

- **Main Passage:** 1 Peter 5:1-11
 - **Purpose:** To consider the need for men of God to be mentored by more mature believers and to be investing in younger believers.
 - **Session Snapshot:** The Body of Christ is intended to function so that believers are strengthened and encouraged by other believers. In this passage, Peter encourages the men of God who are supposed to be leading the Church and reminds them of their responsibility to shepherd younger believers. If we want to continue maturing in Christ, we need other believers to pour into us. As we continue to mature ourselves, we need to seek opportunities to pour into other believers. When we lack these types of relationships in our lives, we are setting ourselves up to be attacked by our adversary, the devil.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 5 of their video series on Peter and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Why do you think most young men don't have a mentor-type relationship in their life?**
- **Why is it so important for younger men to be mentored? Isn't Scripture enough to train up a man in the faith?**
- **What are some ways an older man can help or encourage a younger man through mentorship?**

- Can you think of someone who poured into you or invested in your life? Looking back on that relationship, what did that person do that made that relationship special?
- On the flip side, can you think of someone who had the opportunity to be a positive role model but instead used that role to be "domineering"? Maybe a coach, teacher, or a parental figure?
- Thinking about those two different types of role models, what would you say are the most important qualities for a mentor to have?
- In addition to having mentor-type relationships (with an older or younger person), why is it also important to have healthy peer-to-peer relationships? What was Rick's warning about who the roaring lion goes after? Have you seen that play out?
- Why does Rick (and his wife) suggest that some men will be great only after they have suffered for a while? How does that thought make you feel?

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- Most of us can probably think of some of the positive role models who have influenced us in our faith journey. As we spend a few minutes studying this passage, we're going to consider the importance of godly mentorship as we see Peter urging the men of God to invest in the lives of others.

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at 1 Peter 5:1-11. As Rick stated in the video, Peter is now an older man with much wisdom to dispense. In this study, we're going to specifically focus on his appeal for the older men to invest in the younger men while also considering his warning for what happens when these relationships are absent.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** 1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.
- **Timeframe:** 1 Peter was likely written between 54-68 AD.
- **Purpose:** 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God's promises to His people will endure and should be the basis of their hope.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read 1 Peter 5:1-4. When the volunteer has finished, direct your group in a brief discussion of these verses. Say something like:

- **What is the main appeal that Peter is giving here? What imagery does this convey?**
 - *Answer:* His main charge is to "shepherd the flock." The concept of a flock reminds us of those helpless sheep out in the field who would not make it long if left on their own. They need protection and direction lest they wander aimlessly or into danger. Are we not also prone to wander away from the straight and narrow path to which God has called us?

- **What are the main roles of a shepherd taking care of their flock, and how does this translate to the church?**
 - Answers will vary. Peter probably remembers the specific instructions he received from the Lord in John 21, where Jesus tells him to "feed my sheep" and "tend my sheep." Feeding the sheep means making sure they are well-nourished on the Word of God, and tending means supervising them with tender pastoral oversight and love. No believer should ever be left on their own as a lone sheep in the wilderness.
- **Why did Peter have to give some of the clarifications (things NOT to do) along with this appeal? How are these warnings still relevant in the church today??**
 - Answers: "Not under compulsion" is a warning against laziness. How many men could be doing so much more for the kingdom? "Not for shameful gain" is a warning against people who are in ministry for the wrong reasons, pursuing some personal gain or status instead of finding joy in serving God and in the ministry itself. "Not domineering" is a warning against an ungodly character that harms (or even invalidates) our efforts to point others to holiness.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **We know that in his younger years, Peter desperately needed help in his faith. He didn't truly understand who Jesus was, and he made many bumbling errors along the way. Had he not been surrounded by other godly men (and the Lord Himself!), Peter knows he could have stumbled into darkness and away from Christ. Years later, he is pleading with older, seasoned men in the church to make sure this doesn't happen to anyone else. We all have a responsibility to care for our brothers in the faith.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention back to 1 Peter 5:5-7 and have a volunteer read these three verses. Then, ask:

