

☞ **1 Peter** *(opening slide)*

Review: God has offered us the deal of the ages! Since we have received such a great deal from God in salvation, we should be motivated to change our thinking and our behavior. This makes us peculiar people. Unlike many unbelievers, we show proper respect to those in authority and submit to their leadership. Our marriages are filled with love and respect and lots of kind words. Our friendships with other believers are marked by harmony and compassion as we follow the Lord together. Even our responses to those who mistreat us are different because of our faith in Jesus. We don't try to get even, but we keep on doing good and pursuing peace because we know that God is watching. And, we deal with problems and difficulties calmly and successfully because we know that ultimately God is in control.

☞ **Framework for the Flock**

1 Peter 5:1-11

1. ☞ Be Faithful

Elder = mature leader. This word is used throughout the New Testament interchangeably with pastor, bishop and overseer. So, Peter is primarily referring to the acknowledged leaders of the church.

☞ The **ministry** of church leaders is **shepherding the flock**.

Contrast with cattle ranching (driving); dictating; etc.

A shepherd leads and feeds. He disciplines and directs. The shepherd is to be an overseer and a leader. Jesus talked about shepherds in John 10...

John 10:2

The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

This refers to a calling for pastoral ministry. It's not just for those who like the idea, but for those whom Jesus calls. (Jesus is the gate).

John 10:3-4

the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Church leaders are looking ahead and leading. They know their followers and they speak in a way that inspires the flock to follow. Psalm 23 also refers to the shepherd having a rod and staff. Each has a purpose. The staff is used to guide and rescue, while the rod can be used for correction. This is all part of Christian leadership.

☞ **Their motive is a willing heart.**

It's not just a job; it's not about getting wealthy off the sheep; it's not about wielding power; it's about leading under the lordship of Christ, with an eye on what's best for the flock as a whole.

They lead under the Chief Shepherd, Jesus. He will reward with a crown of glory that will never fade. Contrast with temporal things: success comes and goes; etc.

☞ **Their manner is loving leadership.**

Contrast with lording it over the followers; being a dictator; heavy-handed; etc.

Titus 1:7-9

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — *not overbearing, not quick-tempered*, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. **8** Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is *self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined*. **9** He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can *encourage others* by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Church leaders set an example for the followers. Their primary role is setting a godly example for the flock. One of our Plumb lines is “we value character over charisma.” They don't demand respect; they deserve it by their godly lifestyle and anointing.

1 Timothy 4:12-13

set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. **13** Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Their primary responsibility is the ministry of the Word. There are a lot of ideas about what Christian leaders, especially pastors, are supposed to do.

The Perfect Pastor... From what I've seen in many churches, this church joke is only a slight exaggeration! The Perfect Pastor preaches exactly 10 minutes. He condemns sin roundly, but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 a.m. until midnight, and is also the church janitor.

The Perfect Pastor makes \$40 a week, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, and donates \$30 a week to the church. He is 29 years old and has 40 years worth of experience. Above all, he is handsome.

The Perfect Pastor has a burning desire to work with teenagers, and he spends most of his time with the senior citizens. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his church. He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office to be handy when needed.

The Perfect Pastor always has time for church meetings and all of its committees, never missing the meeting of any church organization. And he is always busy evangelizing the unchurched.

But the bible puts the emphasis on preaching and teaching. Leaders are to be faithful examples who adhere to God's Word. And, faithfulness is a quality for all believers to aspire to. Be dependable; reliable; steadfast; be faithful.

2. 📖 Be Humble

This refers specifically to young people, but can apply to all as followers in the flock.

Humility is seeing yourself like God sees you; no more, no less.

The closer we get to God, the more modest we shall become. (It's all about comparing ourselves to Christ instead of others).

📖 Humility includes compliance.

If leaders are faithful to God and his word, then others are going to have to follow.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

📖 Humility includes consideration.

Romans 12:10

be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Humility is not so much about thinking less of yourself, as it is thinking of yourself less.

📖 Humility is like clothing. Without it you're naked in God's eyes.

Colossians 3:12

as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

These things are supposed to be as important as wearing clothing in public.

☞ **Humility is cherished by God.**

Isaiah 66:2

This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Isaiah 57:15

I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit

We are called to be faithful and humble...

3. ☞ Be Watchful

Peter knew better than most how the enemy prowls around.

Luke 22:31-32

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. **32** But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

So, Peter is now fulfilling that prayer with his words to us. We know the devil is a slanderer. And, Satan is our adversary, which means he "accuses us in court." He comes as a serpent to deceive or as a lion to devour. He wants to ruin us.

☞ **So, we must be ready.** That is, self-controlled and alert. No letting the guard down. When David left the battle and let down his guard, he fell into sin.

☞ **We must resist the enemy.** (and replace sinful behavior with godliness)

James 4:7-8

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Come near to God and he will come near to you.

☞ **We must be resolved to hold on to faith.**

Philippians 1:27

stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

John 8:44 (Satan's primary weapon is lies)

When he (Satan) lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Romans 10:17 (So, we must know and grow in the truth of God's Word)

faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

In Matthew 4, the devil twisted the truth to tempt Jesus. But Jesus repeatedly responded with, "It is written." And, Romans 12 talks about "renewing our minds." This occurs as we furnish our minds with the truth in God's Word.

☞ **We must remember we're not alone.** Others around the world go through the same and often worse difficulties than we face. And, Jesus predicted this would happen.

Satan wants us to feel isolated and alone. In fact, this is one of his strategies. He uses offense and conflict within the flock to separate and isolate us, making us much more vulnerable to his ploys. I've seen this much too often... someone gets upset and leaves the church... but this is so often exactly what the enemy wants to happen. You are much more vulnerable when you're alone. We need each other.

☞ **We remember also that God will restore us.** He will make us strong, firm and steadfast. Yes, we all go through difficult times, but we know that God has great things in store for us if we'll hang in there. He gives grace to his people. And even this framework we're talking about today: faithfulness, humility, watchfulness... God gives us grace for all of these things.

His grace is given to those who recognize their need for it.

2 Corinthians 12:9

he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

☞ So, let's **ask God and by his grace**, let's be... **Faithful; Humble; and Watchful.**