

Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

An Expositional Journey Through **1Peter**

1Peter 5:5-7

52 What Spiritual Maturity Looks Like,
Part 1, The Humility that Leads to Exaltation

May 19, 2019

1 Peter 5:5-7

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.***

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

To the Glory of God

Now the *previous* 95 verses of inspired Writ of this Letter have been designed by God the Holy Spirit to bring all genuine believers into a place of godly Humility, *primarily* through the "Ministry of Suffering". So, by first *understanding*, and then by *believing* all that this Apostle has been teaching, we will arrive at the single most important position that any human being can be in this life and on this earth: Godly Humility.

Now all through the Bible God tells us *clearly and repeatedly* how much Humility means to Him. 71 different times throughout the Bible God moved upon human writers to pen down how much God regards a person who is humble. And perhaps the best summary statement of all that God has spoken about Humility is found in the single Statement that Peter quoted at the end of **1 Peter 5:5**:

GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Now the reason that this Statement is in all capital letters is because it comes from the Old Testament. But as I was studying this Passage, I found out that the way that Peter quotes this is not *exactly* how the Old Testament phrases it. For example, the wisest man in the world (Solomon) wrote this in **Proverbs 3:34**:

Though He [God] scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

... and in **Psalm 138:6**, 1,000 years before Jesus was born, King David was "moved along" by God the Holy Spirit to write:

For though the Lord is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar.

... and the "sons of Korah"¹ wrote this in **Psalm 84:11**:

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

... so, Peter's Statement is NOT a direct quote from a single Old Testament verse. Rather, it is a "Summary Statement" that

¹ Although Korah was judged by God for rebelling against Moses (**Numbers 16**), Korah's sons (perhaps too young to understand their father's uprising or maybe too cognizant of God's Authority to join in the revolt) were spared (**Numbers 26:9-11**). God judged those who turned against Him in active rebellion and purified His people, but He still had a purpose and plan for the line of Korah. After seven successive generations, the prophet Samuel arose from the line of Korah, the genealogy of which is recorded in **1 Chronicles 6:31-38** and **1 Samuel 1:1, 20**. The "Korahites" became doorkeepers and custodians for the Tabernacle (**1 Chronicles 2; 9:19-21**). One group of Korahites (**1 Chronicles 12:6**) joined King David in various military exploits and won the reputation of being expert warriors. However, the most remarkable thing to note about the "sons of Korah" is that during the time of King David, they became the great leaders in choral and orchestral music in the Tabernacle. Heman the Korahite had a place of great importance as a singer, along with Asaph (a Gershonite) and Ethan or Jeduthan (a Merarite). These individuals played an important role in the Thanksgiving Services and pageantry when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem. David formed an elaborate organization for song, instrumental music, and prophesying through these men. Of all of the Psalms in the Bible- eleven are attributed to the "sons of Korah". These beautiful Psalms express a spirit of great gratitude and humility to an awesome, mighty God. They express a longing for God and deep devotion. These poetic songs include **Psalms 42, 44-49, 84&85, and 87&88**. **Psalm 42:1** contains the beautiful line, "**As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.**". **Psalm 84:1** states: "**How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts!**" **Psalm 46:1-3** conveys the powerful Message, "**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change and the mountains slip into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake at its swelling pride.**"

It is very likely that the poet, who penned these lyrics, was remembering his ignoble beginnings, his distant ancestor who perished in an earthquake for his pride and rebellion. Perhaps it was that reflection that prompted the following words of the same Psalm: "**Cease striving, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth**" (**Psalm 46:10**). For each of us, our own songs of renewed purpose and redemption should flow out of a heart of humility as we remember the fallen state from which He raised us and the redemption that we experience through His grace. This was certainly the case for the "sons of Korah".

encapsulates a "Divine Principle" that involves two opposing Truths that are taught throughout the 66 Books of the Holy Bible:

- God *opposes* those who are Proud
- God *gives* Grace to those who are Humble

... and both of these Truths are *active* and *ongoing Realities*. And that means that God is "*actively* opposing" all those who are proud, and God is "*always* opposing" those who are proud. Likewise, God is "*actively* giving Grace" to those who are humble, and God is "*always* giving Grace" to those who are humble. And this has the idea of *continually* being true, so that, *at no time* does God ever *cease* or *slow down* or *diminish* either one of these Activities.

So, for example, there is no moment when God is not "*actively* and *continually*" opposing the Proud. And likewise, there is no moment of time when God "*stops* or *diminishes*" the giving of Grace to the Humble.

Now the original Hebrew word from where we get the English word "Oppose" was used in a *military* setting. And that means that God is literally "at war" with the Proud. God is "*actively* and *always*" *warring* against the Proud. And this War is *without end*. Likewise, God is just as determined to give Grace to those who are Humble, and this Divine Determination is also *without an end*.

Now this all adds up to illustrate how serious both Humility and Pride are to God. You would be hard pressed to find *anything else* in all the Bible that generates as much attention and as much action that Pride and Humility generates from God. I can find no other human attribute that results in any more Hostility from God than does Human Pride. And I can find no other attribute that brings out more Favor from God than does the trait of Humility. So, when you add all this up, I would suggest that us being Humble and us *not* being Prideful is a real big deal. Now Peter begins this Section by saying:

You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...

So, first, to the younger men, Peter says, "*You become subject to the Elders.*" And, of course, this too is a form of Humility. But then, Peter goes even deeper and says:

... and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...

So, in the same way that God wants the younger men to *submit* themselves, or *humble* themselves to the Elders of the Church, God also wants *all* believers to “**clothe yourselves**” with this “garment” of Humility toward each other. But *why* does Peter command this? Because of this overriding Divine Principle:

GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

Now there is a magnificent Example of what this looks like in **Isaiah 2:11-17:**

The proud look of man will be abased And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. For the Lord of hosts will have a day *of reckoning* Against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased. And *it will be* against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, Against all the oaks of Bashan, Against all the lofty mountains, Against all the hills that are lifted up, Against every high tower, Against every fortified wall, Against all the ships of Tarshish And against all the beautiful craft. The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased; And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day...

Now most of us don't know this, but there was a day when the tallest and greatest and mightiest cedar trees on earth were found in Lebanon. They were known all over the earth as the place where the great cedar trees grew. And this was a source of such national pride that the Government put the cedar tree on the national flag of Lebanon. The same is true of the now extinct nation of Bashan². This nation took

² Bashan was the northernmost region of the Transjordan. The Bible first mentions it in **Numbers 21:33**, where Og the king of Bashan came out against the Israelites at the time of their entrance into the Promised Land, but was utterly routed (**Numbers 21:33–35; Deuteronomy 3:1–7**). Along with the half of Gilead it was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh (**Joshua 13:29–31**). According to the book of Joshua, Golan, one of its cities, became a Levitical city and a city of refuge (**Joshua 21:27**). The cities of Bashan were taken by Hazael (**2 Kings 10:33**), but were soon after reconquered by Jehoash (**2 Kings 13:25**), who overcame the Syrians in three battles, according to the prophecy of Elisha (**2 Kings 13:19**). From this time, Bashan almost disappears from history, although we read about the wild cattle of its rich pastures (**Ezekiel 39:18; Psalm 22:12**), the oaks of its forests (**Isaiah 2:13; Ezekiel 27:6; Zechariah 11:2**), the beauty of its extensive plains (**Amos 4:1; Jeremiah 50:19**), and the rugged majesty of its mountains (**Psalm 68:15**). Soon after the conquest, the name "Gilead" was given to the whole country beyond Jordan.

great pride in the abundance of their mighty oak trees and cattle and majestic mountains. Likewise, Tarshish took pride in their ships.

The point here is that, while it is fine to appreciate (and even admire) what God has given and what God has done in our midst, we must take heed to our hearts that we do not see the various Blessings that God gives as being the *Source* of our Prosperity and Safety and Hope. We are to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, alone, as being the Source of all our heart's desires and longings, because God has promised:

**The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased;
And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day**

So, there is a *constant* War going on between Human Pride, Arrogance, and Self-Righteousness, and God's Glory. For example, it is *common* through the Bible to read that God did certain things for one reason:

... so, that no one may boast.

The great Passion of God is to be known, and admired, and honored, and praised, and adored, and magnified, and worshipped. And that is normal and appropriate, because God is God. But, since the Fall, the great Passion that God has is at odds with the overall Goal of Man, which is to be seen and to be made much of.

And so, the only way that fallen Man can achieve his Goal is by robbing God of Glory and then give that Glory to himself. And *that* is what is called "Pride". And *that* is what God opposes. And nowhere is that seen more clearly than in the way that many in the lost, pagan world (and those deceived by false religion) see Salvation. To them, "Salvation" is something that they must *acquire* or *earn* by "doing" certain things.

But, *inherent* in that philosophy is the "false supposition" that they could actually do that. The notion that any "creature from the dust" (human) could actually "do something" to *earn* or to *deserve* Salvation reveals that, *fundamentally*, they do *not* consider themselves to be "fallen" or "sinful" in the first place. And this false supposition is

also called "Pride". And it, too, is being *actively and constantly* opposed by God.