- **Why is it important for younger men to be under the leadership of older men?**
 - Answers will vary. As Rick mentioned, some men may not look like babies but are still young in the faith. God's design is for older believers to pour into newer believers. Younger men must have the humility to recognize the need for oversight and support if they want to continue growing in godliness and persevere to the end of their lives with God-honoring faithfulness.
- **Peter says that God opposes the proud. How does this warning teach us about what God is looking for in His followers?**
 - Answers will vary. We should understand that there is no place for pride in the heart of a Christ-follower. When we understand the depth of sin in our hearts, it should bring us to our knees in humility before God and others. We should never think we are better than anyone else, and we should recognize our need for support within the Body of Christ.
- **What does humility have to do with casting our anxieties on God?**
 - *Answer:* If our pride leads us to believe we can handle everything on our plates, we will never be dependent on God. Our pride wants to take credit ourselves for what only God can do. Truly humble men of God should be dependent on the Lord for both short-term and long-term provision. (And, as we have already seen, humble men of God should recognize their need for support from other believers as well.)

THEN, read the next two verses, 1 Peter 5:8-9. Peter has already urged the elders to be looking after the flock, and now he describes what happens when someone slips away from the protection and oversight of the flock. Explain to the group how Peter is continuing to draw from first-hand experience here. He knows that in our sin nature, we tend to reject any notion of needing help from others (or from God), and he also knows how the

devil takes advantage of this to take us down. If we want to resist the devil, we must be on guard. After reading verses 8-9, ask:

- **What comes to your mind when you imagine someone being sober-minded and watchful? What happens when we lack these qualities?**
 - Answers will vary. For some, this recalls the imagery of a guard keeping watch at nighttime, having to fight off weariness and distractions lest the enemy sneak through. Without sober-mindedness and watchfulness, sin will creep in and begin wreaking havoc in our lives. Many of us have experienced this.
- **Let's think about this practically. In what ways does the prowling, roaring, lion-like devil attempt to harm believers today?**
 - Answers will vary. Remind your group that the devil is not omnipotent and omnipresent like God, but that he is powerful and does have other spiritual forces that want to harm us. The enemy can attack our minds, causing us to doubt the promises of God or other biblical truth. The enemy can tempt us with sin, damaging our intimacy with God. The enemy loves to create fear, guilt, and shame in our lives, just as Adam and Eve experienced after the Fall when they attempted to withdraw from God.
- **If we took the threat of the devil seriously, how might that change the way we view Peter's entire exhortation in this chapter?**
 - Answers will vary. If we knew an enemy was lurking nearby, ready to pick us off at any chance, we would better understand our need for accountability, encouragement, or mentorship in the body of Christ. We are stronger together than we are alone. If we don't take this threat seriously and choose to remain on our own, we are walking into terrible danger.

FINALLY, read 1 Peter 5:10, the very next verse. After reading, say something like:

- **We are going to suffer and stumble at times; there's no doubt about it. That's why the God of all grace provided a Savior who paid for every one of our sins, not only those in the past but also those in the future. Verse 10 reminds us that the suffering is temporary, but the glory awaiting us is eternal. However, we must hold on until the end to attain that prize. We need strength and support from the Body of Christ to stand strong against the enemy's attacks. Let's not be men who are too prideful to admit our need for help. Instead, let's be men who humbly acknowledge our weakness by submitting to God's design in the Body of Christ for men to strengthen and support one another.**

Ask if there are any questions. If there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **After thinking through Peter's exhortation and warning, some of us need to consider, "Do I have a Godly mentor who is regularly speaking into my life? Or do I need to seek out someone?"**
- **Others of us need to look at the opposite side of that question. We need to ask, "Am I doing my job to invest in others in the body of Christ?"**

- Are there younger men (or students) in whom I can be investing? Who do I need to reach out to this week?"
- **Some of us need to consider if we are wrapped up in tremendous pride and entangled in sin that exposes us to the devil's attacks.**
 - We need to ask, "Am I being honest with God and with others about how I'm doing? Who do I need to be vulnerable with and admit my sin and struggles?"

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.