

• *Speaking to different sections*

1. A final word to the elders

• *Encouragement and incentives – Jesus' coming and the hope of reward*

• *Jesus is the 'Chief Shepherd'*

• *A victor's crown – high praise from Jesus*

• *For those who overcome*

2. A word to the younger people

• *In the Bible old age is respected*

• *The old have had years of experience*

• *Teamwork between young and not-so-young*

Peter is still speaking to the elders and to different sections of the congregations that are led by them.

1. First comes a **final word to the elders**^{□1}. '*And when the Chief Shepherd appears you will obtain the unfading crown of glory*'^{□1}. It is the way of the Bible, everywhere, to give us encouragement and incentives towards living the godly life. Peter has warned that elders may be lazy, greedy and inconsistent. Yet he does not abandon such people; neither does he question their salvation. He simply urges them to be willing, eager and contented. Then he puts before them the facts of Jesus' coming and the hope of reward.

Jesus is 'the Chief Shepherd'. God does not ask any elder to do anything that He has not already asked from His own Son. Jesus has been, and still is, the Great Pastor, more so than anyone else ever. He is the 'good shepherd' and has laid down His life for the sheep. Jesus has been all that a pastor should be: sacrificial, wise, tender-hearted, patient, willing, eager, content to do God's will. Jesus has been all of these things to us, many times over. No Christian is totally without a pastor to care for him, because Jesus Himself is the chief pastor who shepherds all of His people. Every pastor has a Pastor.

Soon Jesus will appear, visibly, gloriously, and majestically. When He comes those elders who have done their work willingly, eagerly, with consistency and contentment, will receive their victors' crown. Peter does not say precisely what the crown is. Certainly it is a matter of receiving high praise from Jesus. It is a visible indication (like the victor at an athletics competition) that he has overcome the conflicts and adversities in the way of godly living, and in the way of his ministry. Conquerors' crowns are for those who overcome adversities, obstacles, and sufferings.

2. Next comes a **word to the younger people**^{□1}. He says, '*Likewise, younger men, submit yourselves to the older people...*' (the Greek word for 'elder' is still used, but now it does not have a technical meaning; it simply means 'older person').

In the Bible old age is respected. Young people – Peter probably has in view people in their twenties and thirties – are asked to submit themselves to the older people. There are some good reasons for this (in addition to the fact that it is God's command). The older people may not have the energy that the younger people have. Also they may get a bit traditional and stuck in their ways. Yet they are still to be respected. They have had years of experience and they know that some of the ideals of the younger ones are simply unrealistic theories that will soon be disproved.

The church will be at its best if there is teamwork between young and not-so-young, with the younger people providing energy and zeal and the older folk providing wise leadership, restraint of wildness, and a cool head when there is opposition.

The church is at its best, not when different groups get on with their own thing, but when different groups contribute their different gifts to the supreme tasks of witnessing to the world and building up the church.

□1 5:4

□1 5:5a

• Different groups contribute their different gifts

3. A word to everyone

• Humility

• A choice

• The pathway to lowliness

• To be oppressed

• To serve

• To be despised
• God resists the arrogant person

• Anyone who likes admiration too much is likely to be humbled

Within the team the older folk are to be leaders and guides, but the younger folk are indispensable.

3. Next comes a **word to everyone**^{□1}. ‘...and all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another...’ The older folk lead; the younger folk have energy but must stay respectful to others. But everyone is to show humility towards everyone else – as Peter has already said^{□2}.

The best way to understand humility is simply to consider Jesus. He was conscious of His humility^{□1}. If He could say ‘I am gentle and humble...’, how could He do so without pride? He could do so because for Him, humility was a choice! He knew that in a thousand situations He would choose the pathway of lowliness. He knew He would refuse to be resentful because of insult. He knew He would choose the lowly position. Humility does not contradict the ‘sober judgement’ of Romans 12:3. It is not pretending to be of little worth or significance. That is just pride! It is rather choosing to be oppressed rather than to oppress, to be despised rather than to despise others, to minister rather than to be ministered to (although to be ministered to may also require humility!) The story of John 13:1–20 is one illustration of humility. It took deliberate lowliness for Jesus to choose to do a servant’s work. It took some humility for Peter to allow himself to be served by Jesus^{□2}. Peter says: ‘clothe yourselves’. The royal robe that the Christian puts on is not the demeanour of a pope or emperor or monarch or dictator. He puts on the deliberate indications that he regards himself as no better than anyone else.

There comes a **final word of explanation**^{□1}. Peter continues: ‘... because God resists the arrogant person but he gives grace to the humble’^{□2}.

It is a quotation from Proverbs 3:34. This should motivate the Christian towards humility. He will be setting up against God if he or she continues in pride or arrogance. God has a habit of bringing failure into the lives of the proud and defeating their intentions and hopes. ‘He has brought down rulers from their thrones’, says Luke’s Gospel, ‘and has exalted those who were humble’^{□1}. Nebuchadnezzar walked around his palace and thought how marvellous he was. The slightest hint of any Nebuchadnezzar-like attitudes will produce disaster. Nebuchadnezzar himself learnt it; he lost what he prided himself on the most, his kingdom and his cleverness^{□2}. Anyone who likes admiration too much is likely to be humbled.

□1 5:5b

□2 see 3:8

□1 Matthew 11:29

□2 see John 13:8

□1 5:5c

□2 5:5

□1 Luke 1:52

□2 see Daniel 4:29-33



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