

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number Twelve – The Way UP Is Down – 1 Peter 5:5-14

Key Verses 5:5, 6

Pattern Number Twelve: The Way Up is Down—chapter 5:5-14

Now you will notice, he’s already spoken about elders and now he’s talking to younger ones.

v. 5 Likewise, younger ones, be in subjection to the elders; moreover, all of you, in your associations with each other, clothe yourselves with humility, because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble.

Now, humility can be seen as that which is recommended by the apostle to all of the previous patterns we have studied, if you look at it right.

- #1: Don't Get Shook, God Has the Controls—remember my friend, it doesn't depend on you.
- #2: Get Tough and Start Growing—you've got to permit yourself to be humbled unto the mighty hand of God.
- #3: Realize You are Part of the Establishment or the member of a team. This calls for humility and dependence upon one another.
- #4: Submit to the Authority Over You—this also calls for humility.
- #5: To Follow your Coach means in humble confidence, you are trusting your life and future to Him.
- #6: When “One + One = One” in the Marriage Relationship, you've got two people who've died to their rights and humbly broken, want to establish a beautiful relationship.
- #7: One of the ingredients of the Beautiful Life, we looked at, is to be Humble-minded.
- #8: If we're playing by the right Game Plan, we've set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts. We've submitted ourselves humbly to His lordship.

#9: What You Plant is What You Pick because if you live by the desires of the flesh, you'll pick what you plan. But if in humble brokenness, you submit to the leadership of the Spirit, life becomes abundant.

#10: Keeping a Good Attitude in the midst of suffering, when we humbly accept His plan for us as being good.

#11: The Laws of Leadership can be summarized in the words of Jesus in Matthew 20:26-28.

Listen to what Jesus says here:

Matthew 20:26-28

It shall not be so among you but whosoever would be great among you, let him be your servant. And whosoever would be first among you, let him be your slave, even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Now let's take the verses in this particular study.

“Likewise, younger ones, be in subjection to the elders.”

You probably thought that we were through with the subject of submission. No—not quite yet.

“Younger ones” in the body of Christ be subjective and be submissive to those who are in authority over you.

Then he goes one step further:

“moreover, all of you, [in your relations with each other] clothe yourselves with humility, because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble.”

What is he saying? Everybody is to be subject to everybody else.

Now, what is meant by the word “humility” anyway? I think some people have the wrong idea of humility. Especially some Christians. They almost make you sick.

You come around and you say “Hey man, you really look great today. You’re beautiful!”

“Oh, my hair’s all messed up.”

They constantly feel that humility is a degrading of themselves. In other words, humility is relating to rejecting my self-image.

Ok you tell some guy “Hey man, you really did a fabulous job on that. I really appreciate it.”

“Oh no, it really wasn’t much at all really. I could have done it a lot better.”

Constantly degrading themselves. Actually, “humility” is not to think of yourself in a lowly manner. Humility is to not think of yourself at all.

Now, based on this, you will notice he uses the word “clothe yourself with humility.” Do you know what that word “clothe” means? That’s the word for the knot tied in the servant’s apron.

What experience in the life of Peter comes to your mind when you think of a servant’s apron?

Remember John 13? Here come the 12 disciples to the upper room for the final supper. What are they talking about when they’re heading for the final dinner?

“Oh man,” Peter says “I’ve led you guys down here. I’m probably going to be Secretary of State in kingdom. I’m going to have a fantastic position.”

And old James and John, they’re fighting over who’s going to sit on the left side and the right side, and they’re all clamoring for the top positions in the kingdom. What happens when they get into dinner?

Everybody walks through the door. They say “Man, don’t call on me to do the servant’s work. Where’s the head of the table? I’m looking for the top place here!”

Finally when they all gather and they’re still chattering over how important they are and what cool guys they are, Jesus gets up from the table. He walks over and He ties on the servant’s apron and He grabs the bucket of water. And He moves around methodically and begins to wash their feet.

When He comes to Peter, Peter says “You ain’t washing my feet baby. No sir.”

And the Lord says “Look, if I don’t wash your feet you don’t have any part with me!”

Peter says “Then give me the whole deal. I want the whole bath.”

You see, Peter is speaking of an experience where he failed in his leadership again. Here’s the memory of a thought which both blesses and burns him, just like his denial. He failed to exercise humility and brokenness by performing the act of a servant.

And friend, it ought to devastate you when you realize how insensitive we are to the needs of others and we leave so many things undone.