You see, part and parcel to being "lost" or "fallen", or "separated from God", is that we are *deceived* about our own inherent "Goodness". So, in our blind and hard-hearted state, we do not *normally or naturally* think of ourselves as being "bad" or "sinful" (and, thus, in need of a Savior). No, the "default position" from which most lost people operate is that we think of ourselves as being "gods", who are able and who have the Right to "map out" our own lives, *apart from God*. This is the very *height* of "Human Arrogance" and "Human Foolishness". And God is determined to utterly *shatter* that Arrogance in Biblical Salvation.

Now most people don't usually verbalize that Reality, but we *inherently* think this way about ourselves. And the proof that this is true lies in the fact that most people consider themselves to be "good people" who *deserve* to go to Heaven, *not* merely by what we do for ourselves, but also because of who we think we are.

One of the greatest and most important battles in Church History occurred back in the second half of the 4th Century and went into the first part of the 5th Century, between the Church Father, Augustine, and a man named, Pelagius. This battle is now called "The Pelagian Controversy", and it is still raging to this day. In fact, there are *more* followers of the heresy of Pelagianism today than there were back then, *before* the Church of Jesus *confronted* this false Teaching, *exposed* it, and *formally and officially rejected* it.

This Battle basically centered on the Issue of "Grace": what Grace *is*, what Grace *does*, and *why we need it*. And so, as Augustine prayed a very simple prayer, "*Lord grant what You command and command what You will*", Pelagius went berserk. You see, Pelagius taught that if God told us to do something, then all that we need to obey is to exercise our own, built-in "will-power", because God would never tell us to do something that we didn't already have the ability to carry out.

But Augustine countered with the Reality that God is not merely interested in giving us Commandments, but to be *loved* by His creatures. God is *passionate* about sovereignly bringing the fallen sons and daughters of Adam to a place whereby we truly *want* God, and where we genuinely *delight* ourselves in God. God took on flesh, and lived a sinless Life, and died a vicarious Death, and rose again, so that fallen sinful rebels would find the fullness of our own Joy *in Jesus being*

glorified, and so that we could recognize our great *Need for God*, and where we would *treasure* God's Mercy and Love.

But in order for that to happen, whatever God requires from us *cannot* and *will not* be carried out unless and until God endows us with the Grace to do it. So, because we are fallen creatures, we not only need God to tell us *what* to do, but we also need God to give us the Grace to do whatever He requires of us.

Pelagius saw this as an attack against the concept of "Human Responsibility". But as he defended that Truth, he went too far and ended up *denouncing* and even *rejecting* the precious Grace of God. This then led Pelagius to also reject "Original Sin" and the negative impact that the Fall had on all Mankind. And, eventually, Pelagius rejected Salvation itself.

Now over the centuries, the false religion that Pelagius began (Pelagianism) *eventually* morphed into what is now called "*Secular Humanism*", which is the very *zenith* of Human Pride and Arrogance. Humanism teaches that Man is really not "fallen" at all. Since the Father of Secular Humanism (Pelagius) taught that there is no "Original Sin", therefore, there is no need for a sinless Savior to redeem fallen Man. Secular Humanism teaches how people can improve their *own* lives (Salvation) by what they do for *themselves*, in "bettering themselves" through a series of Teachings, until, eventually, humans become "gods". Secular Humanism is the philosophy behind all of the many "Self-help" books and programs that dominate our culture today.

To the Humanist, it is utter blasphemy to suggest that people are "fallen", and are "in sin" and "headed for Hell", and have a *need* to humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God and repent and beg for a Mercy they do not deserve. The primary Goal of a Humanist (a follower of the ancient heresy of Pelagianism) is the "Self" of Man. So, the Humanist desires to *build up*, *magnify*, and *glorify* his *own* "Self-worth" and "Self-esteem" and "Self-fulfillment" (Pride) through a series of "Self-help" Teachings. In other words, Secular Humanism, the modern manifestation of the 1700 year-old heresy of Pelagius, promotes the very thing that the Bible condemns, "Human Pride". But God, and the Bible, and Christianity teach and promotes the exact opposite: "Godly Humility".

We need to know that the foundation underneath all three major "Schools" of modern Psychology, Psychiatry and Sociology come *directly*

from the Pelagian playbook. And during my lifetime, these false Philosophies have become very *evangelistic* in the way they promote Humanistic blasphemy.

Our modern Culture and Society, in general, has bought into Pelagianism, lock, stock, and barrel. This heresy is taught in School, it is promoted in all the major Corporations, it is headlined in the Federal and State Governments, and books touting the amazing benefits of Humanism line the shelves of every bookstore in the country, whose main tenet is Human Pride.

But Humanism has been the source of more death and more misery than all of the other false religions and philosophies combined. All of the major wars and purges throughout history have been initiated by evil men, who were all committed Humanists, and who were seeking to merely *purify* Society and create a "super-race" of excellent and superior humans.

But what is most sad is the pagan, Humanistic lies that fill our modern Culture are also being taught in much of what is called "the modern church". Teachings that come directly from Pelagius himself are found in many of the foundational Doctrines of the Health, Wealth and Prosperity Movement. And many of the most famous Teachers on the "Hay, Wood, and Stubble" television network *routinely* promote the "inherent goodness" of Man, while millions are being deceived with the false teaching that human beings supposedly have the power to "call (declare) things into existence".

Now, the reason this matters is because the Bible repeatedly and clearly tells us that God is *actively and ongoingly* "at war" against Human Pride. So, the Teachings that are so popular, and that draw such huge crowds, and that make people feel so good about themselves, are the very Teachings that *prevent* them from being saved. Because, *inherent* in Biblical Salvation is the admission that we are "lost", and that we have a great *need* to be forgiven and saved (rescued, delivered, healed, etc.) from the *consequences* of being lost, which is the Wrath of God, manifested in eternal Damnation. And the only way that God saves sinners is "by" His Amazing Grace and "through" the Gift of "Saving Faith". But if we were not already "fallen" and "lost", we would have no need to be "found" or "redeemed". So, for anyone to be "saved" *requires* that they first admit they are "lost".

But, even more specific, for us to be saved by what Jesus alone did for us *requires* that we first admit that we CANNOT save ourselves, no matter what we do. The Bible is crystal clear about this, dear friends, there is no amount of “good works” or “noble deeds” or “religious acts” that a lost person can do to earn his Salvation. We are saved by Grace, ALONE, through the Gift of “Saving Faith”, ALONE, to the Glory of God, ALONE. So, to a Humanist who hangs his hat on the development of “Human nobility” and “Self-Worth” by what we do for *ourselves*, true, genuine Biblical Salvation is truly the “worst news” in all the world.

Now you would think that common sense would *compel* the lost to run to God to beg Him for Mercy. If Salvation is solely a sovereign Work of God alone, then common sense would *compel* the lost to cry out to God for Salvation. But Human Pride stands in the way as a gigantic Mountain, and “Moral Inability”³ *prevents* them.

So, the Bible goes on to say that, in *addition* to God receiving all Glory, and all Honor, and all Praise for saving unworthy rebels, God set up Salvation, in such a way that:

Ephesians 2:9b

... so that no one may boast.

... which is the absolute *antithesis* to any Teaching of Doctrine or Philosophy that extols and promotes Human Pride.

But then the Scriptures go on to teach that even *after* we are saved, *all* that we do for Jesus, *all* that we do for the propagation of the Gospel around the world, and *all* that we do for the Glory of God in the earth, is also done for the very same Reasons and Causes:

- By Grace and through Faith
- For the Glory of God, alone
- So that no human can boast

So, true, biblical “Spiritual Maturity” does not look “Arrogant” or “Self-righteous” or “Self-confident” or “Self-assured”. It looks Humble. Because, God is *opposed* to the Proud and *gives Grace* to the Humble.

³ “Moral Inability” is the Biblical Truth that teaches that, unless and until God mercifully grants the sinner with Grace- he will not come to Jesus for Salvation. And the sinner *will not* come- because He *can’t*. But he *can’t*- because he *doesn’t want to*. So, whereas the sinner is *unable* to come to Jesus for Salvation (in his own strength)- the underlying Cause of his *inability* is his own *unwillingness*. Therefore, the lost are fully culpable for their own lostness.

So, those who are "Spiritually Mature" do not seek to "be seen" or to "be made much of". No, what makes "spiritually mature" people happy is the *magnification* of the Worth and the Beauty and the Importance of Jesus Christ. What thrills the heart of a person, who is strong in Faith, is the *exaltation* of Jesus.

So, the very *essence* of Spiritual Maturity is Humility. The *more* of the Bible you understand and believe, the *more* Humble you become. The *closer* to Jesus you get, the *more* Humble you become. The *more* "spiritual" you are, the *more* Humble you become.

So, there is no such thing as anyone being "Strong in the Lord" and becoming more "Selfish" or more "Self-centered" or more "Self-righteous" at the same time. At best, Human Pride is a sign of great spiritual *weakness*. But, *at worst*, it is possibly a sign that the individual might not even be saved in the first place. Because whatever Truth causes you to be Strong in Faith *always* promotes Godly Humility. *Whatever* Teaching builds up "Human Importance" and gives people the ability (and permission) to *boast* about "what they have done", or "who they are", puts us into a position where God *wars* against us.

So, it is truly "either-or". One of the most fundamental Truths about Biblical Christianity is that the Truths that cause you to be Spiritually Mature are the very Truths that promote Godly Humility. A correct understanding of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible will *always* bring a person into the Truth that the one, true, and living God, Who is revealed in both Creation and Scripture, *hates* Pride. And there are two reasons for this:

1. God alone is of infinite Value and Greatness and Beauty and Glory and Worth.
2. Human beings can only find deep and pervasive Happiness, Satisfaction, and the fullness of Joy in, by, and through this great and glorious God.

So, in foolishly seeking to exalt *himself* (which is what Pride is), Man is not merely insisting that he is the being, who is infinitely valuable (thus, robbing God of Glory), but sinful Man is also *destroying* any way to find true and lasting Delight. Because God has created Man

in such a way that he can only find lasting Joy *outside* of himself, and by NOT seeking to be glorified.

So, for the sake of God's Glory, and for the sake of our own soul's Satisfaction, God *actively* and *continually* "wars against" those who have been deceived by their own greatness and importance (Pride), and He *actively* and *continually* (and *energetically*) gives Grace to those who are blessed to be Humble. And this is *why* Peter instructs us to "make war" on every vestige of Pride in our lives, and cry out to God every day for the miraculous Gift of Humility. And the Act of "making war" against Pride and "crying out" for the Gift of Humility is phrased here by Peter as a man putting on a garment. He said:

... clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

... which illustrates that Humility is NOT inherent *inside* of us. It is *external* to us. Ever since the Fall, Humility is *no longer* a part of Human nature. And that means that Humility is NOT lying inside of us, and all we have to do is learn how to reach inwardly and "tap into" what is already there. That notion is categorically contrary to the Bible. Since the Fall, human beings do NOT already possess true, Biblical Humility. But we must also realize that we CANNOT *develop* Humility ourselves, either. There is *nothing* within the fallen human vessel that can be "made better" or "improved" or that can be "strengthened" or that can be "developed" that would *produce* Humility. So, while Pride is absolutely a part of who we are, Humility is as *far away* from us and as *different* from us as God Himself is.

And that means that Humility is *not* some Lesson to be "learned". It is not a "thing" to be "possessed". It is also not merely a Truth that must be "believed". No, Humility is a Gift that must be *given* and *received* and *experienced*. And that means that the Bible is not a "how-to" Book that teaches that if only we would do this or that, that we can develop Humility. No. Humility, like Salvation, requires, first, that we look *away* from ourselves, to the Bible, to Heaven, to the Cross, and to Jesus, and we cry out to God for the Gift of Humility, the Miracle of Humility, the supernatural Grace of Humility.

Now most of us would agree that humble people don't think much about themselves. But often what we have in mind is "Self-Deprecation", which means that humble people think of themselves as

being “lowly”. But we must understand that lots of people are “soft-spoken”. For example, lots of pagans do not think highly of themselves. Many Buddhists don’t go around bragging. But that is NOT what Peter is talking about here. The Humility that Peter is revealing here is NOT merely the absence of bragging. What Peter refers to here is a wondrous Gift that is wholly connected to Jesus Christ, whereby the believer is radically altered based on the ability he has been given to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. Here is how the Prophet Isaiah describes this Humility in **Isaiah 66:2b**:

But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Notice here that Isaiah adds two other qualities to the Gift of Humility:

- Contrite of Spirit
- Trembles at God’s Word

And so, as the Knowledge of God (from the Bible) becomes more clear, and is no longer *vague* or *distant* or *fuzzy*, the Worth and Value and Beauty of God *rises*. And the response of the true believer is not arrogance about what he now understands, but rather a *contrition* of spirit, a *lowering* of self-importance, and a *diminishing* of self-worth. So, it isn’t that he simply speaks more softly. It is that he has been blessed to be able to see God as being so glorious and so infinitely more important than *himself*. And that *assessment* of himself brings him into a proper alignment with God. And that tells us that Humility is the correct and proper place we were created to live in. Sin *blurred* that vision and deceived us into thinking more highly about ourselves. And so, Salvation and a proper understanding of the Bible *corrects* that false vision.

So, a healthy, proportionate, biblical view of our own Depravity, combined with a proper and correct view of God, in His magnificent Excellencies, results in spiritually mature believers clothing themselves with what Paul taught in **Philippians 2:3&4**:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

... so, humble, spiritually mature believers see all things in relation to God, and they *look for* and *enjoy* God's Glory in all that He has made.

So, "Self-deprecation" is NOT the primary trait of Humility. Neither is it that humble people just don't think too highly of themselves, or they simply aren't "Self-preoccupied". No, spiritually mature people, humble people, have *better, higher, and more glorious* things to be occupied with. And they see all things in relation to God and His Glory.

This allows spiritually mature people to fully *enjoy* what God has made, including other people. So, when any of us are blessed to be around spiritually mature people, who have been gifted with the Grace of Humility, they often help us do the same thing. Few things are as wonderfully refreshing as forgetting ourselves for a while because we're absorbed in something more glorious.

So, we find this trait of Humility powerfully *convicting*, because it exposes our own "Self-obsession". We are so used to people (especially ourselves) being "Self-conscious" and "Self-centered" that when we're with people who aren't, our own Pride stands out in stark contrast.

And that means that spiritually mature people prefer "Windows" to "Mirrors". Desiring to see the Glory of God in everything *frees* them from needing to see how everything else reflects on them. Humble people view other people as God's marvelous "Image-bearers", or Windows to God's Glory, rather than Mirrors that enhance or diminish their own "Self-image". Which means that spiritually mature people aren't absorbed by how others view them. They aren't worried about reading the "right" books, or seeing the "right" movies, or listening to the "right" music, or living in the "right" neighborhood, or having the "right" job, or driving the "right" car, or being seen with the "right" people, etc. That's a "Mirror Mindset". The Humble, spiritually mature people view these things as Windows to see and savor God's Glory.

This makes humble people *authentically* "counter-cultural". A Culture comprised of "Pride-infected people" produces a lot of pressure for us to conform to "cultural expectations". Even much that *poses* today as "non-conformity" is actually just "subcultural conformity", which is

the pressure to attempt to fit into some “subgroup” of the larger Culture around us.

Humble people are unusually *unaffected* by this pressure to conform. And that makes them hard to categorize because they often don’t fit neatly into any “cultural mold”. Now they have “personal preferences” about all sorts of things, just like everybody else. But they hold those preferences as merely different ways to enjoy God’s manifold Goodness, rather than as “Image-*enhancers*”. This deficit of “Self-importance” usually isn’t considered “cool” by those who assume the mantle of “cultural cool-definers”. And it makes these humble people to be looked at as “odd”, and very different from what the fallen world sees as “normal”:

Titus 2:14

who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

But one of the things that can really surprise us about truly humble people (which is sometimes mistaken for Pride) is that they can be quite offensive at times. Humble people, being without guile, usually “say it like it is”. And “saying it like it is” can sting, and even sound “condemning”.

Now there has never been and never will be any Man, Who epitomized true, Biblical Humility like Jesus. Jesus was Humility, *personified*. And yet, Jesus could really fling some zingers. For example, He called religious leaders a “**brood of vipers**” (**Matthew 12:34**), and “**sons of the devil**” (**John 8:44**). Jesus called the crowd, and even His Own disciples, a “**faithless and twisted generation**” (**Matthew 17:17**). Humble Paul publicly rebuked Peter (**Galatians 2:11-14**) and told the Galatians they were “**foolish**” (**Galatians 3:1**). These weren’t “nice” things to say. But humble people don’t always say “nice” things. They say “honest” things that can have sharp edges and that can wound, sometimes deeply. And because of this, they can be accused of Pride.

But there is a qualitative difference between the “Offensiveness of the Proud” and the “Offensiveness of the Humble”. The Proud offend for one reason: to exalt or defend *themselves*. Prideful people desire to *control* or *manipulate* other people⁴. But the Humble offend

⁴ Interestingly, in the Bible, the desire or the effort to control other people- is labeled as, “Witchcraft”.

reluctantly, and only in order to advance the Truth for the Glory of God and the ultimate Good of others. And so, while “Humble Offensiveness” may not be popular, it is *always* loving. And King David knew this. Which is why he wrote this in **Psalm 141:5**:

Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.

His son, Solomon, also knew this and wrote:

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

We have to realize that godly Humility can wound while sinful Human Pride can kiss. And kisses *always* feel better than wounds, at first. But later, the wounds brought about by godly Humility foster good spiritual Health, while the kisses of the Proud only foster more and more Corruption.

That’s why humble people aren’t always what we think they ought to be. They are very disagreeable when Truth must be valued over “relational harmony”. They are entirely “Un-submissive” when conformity defaces God’s Glory. And their company can even be *unpleasant*, even *undesired*, when their wounding words are *kinder* than selfish flattery or silence.

Humility is *not* a popular human trait in the modern world. It’s *not* touted in the talk shows or celebrated in valedictorian speeches or commended in diversity seminars or listed with core values. And if you go to the massive “self-help” section of Barnes and Noble, you won’t find books on Godly Humility.

And the basic reason for this is not hard to understand: Humility can only survive in the Presence of God. Where God goes, Humility goes. You might say that Humility follows God like a shadow. We can expect to find Humility applauded in our society only as often as we find God Himself applauded, which means almost never.

But the main point of this Passage is that we Christians should be humble people. Three times Peter gives the Command in one form or another.

1. Verse 5a: "**Younger men, be subject** [i.e., be humble toward] **to your elders.**"
2. Verse 5b: "**All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.**"
3. Verse 6: "**Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.**"

So, the main point is plain in these three verses: Humility is *essential* in the life of a Christian. It is a defining mark of a true Christian. And Peter gives at least four reasons or incentives:

1. **God is opposed to the proud.** Nothing could be worse than to have an infinitely powerful and holy God opposed to you. So, learn to hate Human Arrogance.
2. **God gives Grace to the Humble.** And nothing could be better than to have an infinitely powerful and wise God treat us graciously. He does that to the Humble. Now we must always understand that being Humble does NOT "earn" Grace. Humility is a confession of emptiness that "receives" Grace.
3. **God will use His mighty Hand to *exalt* those who are Humble.** Peter said, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time."
4. **God will use His mighty Hand to care for the Humble:** "Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." Be a humble person because, if you are proud, God will be *against* you in your Pride. But, if you are Humble, God will give you Grace, He will exalt you in due time, and He will care for you along the way so that you don't have to be anxious.

.. and that's the basic Message of this Passage. But how shall it take root in our minds and hearts and make a powerful difference in the way we live to God's Honor? Let me try to make it sink deeper into us by asking two questions:

1. What is Pride and Humility?
2. What is the *connection* between Humility and *not* being anxious?

I'll start with the second one. Did you notice (in the NASB) the *grammatical* connection between verses 6 and 7?

6. ... humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7. casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

This is not merely a new sentence. It's a *subordinate clause*.

Humble yourselves . . . casting all your anxiety on Him.

... this means that casting our anxieties on God is an expression of Humility. It's like saying, "*Eat politely . . . chewing with your mouth shut.*" Or "*Drive carefully . . . keeping your eyes open.*" Or "*Be generous . . . inviting someone over on Thanksgiving.*"

Humble yourselves . . . casting all your anxiety on Him

So, one way to be humble is to cast our anxieties on God. Which means that one *hindrance* to casting our anxieties on God is Pride. And that means that an undue worry about our future is actually a form of Pride.

Now there is more to say about that. But to feel the full force of this, we need to answer the first Question, and then come back to this connection between Pride and Anxiety.

The first Question was, "*What is Pride and Humility?*" And I'll try to answer that with ten Biblical Observations about Human Pride. And then we are to understand that Humility is just the opposite.

1. Pride Is a *Satisfaction* in "Self"

God said to Israel in **Hosea 13:4-6**:

***I have been* the Lord your God Since the land of Egypt... I cared for you in the wilderness, In the land of drought. As *they had* their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me.**

2. Pride Is a *Sufficiency* and a *Reliance* in "Self"

Moses warns the people of God in **Deuteronomy 8:11-17** about what will happen when they have "Rest" in the Promised Land:

Beware ... when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. In the wilderness He fed you manna... that He might humble you... Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

3. Pride Considers Itself *Above* Godly Instruction

In **Jeremiah 13:9&10**, God said to the people of Judah:

... so will I destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have gone after other gods to serve them and to bow down to them...

4. Pride Is *Insubordinate*

Psalms 119:21 says:

You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, Who wander from Your commandments.

When the Commandments of God are spoken, Pride turns away and will not submit. It rejects both the inherent "Right" and "Authority" of God to command us.

