

## 16. Learning to Submit to God and Resist the Devil

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to both lead and serve. We saw that such ministry will be most effective when that ministry is done with an attitude of humility. We also saw that godly leaders are to serve as the bondservants of Christ. We will be effective as we serve other Christians by showing them how to serve the Lord effectively. In our topic today, we are going to see what it means to submit to God and also to resist the devil.

In 1 Peter 5:6-7 we read, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” The word “therefore” means “*consequently or these things being so.*” As a result, we need to be reminded of what the previous section says about humbleness. 1 Peter 5:5 says, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” Here, we see that both the younger and the older people are to be submissive to one another. We are also all to be clothed with humility.

As we humble ourselves toward one another, the most important person to humble ourselves before is God. Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Christians often quote verse 28 and forget about verse 29. However, verse 29 tells us that the goal of the Father is to conform us to the image of His Son. In order to help us learn to become more like Christ, the Father allows suffering and difficult situations to come into our lives to help us become more like Christ. That is why we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God because a humble attitude accepts the things that God allows in our lives.

When we humble ourselves and accept the things that God allows to happen in our lives, we see that God will exalt us in His time. The word “exalt” means “*to lift up.*” James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” Here, we see that the word is translated “lift up”. Christ spoke a parable in Luke 18 about two men that went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee exalted himself. The tax collector humbled himself. As a result, Christ said, in Luke 18:14, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” God will lift us up when we have humbled ourselves and allowed God to work in our lives and through our lives.

The word “care” means “*anxiety or worry.*” We are to cast (throw) all of our worries on Christ because Christ cares about us. The disciples were caught in a terrible storm while they were crossing the Sea of Galilee in a little boat. They were afraid that they would sink. Mark 4:38-39 says, “But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” Here, the disciples questioned

whether Christ cared for them and Christ showed by His actions that He did care. In the same way, we are to trust Christ when we have things that cause us to worry or be anxious.

As we go on, 1 Peter 5:8-11 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” The word that is translated “be sober” means “*to be watchful or sober.*” The word translated “be vigilant” means “*to be cautious or to stay alert.*” We are to be watchful and alert because the devil is our enemy.

We see that the devil walks around like a roaring lion looking for people to destroy. A key thing to understand is that normally lions travel in groups. When they find an animal to eat, the young lions will go to the far side of the animal and hide in the tall grass. Once the young lions are in place, an old lion that has usually lost most or all of his teeth will rise up on the opposite side and begin to roar. The animal will see and hear the old lion and immediately begin to run away from the old lion. The animal will then run into the young lions that are hiding in the grass and they will kill him and tear him apart. Then, the old lion will come and eat with the young lions.

In the same way, the devil tries to destroy Christians by accusing them to God and to others in an effort to discourage the Christians. However, the devil is really like a toothless lion once we become Christians. 1 John 2:1-2 says, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. Christ is our Advocate or defense attorney. When Satan accuses us to the Father, Christ says that He paid for our sins with His blood and that we accepted the payment. The word “propitiation” means “*that which satisfies.*” The Father says, “I am satisfied with the payment. Case dismissed.”

That is why we are told to resist Satan and be steadfast in the faith. Ephesians 6:17-18 says, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” Here, we see that the Word of God and prayer are our two offensive weapons for resisting Satan. Prayer shows our dependence on God and the Word of God is our weapon to defeat Satan. We are also reminded that the brotherhood (every Christian) experiences these same sufferings in the world because Satan is also trying to destroy them. However, Christ already defeated Satan and so we do not need to be fearful of him when our faith is in Christ.

We are reminded that God is the God of all grace. God has called us to enjoy His eternal glory and has made that eternal glory possible through Christ. Here, we see that God allows any suffering that we experience in our lives to do four things. First, suffering perfects us. The word that is translated “to perfect” means “*to make us complete or mature.*” Hebrews 13:20-21 says, “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of

the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.” The blood of Christ makes us complete so that we can carry out the will of God on this earth.

Second, suffering establishes us. The word that is translated “establish” means “*to make stable or to make firm.*” 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 says, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” Here, we see that Christ gives us strength so that we can both speak for Him and do good works that are pleasing to Him.

Third, suffering strengthens us. The word that is translated “strengthen” means “*to make a person strong.*” Paul prayed for Christians in Ephesians 3:16, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.” God has given us the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in the inner man. Fourth, suffering settles us. The word that is translated “settle” means “*to lay the foundation.*” Ephesians 3:17 goes on to say, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.” The word that is translated “settle” in 1 Peter is translated “grounded” here. Our faith will be able to stand on a firm foundation because it is on the foundation of Christ and His love.

It is the Lord who has all glory and to whom all dominion will belong forever. God has allowed us to suffer so that we can become more like Christ since we are going to share His eternal inheritance forever. Romans 8:16-17 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Here, we see that God has chosen to make us His heirs so that we can share in His glory forever. That is why we are thankful for the opportunity to submit to God.

In 1 Peter 5:12-14 we read, “By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” Here, we see that Peter had written this letter to encourage the Christians who were suffering to remember the true grace of God in which they stood. He also sent greetings from Christians who were going through similar suffering in the area where Peter wrote this letter.

As we help our physical and spiritual children learn what God is working to accomplish in their lives through suffering, we help them to realize why God will work greatly in their lives as they learn to submit to Him. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children what it means to submit to God.