And what he’s saying here is “clothe yourselves with humility.” Let it be understood once and for all my friend, if you’re going to be a leader of men you’re going to have to put on the servant’s apron. And that’s going to be your lot for the rest of your life. You still want to follow the Lord Jesus? You still want to be an effective leader? You’re going to have to die to yourself and take the servant’s apron to bring God glory in your life.

Now why should that be your position as a Christian? The way up is down.

What he is saying here is that God is the adversary of every proud individual. That's the reason you need to be a broken, humble servant.

I thought the poet did this so well when he tries to describe humility. He talks about a kite. He says:

Once upon a time a paper kite
 was mounted to a wondrous height.
Where giddy with its elevation,
 it thus expressed self-admiration.
See how yonder crowds of gazing people,
 admire my flight above the steeple.
How would they wonder if they knew
 all that a kite like me can do.
Were I but free, I'd take a flight
 and pierce the clouds beyond their sight.
But ah, like a poor prisoner bound,
 my string confines me near the ground.
I'd brave the eagles towering wing,
 might I but fly without a string.
It tugged and pulled while thus it spoke
 to break the string—at last it broke.
Deprived at once of all its stay,
 in vain it tried to soar away.
Unable its own weight to bear,
 it fluttered downward through the air.
Ah, foolish kite, thou hadst no wings
 how could thou fly without a string.
My heart replied, oh Lord I see,
 how much this kite resembles me.
Forgetful that by thee I stand,

impatient of thy ruling hand.
How oft I've wished to break the lines,
thy wisdom for my lot assigns.
How oft I indulge a vain desire
for something more, or something higher,
And but for grace and love divine,
a fall thus dreadful would have been mine.
(John Newton, source unknown)

Keith Miller in the *Habitation of Dragons* speaks on this too.
He says:

Lord, help me to have the courage to look for the look for the little inner walls and fortresses in my relationships behind which I protect my pride. Forgive me for camouflaging these defenses and calling them matters of principle when so often they are only means to keep from having to admit that I have been wrong and wanted to be number one. I guess this is what has always made you so threatening to me. When you expose my self-justifying defenses, I either have to confess them or put you down, which I guess we tried to do on the Cross. And still try to put you down when you get close to revealing the motives I have hidden. Help me Lord not to cling to my rights, but to unclench my spiritual fist so that I can be free to follow you.
(source unknown)

I'm going to hasten through these final verses so just take a few minutes. But I want to say a word here about the sixth verse.

v. 6 Permit yourselves, therefore, to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that in due time He may exalt you,

What I've learned as a fantastic truth in this sixth verse is that when I pray for humility, God is in the business of giving it. And the way He does it is by bringing difficulty into your life.

He breaks your will by the suffering and the things that come into your life—the trials and the tests—so you can welcome it. And what Peter is admonishing them here is to “permit yourselves...to be humbled under the mighty hand of God” so that God has the responsibility not only of humbling and breaking you, but He also has the responsibility of exalting you.

When you turn over to that fabulous passage again in Philippians 2, as you see Christ willingly being broken all the way to the Cross, you see the Father exalting him and giving him a name—which is above every name.

And when you allow the humbling process to go on in your life, you're fulfilling the admonition of verse 6—you're permitting yourself “to be humbled under [His] mighty hand.” Friend, He is going to “exalt you” in due time.

And what a fabulous exaltation it's going to be. You're going to find the greatest fulfillment as you are submissive and yielded to the Spirit of God as He prepares you for what He's going to do through you.

Now look at verse 7.

v. 7 throwing all your anxieties upon Him, because it is a care to Him about you.

Whereas in verse 6 we are to “permit ourselves to be humbled,” in verse 7 we are to throw all our “anxieties upon Him.”

Now put with this seventh verse, Proverbs 16:3. I like the way Berkley translates that:

Proverbs 16:3

Roll your work unto the Lord and your plans will be achieved.

Philippians 4:6

Entertain no worry, but under all circumstances let your petitions be made known before God by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving.

You see, it is His will that we should cast our care on Him every day. And He also in His Word says “don’t cast your confidence away.” But oh how foolishly we act so oftentimes when we’re caught unaware.

We cast away our confidence and carry all our care.

Psalm 55:22

Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you.

Isn't it cool when you know that God has spangled the heavens has a personal care about you? He carries you upon His heart.

Now verse 8 says:

v. 8 Be self-possessed, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion (in fierce hunger) is walking about, seeking someone to devour (swallow up).

Have you seen the three things in these verses?

1. “permit yourselves to be humbled”
2. “throw all your anxieties upon Him” and
3. “be self-possessed [and] watchful.”

You want to see how a lion works, read Amos chapter 3. In Amos 3 you get a picture of a lion at work. You've got a picture of a shepherd trying to rescue a lamb and all he gets is two legs and the piece of an ear.

When a lion works, sometimes we've got the idea that he roars to announce that he's coming. Now if you know the habits of a lion, when he awakens from sleep and hunger pangs begin to move him out into action, he doesn't go out into the fields where all the deer are grazing and say “Fellows I'm hungry

and I'm coming!" He steals along in silence. And when he has attacked his prey and he's got the prey, he roars like mad. One to announce his victory and two, to tell everybody to stay away while he enjoys his meal.

And Satan is like a roaring lion. He roars into the face of God and says "See what I did to that one!" and two, "Stay away while I enjoy the fruits of my kill."

Now Satan is like a "roaring lion." He goes about "seeking whom he may devour." Peter knows this.

Remember Matthew 16? In Matthew 16 when Jesus asked "Who do men say that I am?" He says "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And then in verse 23 the Lord says "Look fellows, I'm going to the cross." Peter says "Over my dead body you're going to the cross!" Jesus has to say "Get you behind me Satan. You're not minding the things of God."

"As a roaring lion" he moved into that situation in just a very limited time of conversation. And from the heights of great victory, he takes him and plunges him into disease.

And mind you, be aware of the fact that he waits to destroy you. And he's bent on your destruction and he's walking around seeking whom he may devour.

You might relax and you might sleep, but he never does. He's planning for his next day's attack. He's working in order to accomplish his objective.

Now James 4:7 will help you there.

James 4:7

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

And Ephesians 6:11, 12 and 13:

Ephesians 6:11-13

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against the wiles of Satan...

Verse 9 goes on to say:

v. 9 Withstand (resist) him, firm (steadfast) in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being laid upon your brotherhood who are in the world.

You're supposed to "withstand him, [stand] firm in your faith."

Verse 10 is the KEY VERSE to the whole book, and this will wrap up the entire message of the book and he bursts into DOXOLOGY.

v. 10 But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.

In Peter, in our study together, we've had a "God of all grace" who has provided enough grace for you to be SAVED—your SALVATION.

"the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ"—that's your salvation.

He's provided enough grace for you when you suffer, "after you have suffered a little while."

"My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in your weakness."

"Shall himself make you complete"—But friend, He cannot do that unless you're submissive to His Spirit.

And the secret to progress and growth—the secret to completeness is SUBMISSION to the work of His Spirit.

1. He'll make you complete because there are no unfinished pieces of workmanship in His workshop.
2. He'll establish you.
3. He'll keep you STRONG. He'll provide the strength which is needed: "my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in your weakness."
4. And He "shall ground you on a foundation." And the only foundation is the Rock—Jesus Christ.

Now these wonderful things are things which “the God of all grace” will do for you.

And is it any small wonder that Peter bursts into praise and doxology in verse 11?

v. 11 To Him be the power (dominion) for ever and ever. Amen.

Then he concludes with these three verses of GREETINGS.

“To Him be the power (dominion) for ever and ever. Amen.”

v. 12 Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I am thinking of him), briefly I have written to you, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, in which [grace] take your stand.

“Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I am thinking of him)”

Silvanus is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians and that guy’s name is really Silas.

Remember on the second missionary journey in Acts 15, Paul and Silas go together. He’s a faithful brother in the ministry.

Verse 13.

v. 13 The church in Babylon, chosen out with you, sends greetings, and Mark, my son.

The church in Babylon, of course, is the church in Roman. They went under the guise of the name “Babylon” so Nero, if any of these letters ever got into his hands, would not assume that there was a group of believers meeting right under his nose.

“chosen out with you, sends greetings, and Mark, my son.”

Do you know the story of Mark? Mark and Peter had a great deal in common.

Peter blew it at the denial.

Mark was a young guy, when Paul and Barnabas went out on the first missionary journey, he says: “Man, I’m ready to go!” He got out there and he got under the pressure and he quit and went back home.

And then, as they come back to Jerusalem, Mark says “Barnabas, I’ve learned my lesson. I really goofed. I want to go out and help you guys again. Will you receive me back?”

And Barnabas goes to Paul and says “Hey, you know, I think Mark’s really learned his lesson. He’s ready to go.”

Paul says “He ain’t going with me. I’m not taking a flunky along with me. I’m sorry.”

Barnabas says “Well I’m sorry, too, because I really love Mark.”

And so Barnabas and Mark went off in one direction and Paul and Silas went off in the other direction.

And it's so cool, in Paul's last letter in 2 Timothy 4 when he asks Timothy to bring along the parchment and his coat because it's getting cold in prison. There, as he's writing these words, and he says "Bring Mark along with you for he's profitable to me for the ministry."

You see Mark had a bad lap but he didn't stay down. Peter had a bad lap but he didn't stay down. Man the bad lap was the beginning of a fabulous ministry! It's fantastic what took place after they came to this point of failure in their life. It's fantastic what God did after this in their experience.

v. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.

Isn't it great to know that there's peace in the time of trouble.

"In the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer. I've overcome the world."

My challenge to you today is to follow these patterns to practice from the book of 1 Peter.

1. Don't get shook, God has the controls—there are three reasons. Do you remember what they were?

You're born into His family. You are an individual who is looking forward to an inheritance which is reserved. You're protected by His power.

2. Get tough—"gird up the loins of your mind"—and start growing "as a newborn babe desires the sincere milk of the word."
3. You are stones in a building—You are part of the establishment.
4. Submit to His authority.
5. Follow the Coach because we've been called to follow in His steps.
6. One + One (in the marriage relationship) only works when the wife is submissive and the husband is living with his wife "according to knowledge," rendering honor unto the weaker vessel.
7. Life can be beautiful—the 11 ingredients that we looked at are manifestations of the life of Christ.
8. Living by the game plan—we set apart Christ as Lord and we're ready always to give an answer to every man.
9. What you plant is what you pick—you can live by the flesh or by the Spirit and the results are obvious.
10. Keep a good attitude—if it's the will of God for you to suffer, rejoice. Because in the suffering, you are being confirmed to the image of Jesus Christ.
11. There are laws of leadership—we've looked at those today.

12. The way up is down—permit yourself to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

In a race everyone runs, but only one person gets first prize. So run your race to win; to win the contest you must deny yourself many things that would keep you from doing your best. I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win.

Let's pray.

Our heavenly Father, perhaps there's a student here this afternoon who does not know Jesus Christ. They've not entered into the fulfillment and the joy of a relationship with Him. Pray that You might speak to that heart and they'd respond and receive Christ as their very own. And then Father, I would pray also for those who know You, that with a holy sense of urgency, they might be following these patterns which Peter has outlined for us in his first epistle. We praise You for the privilege of studying. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PATTERN NUMBER TWELVE - THE WAY UP IS DOWN —

1 PETER 5:5-14

KEY VERSES 5:5, 6

v. 5 Likewise, younger ones, be in subjection to the elders; moreover, all of you, in your associations with each other, clothe yourselves with humility, because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble.

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v. 9 Withstand (resist) him, firm (steadfast) in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being laid upon your brotherhood who are in the world.

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v.14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 5:5-14 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What reason does Peter give for clothing ourselves with “humility?”

3. What is the purpose for permitting ourselves “to be humbled under the mighty hand of God” in verse 6?

4. What are you supposed to do with your “anxieties” in verse 7?

5. Describe in your own words the picture of Satan in verse 8 and what he is trying to do.

6. What promises are given to us in verse 10?

7. How do you think Silvanus got the title “Faithful Brother” in verse 12?

8. Put in your own words what grace means.

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The key to blessing is humble brokenness and surrender to the will of God.

LESSON #2: Humility must be dominate in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

LESSON #3: God is an adversary to the proud because they are living for themselves and dominated by their own desires.

LESSON #4: Help me Lord not to cling to my rights, but to unclench my spiritual fist so that I can be free to follow you.

LESSON #5: Trials, tests, and suffering are all parts of the humbling process.

LESSON #6: “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3 NIV).

LESSON #7: Are you casting your cares upon Him daily?

LESSON #8: Be constantly on the alert because the devil is looking for victims he can destroy.

LESSON #9: According to verse 10, the Lord of all grace longs to do four things for you: (1) make you complete; (2) establish you; (3) make you strong; and (4) ground you with a solid foundation.

LESSON #10: Suffering is a necessary part of the divine program to make us Christlike.