older believers.

Because God has allowed Peter’s readers to suffer, he writes, *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God* ([5:6a](#)).

The *mighty hand of God* means God allows unpleasant things to happen to make us *humble* and more dependent on Him. We are to submit to God’s *mighty hand* as we would to the skillful hands of a surgeon.

This is because God often uses affliction to eliminate spiritually harmful things, such as pride, from our

lives. We are to endure affliction without becoming bitter or mad at God *that he may exalt us in due time* ([5:6b](#)).

How does Jesus express this principle in [Luke 14:11](#)?

Now we come to one of the most wonderful promises in the Bible. It is given to those who have a **stirring witness**, a **serving spirit**, and a **submissive attitude** when life is tough.

The promise is found in [1 Peter 5:7](#). Write it below:

The word translated **care** means “to be drawn in different directions.” It refers to worries that are pulling us apart and having a debilitating effect.

The verb **casting** is the idea of throwing our cares to the Lord and leaving them there.

Too many of us cast our burdens, like we do a fishing line, and reel them back. However, we are to cast them to the Lord and leave them there. It is important to understand we cast our anxieties, not our troubles. God may not take the problem away, but we can give Him our worries about it, because He cares for us. Peter’s words are reminiscent of what promise given in [Psalm 55:22b-c](#), if we cast our burdens on the Lord?

We can cast all our cares on the Lord because He is genuinely concerned about us all the time, even when life is tough.

However, when life is tough, God does require

A STIRRING WITNESS,

A SERVING SPIRIT, AND

A SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDE.