

• How to find the pathway of humility

• Deliberate self-humiliation

**1. An instruction: 'Humble yourselves'**

• Persecution – opportunities for self-humbling

• Quarrels

• Injustice

• It is God who provides the opportunity for humility

• Then we humble ourselves

**2. A promise: '...in order that at the right time he may exalt you'**

• Humility will be rewarded with exultation

• But some conditions have to be met

The quotation from Proverbs 3:34 in 1 Peter 5:5 leads him to tell the Christians how to find the pathway of humility. It is a matter of deliberate self-humiliation.

*'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, in order that at the right time he may exalt you'*<sup>1</sup>. *Cast all your anxieties upon him, because it matters to him concerning you'*<sup>2</sup>.

1 5:6  
2 5:7

He gives an instruction and a promise, then another instruction and another promise.

1. First comes an instruction: *'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God...'*

Humility is a matter of humbling ourselves. There will be hundreds of situations in which we shall find opportunity to do so. Peter's people were suffering some persecution – and it was likely to get worse. No situation provides more opportunities for self-humbling.

Every time there is a quarrel there is opportunity for humility. One can leave aside the quarrel without proving one's point. One can let the other person have the last word.

Every time there is injustice there is an opportunity for humility. One can refuse resentment, one can repay ill-treatment with friendliness and outgoing concern.

It is God who provides the opportunities for humility. 'How can I be humble?' we ask. Putting on a disguise of humility is not the answer! Pretending to be nothing and nobody is simply inverted pride – even pride of one's humility! Actually it is God who provides hundreds of opportunities for humility. He has a habit of putting us in a situation where the way we react leads to pride or to humility. Then we humble ourselves under what He is doing to us. We can try to push ourselves into a place of honour (like the man in Luke 12:8) or we can take the position that has no special honour attached to it. What shall we do? Jesus says: 'Do not sit down in a place of honour'.

2. Next comes a promise: *'... in order that at the right time he may exalt you'*<sup>1</sup>.

1 5:6

Humility will be rewarded with exaltation. Sooner or later God will say to us, 'Friend, go up higher' and you will be honoured. God's promise helps us when we find ourselves in painfully humiliating circumstances. When it is agonizingly difficult to hold back the sharp word, when the other person is obviously acting in foolishness or hostility but is quite unreasonable, when the persecutor clearly has no intentions of showing any mercy – then we keep quiet and humble ourselves. *'When he was insulted, he did not insult the other person; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he trusted him who judges justly'*<sup>1</sup>.

1 2:23

We shall be exalted! But some conditions have to be met. (i) We have to humble ourselves first without the slightest attempt to exalt ourselves. (ii) We have to allow the exaltation come in God's way. Peter says *'...that He may exalt you'*. (iii) We have to let the exaltation come in God's time. It may not come just yet, maybe not even until the judgement seat of Christ. But that should be enough to satisfy us.

**3. Another instruction: 'Cast all your anxieties upon him'**

• Peter sees a link between pride and anxiety

• Self-concern

• 'Casting' means throwing

• All our anxieties

**4. Another promise: 'since he is concerned about you'**

• God is deeply concerned about all the very things that cause us anxiety

• He wants to satisfy me with His plan for my life

3. Next comes another instruction. It is not a new command ('Cast all your anxieties upon him. . .') but it links tightly with the previous command: 'Humble yourselves... in order that . . . he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties upon him, because it matters to him concerning you'<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 5:7

Peter sees a link between pride and anxiety, and therefore between humility and deliverance from anxiety. Much of our pride stems from anxiety, so as we humble ourselves, at the same time we are to cast our anxiety upon God.

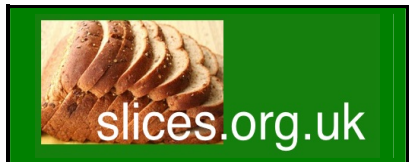
Why are we proud, selfish and arrogant? Because we are full of self-concern. We have anxieties about ourselves. We become distressed over how well our reputation is doing, how much we are getting our own way, how secure we are in our finances and possessions. It is anxiety about such matters that makes us edgy, hostile, boastful, overbearing. So if we are to humble ourselves it is necessary that we find a cure for our self-concern. Peter has the remedy: 'casting all your anxieties upon him'.

Two words need our special attention: 'casting'. It means 'throwing' (as in Luke 19:35, 'throwing their cloaks on its back'). It speaks of something firm and decisive. We are to utterly refuse self-concern and anxiety, drastically throwing our anxiety into the hands of Jesus. Having done so, we refuse to take it back again!

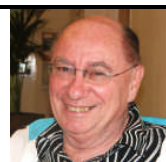
And Peter says 'all'. All our anxieties are to be surrendered to Him! There is no pathway to humility otherwise. Self-concern will produce pride. Release from anxiety opens up the route to humility.

4. Lastly, there comes another promise, a reassurance: 'since he is concerned about you'<sup>1</sup>. At the bottom of all pride is self-concern, and at the bottom of all self-concern is the fear that God is not concerned about us. But amazingly, God is deeply concerned about all of the very things that cause us anxiety. Because of God's greatness and holiness we feel that He cannot really be concerned about us. 'How can the God who is so great bother about me?' we ask. And how can One who is so pure and right, not be vexed and irritated by people like us who are so weak and corrupt? And yet we need have no fears about the matter. He provides for sparrows; He will provide for me. He clothes the flowers of the field; He will clothe me also. Since I am flawed and fallen, He has plans to recreate me. The very things that make me so self-concerned, He makes His concern. He is concerned about my reputation; He wants to give me glory. He is concerned about fulfilment; He wants to satisfy me with His plan for my life. He is concerned about finances and possessions; He wants to meet every need as I do His will. I need not bother about arrogance, for He is committed to me and that satisfies my every concern.

<sup>1</sup> 5:7



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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