5. Pride *Takes Credit* for What God Alone Does

One of the most vivid illustrations of this is the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, in **Daniel 4:30-32**:

The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' While the word *was* in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, *saying*,... sovereignty has been removed from you... until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'

Then, after his "Season of Humiliation", grazing in the fields like and ox, Nebuchadnezzar is restored and confesses in **Daniel 4:37**:

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

6. Pride *Exults* in "Being Made Much Of"

In **Matthew 23:6**, Jesus indicted the religious leaders in Jerusalem when He said:

They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.

7. Pride *Aspires* to the Place of God

Read the story of "Herod's Pride" in **The Acts 12**:

On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and *began* delivering an address to them. The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.

8. Pride *Opposes* the Very *Existence* of God

Psalm 10:4

The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."

Pride knows that the simplest solution for its own survival would be that there be no God at all. That would be, as the Nazi's might say, "The Final Solution" for the survival of Pride. It doesn't come as any surprise then that . . .

9. Pride *Refuses* to Trust in God

Proverbs 28:25 contrasts Arrogance and Humble Trust:

An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.

Pride *cannot* trust God. The posture of Trust is too weak, too dependent. It calls too much attention to the Strength and Wisdom of another. Trusting God is the very Heartbeat of Humility, the very *opposite* of Pride.

When Pride keeps us from trusting in God to take care of us, there are two possibilities: one is that we feel a False Security based on our own imagined power and shrewdness to avert catastrophe. The other is that we realize that we cannot *guarantee* our Security, and so we feel anxious. Which brings us to the tenth trait of Pride and the final explanation about the connection between **1 Peter 5:6&7**.

10. Pride Is *Anxious* About the Future

In **Isaiah 51:12&13**, God says to anxious Israel that their problem is Pride.

I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass, That you have forgotten the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor...

God says to the proud, "*Who do you think you are to be afraid?*" Sounds strange, doesn't it? But that's how subtle Pride is. Because Pride is the *root* of all our anxiety. And now we can see clearly and feel the *force* of **1 Peter 5:6&7**:

humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

... how? In what way should we humble ourselves? Answer (v. 7):

by casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you

... in other words, the single most humble thing in the world is to do what **1 Peter 4:19** says:

"Entrust your soul to a faithful Creator."

But now notice that when we *are* Humble, when we do trust these two Promises:

1. That God genuinely cares for us.
2. That God has both the Power and Wisdom to put that Care to work in the most glorious way.

... that something amazing happens. As we struggle against the lusts of our flesh to be humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture in our daily lives, all to God's Glory, as we struggle to *resist* being Proud, and that we *embrace* every opportunity to be Humble, notice what Peter says God will do:

[So] that He may exalt you...

... what? *Why* are we to be Humble? What is the Divine Motivation that is given to us (in the Promise of God) as to *why* we are to be Humble? *So, that God may Exalt us!* But isn't that completely *contradictory*? If God is going to exalt us anyway, why does Peter go to such lengths to tell us to be Humble? And doesn't the fact that God is going to exalt us, doesn't that wipe out our Humility? How can we be "Humble" and "exalted" at the same time? What is Peter talking about here?

I think *part* of the answer lies in the timing. Peter didn't say that God was merely going to exalt us, but that God will exalt us...

... at the proper time

So, we must realize that God *exalting* us is Him *visiting* us with the Grace that we need. So, God *exalting* us here in **1 Peter 5:6** is to be understood in the same way as being "Blessed" or "Favored" is understood in the "Beatitudes" over in the Gospel Records. When Jesus said, "*Blessed are the 'poor in spirit', or 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after Righteousness'*", He was simply illustrating what having the Grace of God in our lives looks like. Jesus wasn't teaching about us *earning* or *deserving* special privileges from God by doing certain things.

So, being “exalted” here is the *opposite* of being “cast down”, or, in Peter’s context, what being opposed by God looks like. So, this is *not* about God *violating* our Humility by making us to be important. It is simply showing us what it looks like for God to give us Grace. It looks like exaltation.

So, casting our anxieties on God means trusting the Promise that He cares for us, and has both the Power and the Wisdom to put that Care to work in the most glorious way.

And that Trust is the very *opposite* of Pride. It's the very *essence* of Humility. It's the Confidence that the mighty Hand of God is not over us to *crush* us, but to *care* for us, just like the Promise says.

So, don't be proud, but cast your anxieties on Jesus, because He will care for you. And so, whenever our heart starts to be anxious about the future, preach to your heart and say, *"Heart, who do you think you are to be afraid of the future and nullify the Promise of God? No, heart, I will not exalt myself with anxiety. I will humble myself in Peace and Joy as I trust this precious and great Promise of God, because He cares for me!"*

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.