

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

Chapter 4 - Read 1 Peter 5:1 – 14

Introduction: Peter launches his epistle in **1 Peter 5** in the first four verses addressing the need for spiritual shepherding over God’s sheep / people. “It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep,” wrote W. Phillip Keller. “The behavior of sheep and human beings are similar in many ways.... Sheep do not ‘just take care of themselves’ as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.” For example, God has created most animals with an uncanny instinct to find their way home. But if sheep stray into unfamiliar territory, they become completely disoriented and cannot find their way back home, as in the Lord’s poignant parable of the lost sheep in **Luke 15:3 - 7**. Sheep need a shepherd to **guide them, provide for them, protect them**, and sometimes also to **rescue them** from harm.

Sheep spend most of their time eating and drinking. But if they become lost, they are helpless to find adequate food and water. Left to themselves, sheep will indiscriminately eat both healthy and poisonous plants, or overgraze and ruin their own pasture. And they need to be led to water that is not impure and stagnant, not too hot or too cold, and water that is not moving too rapidly. That is why the psalmist refers to “**quiet waters**” in **Psalms 23:2**. Sheep are much in need of other assistance as well. Because their wool conceals a large volume of oily fat that permeates their fleece, much dirt, grass, and wind-blown debris clings to it. Since they have no ability to clean themselves, they remain soiled until the shepherd shears them. Between shearing that dirty, sticky accumulation must be cut away from under their tails or they cannot eliminate waste and become sick and even die. Because sheep also are naturally passive and virtually defenseless against predators, and when attacked their only recourse is to flee in panic, the shepherd must be continually on guard to defend and rescue the sheep from attack.

It is not surprising, then, that Jesus likened the disoriented, confused, unclean, and spiritually lost crowds to flocks of sheep without shepherds in **Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34** **Read**. They could not feed themselves spiritually and had no one to lead and protect them. The prophet Isaiah also compared humanity’s lost condition to that of stray sheep in **Isa. 53:6** when he says, “**All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.**”

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

All the preceding imagery about sheep and shepherds was familiar to the people in the first century’s primarily agricultural society, but it still needs to be borne in the minds of people today if they are to understand the richness of this passage. Certainly Peter understood the imagery when he called believers **the flock of God** and commanded pastors to **shepherd** them. Since even believers are prone to wandering, **taking in what is bad for them, becoming unclean, and are highly vulnerable, defenseless on their own, and often naive**, they too need shepherds who are faithful, responsible and convincing. And when the church is under severe persecution, as it was in Peter’s day, it is even more vulnerable and in greater need of strong, godly, effective shepherds. Here Peter writes to the elders of various churches in Asia Minor and to church elders of all eras, issuing several fundamental and crucial commands concerning shepherding. These commands may be understood by asking four basic questions of this passage: **What are the issues in shepherding? Who must be shepherded? How must shepherding be done? Why should shepherds serve?**

1 Pet. 5:1 – 3 “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

1 Pet. 5:1 – 3 NLT “And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.”

- The word “**Therefore**” refers back to the fact that this epistle’s recipients were suffering persecution and being attacked for righteousness’ sake. That reality led Peter to **exhort the elders** to shepherd their troubled, struggling sheep. The first and obvious point to

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
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note here is that the Holy Spirit affirms that such spiritual leadership and responsibility for the church belongs to **elders**. That is unmistakable and consistent in the New Testament books dealing with the church. The first mention of elders is in **Acts 11:30**, where the writer Luke identifies them as the leaders of the Jerusalem church. **Read Acts 11:30** Subsequent references to Elders are found in **Acts 14:23; 15:4, 6, 22, 23** **Read** which continue to make clear their role. In **1 Tim. 5:17** Paul identifies them as those who rule well while laboring “in the word and doctrine.” **Titus 1:5** establishes that elders were to lead every church in every city. The qualifications for elders appear in **1 Tim. 3:1 - 7** and **Titus 1:5 - 9. (Read)**

- Peter writes “**I exhort the elders among you...**” The word “**exhort**” from the word **parakaleō** literally means, **to call alongside**, or in the general sense, **to encourage or compel someone in a certain direction**. The related noun is often associated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Here Peter directs his appeal to **the elders**, who are the Lord’s appointed and gifted leaders of the church. There are three New Testament terms used interchangeably to refer to these leaders: **ELDER** from **presbuterion**; **1 Tim. 5:19**, **BISHOP** or **OVERSEER** from **episkopos**; **Read Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2**, and **PASTOR** from **poimēn**; **Read Eph. 4:11**. **Elder** emphasizes the **spiritual maturity** necessary for such ministry, and in many Protestant churches it is the **official title chosen for the office**. **Bishop**, or **overseer**, states the general **responsibility of guardianship**. **Pastor** is the word **shepherd** and expresses the **priority duty of feeding or teaching the truth of God’s Word**.
- The Old Testament is filled with references to elders in Israel. The New Testament also indicates elders were still important in Jewish society in those days. Each synagogue had its ruling elders who held leadership duties and were responsible for teaching. The early church broadly adopted a similar model, appointing a plurality of godly and gifted men to lead, guard, and feed each local congregation. It was their responsibility to proclaim the truth so as to build up the people and protect them against sin and error, while always being the highest examples of godliness to the flock. It is significant that Peter used the plural, **elders**. In reference to this ministry, the term always appears in the plural in the New Testament, affirming that the office was designed for a plurality of leaders.

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

- Peter includes some compelling motivation in this exhortation for leaders to **shepherd**. First, the respected apostle humbly identified with them, calling himself a **fellow elder**. Rather than take advantage of their respect for him as an apostle and elevate himself, he empathized with their task as one who understood the challenges and difficulties inherent in shepherding. Peter also reminded them that he was a **witness of the sufferings of Christ**. That he had seen the suffering and risen Christ affirmed the reality of his apostolic identity and gave him authority. The word **witness** from **martus** has a twofold meaning: **one who personally** saw and experienced something, and **one who testified to what he saw**. Because so many who gave testimony to their experiences with Christ were killed, the term **martyred** came to refer to one who was killed for being a Christian witness. In Peter's case, his being a **witness** to the sufferings of Jesus along with his fellow apostles, and being commissioned to proclaim those sufferings, to declare the gospel message, made him a trustworthy source to encourage the elders to their duty. The Lord's redemptive work was a primary focus in Peter's preaching, and a major theme in this letter.
- In the **b-portion of verse 1** Peter's mention of future glory is motivated by anticipation. As one who was **a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed**, Peter could offer the other elders the genuine hope of an eternal reward for their faithful service. **The glory that is to be revealed** looks at the return of Christ when He comes in full expression of His glory to destroy the ungodly, reward His own, and establish His kingdom forever. Peter says he is **a partaker also** in that ultimate blessing, indicating that so are the elders. That believers share in eternal glory with our Lord is the essence of our hope and that shepherds would one day receive that reward from Christ Himself should have been a powerful motivation to all of Peter's readers.
- In the **a-portion of verse 2** the text says, “... **shepherd the flock of God among you.**” / **NLT says, “Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you.**” This clearly states that elders have a serious delegated stewardship, to shepherd not their own flock, but **shepherd the flock of God**. Jesus Christ came to earth to redeem His church. After He ascended back to heaven, He sent His Spirit to empower His church with the necessary spiritual gifts and gifted leaders to shepherd the flock to Christlikeness. **Read Eph. 4:11 - 12** And the fact

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

that Christ purchased that flock with His own blood emphasizes the church's value to the Lord. In form, the term rendered **flock** here is a term of endearment, further stressing the preciousness of the church.

- The **b-portion** of **verse 2** says, “**exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness...**” / **NLT** says, “**Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.**” Here Peter answers the key question of how elders / pastors are to shepherd. He provides both positive and negative answers. First he says, “**exercising oversight**” which actually translates a single Greek word, **episkopeō**, which literally means “**to have scope over, or to look upon.**” The noun is **episkopos** which translates the title “bishop, or overseer” and speaks of a guardian. It's a clear connotation here in this first positive answer that shepherds must **watch over the sheep to assess their condition, so as to lead, guard, and feed them.**
- Also note that Biblical spiritual oversight involves avoiding three threats inherent in the shepherding task. The first danger Peter mentions is shepherding **not under compulsion**, but as a willing servant-leaders who minister **voluntarily**. The obvious point is that the shepherd must be diligent rather than lazy, heart motivated rather than forced to be faithful, and passionate about his privileged duty rather than indifferent. When the heart is fully Christ's and driven by love for Him and for souls, there is much internal pressure that precludes any need for external motivational pressure. Paul says that the service is to be **according to the will of God**, just as the Lord wills the unjust suffering that perfects His saints. Those who shepherd God's people should have no doubt about the diligence and seriousness with which they should fulfill their spiritual ministry of caring for the precious souls who are the Lord's, as they will give an account on day. **Heb. 13:17** says, “**Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.**”
- The second peril for shepherds to avoid is the temptation to be motivated by money or material benefits. The closing clause of **verse 2** says, “**and not for sordid gain, but**

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

with eagerness...” The words **sordid gain** actually go beyond just seeking wealth and speaks to the shameful acquisition of it. True shepherds will never use the ministry to steal the sheep’s money or acquire it dishonestly, like false prophets always do. Such despicable behavior is typical of false shepherds, the charlatans and heretics who masquerade as the servants of God, to make themselves rich and their victims destitute. In his second letter, Peter characterizes false teachers in vivid language in **2 Pet. 2:3** and says, **“In their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”** Read **Isa. 56:11; Jer. 6:13**

- On the other hand the basic scriptural qualifications for elders make it clear that they are characterized as a selfless servant committed to sacrifice and not preoccupied with money and materialism. That is not to say, however, that shepherds should not be properly compensated. Paul taught that those who minister the Word have a right to live by that ministry in **1 Cor. 9:7 - 14**. In fact, those elders who serve diligently, with greater commitment and excellence in teaching the Word and leading the sheep, should receive greater acknowledgment and more generous remuneration from their congregations.

Read 1 Tim. 5:17–18 True shepherds, instead, will eagerly rejoice at the privilege to serve at all personal costs. No true shepherd should need personal wealth to motivate him, but he should serve **with eagerness**. The words **with eagerness** from the word **prothumōs**, means, **willingly, freely, and eagerly** because of the high calling and privilege.

1 Pet. 5:3 says, **“... nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”**

1 Pet. 5:3 NLT says, **“Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.”**

- Finally, those called to shepherd can be endangered by the desire to sinfully dominate others. The words **nor yet as lording it over** implies intensity in domineering over people and circumstances. What Peter teaches here is any kind of autocratic, oppressive, and intimidating leadership, with elements of demagoguery traits that typically characterize the leadership style and methodology of unregenerate men, is a perversion of the overseer’s office. **Read Matt. 20:25 – 28**

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

- As if to further challenge elders with the weight of their responsibility, Peter adds a strong reminder that those who shepherd do not choose their responsibility, or those for whom they are responsible. Every shepherd has a flock **allotted to his charge**, meaning that which is given to another's care by the Lord Himself. The words, **allotted to your charge** from **klērōn** speaks of the **kleron call** on a shepherds life.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 3** it reveals the second positive way elders exercise oversight is by **proving to be examples to the flock**. Shepherds are to become sufficiently involved in the lives of the flock that they establish a godly pattern for the people to follow. The most important aspect of spiritual leadership and the best test of its effectiveness is the power of an exemplary life. **Read 2 Cor. 1:12 - 14; 2 Thess. 3:7 - 9** Paul even went so far as to exhort his sheep to be imitators of him in **1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6. Read**

1 Pet. 5:4 “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

1 Pet. 5:4 NLT “And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.”

- The title **Chief Shepherd** is one of the most beautiful titles for the Savior in all of Scripture. The shepherd imagery for Messiah first appears in the Old Testament. Then in **John 10:11**, John calls Jesus the Good Shepherd. The writer of Hebrews calls Christ the Great Shepherd in **Heb.13:20 - 21** Earlier in this letter in **1 Pet. 2:25**, Peter calls Him the Shepherd and Guardian of souls.
- Peter says, **“And when the Chief Shepherd appears...”** The word **appears** from **phaneroō** means, **to make manifest, to make clear, or to reveal**. Here, as in **1 Pet.5:1**, the reference is to Christ's revelation at the Second Coming, at which time shepherds **will receive the unfading crown of glory**. Note here in the Greco-Roman world of Peter's day, crowns rather than trophies were the awards for victory at athletic events. **Read 1 Cor. 9:24–25** Temporal crowns would eventually rust, fade, or, if made from plants, die quickly. Peter was not looking forward merely to some **unfading** version of an earthly **crown**, but metaphorically to a crown of eternal **glory**, which can never fade. The term **unfading** is from a word **amarantinos** and means the same thing as the name of the

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

flower **amaranth** that supposedly **never faded or lost its bloom**. Peter’s phrase here can be expressed **“the unfading crown that is glory.”** The **NLT** translates it **“... a crown of never-ending glory and honor.”** What this reveals is the reward of eternal glory ought to be all the reason any shepherd needs for desiring to serve faithfully. Shepherding the flock is a serious, sobering responsibility, and elders are accountable to God for their ministry, but there is a promise attached to it for those that do it God’s way. James was fully aware of that accountability when he wrote in **Jam. 3:1** the following warning: **“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”** James was not trying to discourage truly qualified and willing shepherds, but he only was reminding them of God’s high standards for them and of the reward they will receive before the judgment seat of Christ. Christ’s undershepherds face a daunting task, but faithful oversight brings eternal reward in the form of greater service and joy in the Lord’s heaven. **Matt. 25:23 says, “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”**

Transition: In the final verses of chapter 5 Peter reveals the fundamental attitude of a Christian mind. Note in this day and age the spirit of the times in Western society is one of anti-intellectualism. The emphasis is on mystical experiences rather than rational content. So many new religions are a major source of mindlessness and has influenced religion and philosophy in many ways. In the spirit of Hindu mysticism, New Age philosophy believes everything and nothing at the same time. Distinctions between the natural and supernatural tend to blend together in a fuzzy blur. Over the centuries—especially during the past century—that kind of perspective has found its way gradually, but steadily into the Church and Christendom. The Roman Catholic Church has always been deeply involved in mysticism, with rituals and ceremonies supplanting biblical worship and the proclamation of the true gospel. The charismatic movement too has blatantly been a spreader of mystical anti-intellectualism and spiritual subjectivism. The idea that there is no absolute truth and each person can develop his own view of truth based on intuition and experience, and one has a further concept of the extent to which this anti-intellectualism has pervaded today’s world. The foregoing systems reduce God to a detached, transcendent being, reachable and

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

knowable only through mystical experience or feeling, rather than revealed through facts and truth. The Bible is not viewed as the sole, inspired revelation of God, and it is seen as neither infallible nor authoritative. As a result, divine truth is ignored, moral absolutes of right and wrong disappear, and deception about one's true spiritual condition prevails. Such mystical mindlessness is the antithesis of how God is to be known. He never intended for His people to relate to Him without applying their minds to His revelation. True fellowship and worship must be based on a clear, precise understanding of biblical truth. Through the psalmist David, God declared in **Ps. 32:8 - 9**, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.”**

- God has always been concerned that believers use their redeemed minds to search the Scriptures in order to know Him and become conformed to the image of His Son. The apostle Paul told the Philippians in **Phil. 1:9 - 10**, **“This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.”** Peter also called believers to use their minds to understand God's truth and apply it to their lives in **2 Peter 1:5** when he says, **“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge...”**
- The Lord is also concerned about the condition of the unregenerate mind. **Read Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 4:17; Rom. 8:5 – 8**
- On another note if Christians will have a careless or superficial approach to the truth of Scripture, their minds cannot be filled with the divine thoughts that should shape and control their conduct. It is crucial that believers continually take in the truth, as **Prov. 23:7** says, **“For as [a man] thinks within himself, so he is.”** With all that being said, there is still the danger of assuming that spiritual thinking is simply processing information so as to intellectually understand doctrine, when in contrast, spiritual thinking involves far more. It includes all the attitudes, convictions, and motivations that lead to application of doctrinal truth. In the final section of this letter, Peter addresses the godly attitudes so necessary to produce a spiritual mind. In a closing litany of

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

exhortations and some final words, the apostle leads his readers to consider essential Christian attitudes, submission, humility, trust, self-control, vigilance, fortitude, hope, worship, faithfulness, and love.

1 Pet. 5:5 “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Pet. 5:5 NLT “In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- Peter here uses the word **likewise** as a transition word. The **NLT** renders the word “**in the same way.**” The word marks a change of focus from one group to another. In **1 Peter 5:1 - 4** Peter addressed **church leaders**; now he turns and addresses the **church congregation**. As shepherds submit to the Chief Shepherd, so also the flock is to submit to their shepherds. The foundational attitude in the life of the saint must be **submission**. As in **chapters 2 & 3** where Peter commanded believers to be submissive to employers, civil authorities, and within marriage. Here in **chapter 5** it reveals it is no less required of those under the leadership of the divinely instituted office of pastor in the most important entity on earth, Christ’s own church.
- While no believer is exempt from Peter’s exhortation that everyone is to be submissive to their **elders**, he targets specifically the **younger men**. Though it is not stated in the context why he singled them out, probably he did so because it is so obvious that they generally tend to be the most aggressive and headstrong members of any group. The matter of submission would not likely have been as much of an issue for the women or older people in the church; they were more experienced and more spiritually mature. In calling the young to **be subject** to those over them in the Lord, Peter again used the military term **hupotassō**, which means “**to line up under.**” Here he calls everyone in the church to put aside self-promoting pride and willingly and respectfully place themselves under the leadership of their shepherds. Clearly, given the previous context, **elders** refers to the spiritual leaders, the shepherds and pastors, not merely to older

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

saints. That the entire church has the obligation to submit to those God has placed in authority over it. **Read 1 Cor. 16:15–16 NLT**

- In the **b-portion** of **verse 5** Peter gives further instructions and says, **“and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...”** The word **clothe** literally means **“to tie something on oneself,”** such as **a work apron worn by servants.** Here it describes figuratively **covering oneself with an attitude of humility** as one submits to authorities over him. The word **humility** here speaks of and can be described as a **“lowliness of mind, self-abasement, or humbling.”** It describes the attitude of one who willingly serves, even in the lowliest of tasks. Humility was not an admired trait in the first-century pagan world as people saw it as a characteristic of weakness and cowardice. **Read John 13:3 - 17**
- Then in the **c-portion** of **verse 5** to reinforce his exhortation for **humility**, Peter quotes from **Proverbs 3:34** and says, **“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”** Without question, that the Lord **is opposed to the proud** is the greatest motivation for saints to adopt the attitude of humility. Pride sets one against God and vice versa. On the other hand, God blesses and **gives grace to the humble.** **Read Isa. 57:15 NLT; 2 Cor. 12:7 - 10**

1 Pet. 5:6 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,”

1 Pet. 5:6 NLT says, “So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.”

- Here in **verse 6** Peter gives the forceful command to these believers to **humble themselves.** Because of what he has already said, he says, **“Therefore humble yourselves”** in submission, not only to avoid divine opposition and to receive divine grace, but because the authority over all believers in the church is none other than **“the mighty hand of God.”** The **mighty hand of God** here is a description of God’s sovereign power at work in and through the elders / pastors of the church, as well as in the life experience of His people. Whether for deliverance, testing, or chastening, God’s hand of might is always accomplishing His eternal purposes on behalf of His own

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

people. Here in their time of persecution, suffering, and testing, that assurance would surely encourage Peter’s audience to persevere, knowing that all their suffering is only so that **He may exalt them at the proper time**. What this promises is God will **exalt, He will raise or lift up** believers out of their trials, tribulations, and sufferings at His wisely determined time. Even as Jesus was born at the **appropriate time** and died a substitutionary death at the **exact time** God designed, and was **resurrected at the right time!** Those Peter commands to **humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, he promises they will be exalted at the right time**.

- Some have suggested that this exaltation could be a reference to the final eschatological glory that comes to believers at the Second Coming. However, the Greek phrase **en kairō** literally means, “**in time**” and is not an eschatological term. Therefore, it is better to see this as **the appointed time when the Lord will lift the humble and submissive believer up out of their difficulties**. What we can determine from this is the promise that our **persecution, trials, tribulations and troubles** have an **expiration date on them**. NLT translates the ending clause “**...at the right time he will lift you up in honor.**”
- On the flipside, if the foundational footing is anchored in an attitude of submission and humility for spiritual growth, then to become proud and rebellious, and to fight against the Lord’s purposes is on the opposite side of God. Note here to judge God’s providence as unkind or unfair is to forfeit the sweet grace of His exaltation when the trial one has experienced has fulfilled its purpose. It is the Lord Jesus Himself who promised in **Luke 14:11**, “**Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**”

1 Pet. 5:7 “...casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

1 Pet. 5:7 NLT “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”

- In **verse 7** Peter teaches as believers endure **humbly and submissively**, they will find their strength in the midst of their trials, by means of **confidently trusting in God’s perfect purpose**. Peter says, “**...casting all your anxiety on Him**” or “**Give all your worries and cares to God...**”

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

- Peter here uses the word **casting** from the word **epiriptō** which means, **to throw something on something else or someone else**. Here he exhorts believers to throw on the Lord **all** their **anxiety / worries**, a word that can include **all discontentment, discouragement, despair, questioning, pain, suffering**, and **whatever other trials they encounter** because **He cares** and they can trust His love, faithfulness, power, and wisdom. **Read 2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 9:10; Prov. 3:5 - 6; Isa. 26:4; Phil. 4:6 – 7**
- The psalmist David is surely a good example of one who trusted God, and the apostle Peter must have known his words well. **Ps. 55:22 says, “Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.”** Peter drew from that text to instruct all believers in all kinds of trouble to follow David’s example and give themselves to the Lord’s care.

1 Pet. 5:8 “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

1 Pet. 5:8 NLT “Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”

- The opening command in **verse 8 “Be of sober spirit”** calls for another basic element of godly thinking, which Peter mentioned earlier in **1 Pet. 1:13** and **1 Pet. 4:7**. The word **sober** from **nēphō** used here **refers to self-control in relation to intoxication** on a physical level. Here, as in its other New Testament usages, it has a more metaphorical connotation including ordering and balancing life’s important issues, which requires the discipline of mind and body that avoids the intoxicating allurements of the world. **Read Rom. 13:14; Col. 3:2; Titus 2:11 – 12** The bottom line here is these words speak of having self-control.
- But then in the **b-portion** of **verse 8** Peter says, **“... be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** The reason Christians must cultivate the preceding attitudes of submission, humility, trust, and self-control is that they face fierce and relentless spiritual opposition from Satan and his demons. Believers must not become indifferent to that reality, lest they fall prey to the enemy. Instead, the realities of spiritual warfare call for vigilance. Peter here

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

urges believers **“to be on the alert”**, which is an imperative command that means **“be watchful,” or, “stay awake.”** He says this because the spiritual forces that assault Christians, not only attack directly but often very subtly, which demands that we who love Christ maintain watchfulness, attentiveness, and alertness. The Lord warned His disciples in **Matt. 26:41** instructing them, **“Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

- In the next clause Peter identifies Satan as **“your adversary, the devil”**, the pronoun **your** makes the designation a very personal one. Satan is not only the **adversary** of God and His holy angels, but he is also the vicious, malicious and relentless enemy of all of God’s people. The term **adversary** from **antidikos** was used as a technical term meaning **“legal opponent,”** as well as any **kind of enemy who was seriously and aggressively hostile**. Then the term rendered **devil** from **diabolos** takes his opposition to another level and can be described as a **“malicious enemy who slanders or attacks.”** Jesus called the devil the ruler of this world, which shows his difficult and formidable platform from which he launches his malicious and spiteful assaults. The devil commands the demonic realm and administrates the human, fallen world system. He does this personally and through his surrogate demons, who like him never sleep nor rest.
- In the last clause **of verse 8** it reveals Satan untiringly, like a predator in the night of his own evil darkness, hunts to kill. Peter writes , he **“prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** Peter’s imagery of **a roaring lion** gives a pictures of a vicious lion hunting and pursuing his prey. **Read Ps. 7:2; Ps. 10:9 - 10; Ps. 17:12** The word **devour** from **katapino** means **to swallow up or to gulp down**, emphasizing the final objective, which is not to wound but **to destroy**. Peter would not have had the experience of seeing lions in a zoo, but he might have seen the gory spectacle of lions slaughtering victims for the entertainment of the Romans. Certainly he knew of such events. Satan’s opposition to God and believers is behind the human enemies of God and His Word. The demons who are not bound are the sinister, diabolical forces behind the world system. God’s children, in their struggle against deception and temptation that come from the world to their flesh, are actually wrestling with and contending with demonic strategies. Satan and the demons hide unseen in the spirit world, but do their

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

work through human agents. Believers are the target in the demonic strategy of warfare against God and the main focus of Peter’s admonition in this passage. Make no mistake here Satan seeks **to devour** believers in as many ways as possible, but Peter says,

“be on the alert.” Read Eph. 6:11 – 12; 1 Tim. 4:1 – 2

1 Pet. 5:9 “But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

1 Pet. 5:9 NLT “Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.”

- Here in **verse 9** Peter commands his Christians readers to have a mind that is fortified and unyielding and to **resist** Satan by being **firm in their faith**. Note that James teaches in **Jam. 4:7** that such resistance causes the devil to **“flee from you.”** The words **resist** means **“to take a stand against,”** and to be **firm** is to **make that stand solid**. That is done by being **solidly fixed on the faith**, which is biblical revelation. Biblical revelation is simply the whole body of revealed truth contained in Scripture. It is the BIBLE! This is a call to know and believe sound doctrine, to be discerning in distinguishing truth from error, and to be willing to defend the truth and expose error. **Read Jude 3** Since Satan is a liar and a deceiver, the only sure way to stand up against him is by faithful obedience to biblical truth. The battle is a spiritual one, in the supernatural realm. **Read 2 Cor. 10:3 – 5** Paul references **“speculations”** in that text which are satanic ideologies, ideas, theories, religious philosophies, and systems of thought **“raised up against the knowledge of God”**; that is, they are anti-biblical viewpoints that have people captive as if they were imprisoned in a great fortress. Christians cannot smash those ideas with human ingenuity, but only with biblical truth—**“taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”** Only when someone has the mind of Christ on a matter is he rescued from such ideas.
- In the **b-portion of verse 9** Peter concludes this section with a word of assurance to his readers as they persevered humbly and submissively, vigilantly and courageously in the midst of many persecutions, sufferings, and trials—they were not alone. He reminded them **“... that the same experiences of suffering were being accomplished by their**

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

brethren who are in the world.” Believers in other places could empathize with them because every segment of the Christian community has experienced or will experience attacks from the Enemy. God allows this form of painful testing to accomplish His perfect work in the lives of His chosen people. **Read 1 Pet. 1:6 - 7; 1 Pet. 4:19; Matt. 5:10 - 12**
1 Pet. 5:10 “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

1 Pet. 5:10 NLT “In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.”

- Peter begins **verse 10** says, **“After you have suffered for a little while...”** What Peter teaches here is hope provides believers with the settling confidence that after we experience the trouble and difficulty of this life, we can count on God to glorify us in heaven. But he also says we can count on during this life that God will continued His sanctifying work in us through our suffering. But, for believers to fully appreciate that future purpose, we must realize that it may come only after we **have suffered for a little while**. As Christians we need not fear suffering, knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. **Read Rom. 8:31 - 39**
- Peter then calls God **the God of all grace**, which is reminiscent of Paul’s title the **“God of all comfort”** in **2 Cor. 1:3**. Not that God has already promised grace for all eternity; but here he promises to provide **grace** for the present, to **strengthen** believers and make their Christian character what it ought to be. Peter further notes that God has **called** believers to **His eternal glory in Christ**. This speaks of the glory to which saints are called and is described in **Phil. 3:11 - 14** and **1 John 3:2 - 3** **Read** The saints’ glory will be to be made like Jesus Christ. **Read Phil. 3:20 – 21**
- Peter concludes **verse 10** revealing **“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself** (God will personally), in the meantime while believers are still here—and even when the devil attacks them, use believers’ suffering to mold them into Christ’s image. Peter here

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

concisely describes the promise of that earthly, sanctifying process of spiritual maturing by God with four nearly synonymous words. He says god will **perfect** meaning to **prepare, complete, and bring to wholeness**. He will **confirm** meaning to **publicly affirm something or someone or to set fast**. He will **strengthen** which speaks of the **quality of power and might and to make sturdy**. He will **establish** meaning to **lay as a foundation**. These terms all indicate strength and immovability, which God wants for all believers as they face their spiritual battles. He sets believers firmly on the truth of divine revelation, where we stand in faith and confidence until we realize our eternal glory. God’s goal can be seen and heard in Paul’s prayer in **Read Eph. 3:17 - 19**

1 Pet. 5:11 “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Pet. 5:11 NLT “All power to him forever! Amen.”

- Contemplating all the above-mentioned divine graces and overwhelmed by the thought of sanctification and glorification, as well as wanting to illustrate a mindset of worship, Peter bursts out in a short doxology rejoicing that God has **dominion** over all things **“forever and ever.”** Here Peter continues shape and instill Christian thinking and a godly disposition, which submits to spiritual leaders and humbles itself before God so as to be exalted in due time. Such a godly attitude and disposition also casts every care on God; exercises self-control, vigilance, and fortitude in His strength against the Enemy. This is to be done all the while maintaining hope that the process of suffering will perfect believers on earth and bring them heavenly reward. With that in mind, believer’s response to the promises attached to them must be constantly filled with an attitude of praise and worship toward God. Peter says, **“To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”** The word **dominion** from **kratos** actually signifies **power, might and strength**. Here **dominion denotes God’s ability to dominate**, to have everything in the universe under His sovereign and unquestionable control. **Read Ex. 15:11–12; Ps. 66:7; Ps. 103:19** Since God has all wisdom, power, authority, and sovereignty, He is worthy of all the praise and worship saints can render to Him.

1 Pet. 5:12 “Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!”

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

1 Pet. 5:12 NLT “I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God’s grace for you. Stand firm in this grace.”

- As Peter begins his closing comments which also constitutes a final greeting that illustrate several more attitudes of the Christian mind. First, he gives an example of the loyalty of a fellow servant of Christ that was on his mind as he mentioned **Silvanus**, another name for **Silas**, who also traveled with Paul and sometimes appears in his letters. **Ex. 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1** Silas was a prophet and Roman citizen who for this letter was Peter’s scribe or secretary and possibly personally delivered the letter to the churches of Asia Minor. **Read Acts 15:32, 40; Acts 16:37** Peter calls Silas a **faithful brother**, a model of fidelity to the truth and the church, and to Peter himself, as indicated by the personal parenthesis **(for so I regard him)**.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 12** Peter also parenthetically injects a summary of his purpose as having **“written ... briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.”** What can he mean by this other than the letter itself was to encourage all with the gospel truth who would hear it and recognize **the true**, saving, sanctifying, and glorifying **grace of God**? NLT says, **“My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God’s grace for you.”** Because this is true, the apostle exhorts believers to faithfulness to the truth of his letter by shouting for them to, **Stand firm in it!** This reiterates the call of **1 Pet. 5:9** to remain firm in the faith.

LOVE

1 Pet. 5:13 - 14 “She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”

1 Pet. 5:13 - 14 NLT Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.”

Study on Books of 1st Peter
“A Letter Of Remembrance”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

- Peter closed the last two verses of his letter not by commanding the attitude of love, but by personally illustrating it. His love for the believers in the church at Rome, from where he wrote, is seen in the term **she who is in Babylon**, which is an oblique reference to that church. **Babylon** is possibly Peter's code word or codenamed for Rome just like John uses Babylon to represent the entire world system controlled by Antichrist in Revelation. With persecution intensifying, it appears Peter was careful not to endanger the Roman Christians and therefore used the term **Babylon** as a safety precaution. Having written this letter from Rome, Peter did not want his letter discovered and the church to be persecuted even more. Therefore he made no mention of Rome, leaving any curious and hostile authorities ignorant that this letter originated in their own imperial capital.
- The final verses also reveal the believers in Rome demonstrated true love and affection for those going through persecution by sending their **greetings**. Peter also included **Mark**, whom he called **my son**, a title indicating he was the apostle's spiritual son as Timothy was to Paul. Note here that this is the **John Mark** mentioned in **Acts 12:12**. He was Barnabas's cousin and accompanied Paul and him to Antioch and Cyprus in **Acts 12:25; 13:4–5**. He is also the one that later deserted Paul at Perga in **Acts 13:13**, which caused Paul to refuse to take him along on the apostle's second missionary journey. Paul later found **John Mark** to be useful to him and restored favor upon him. **Mark** was also the author of the gospel that bears his name.
- The words **“Greet one another with a kiss of love”** is another obvious indicator of the affection believers should have for each other. The holy kiss—men to men, and women to women—was a customary outward sign of affection among believers in the early church. **Read Rom. 16:16**
- Peter closed his letter with the simple statement, **Peace be to you all who are in Christ**. There is no shortcut to a Christian mind possessing those godly attitudes and motives Peter outlined. They will be perfected only as believers regularly and faithfully place themselves under the preaching, teaching, and study of God's truth and obediently allow His Word to change their hearts and shape their characters. **Read Luke 11:28; James 1:22 - 25**