

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Fundamental Attitudes of Christian Maturity

1 Peter 5:5-14

Part 1

If we will ever become accomplished in any particular discipline we must master its fundamentals. As many of you know I am a UCLA basketball fan. Last year they won the national championship. They were able to accomplish this not simply because of their talent but also because of their mastery of the fundamentals of basketball. This year though the team is athletically, I believe even more gifted than last year's team, they have struggled. Why? Because of fundamentals. Though they lead the Pac 10 in field goal percentage, and they lead the Pac 10 in three-point field goal percentage, and they lead the team in overall team defense. Though they lead the Pac-10 in rebounding, they also lead the Pac-10 in turnovers. They have a significant problem in handling the basketball. They are presently having a problem executing the basic fundamentals such as dribbling and passing. If they do not pay closer attention to these basic fundamentals their chances of repeating as National Champions will be minuscule.

This is also true of ourselves in the Christian life. We must also come to the place in our Christian walk that we have a command of certain basic fundamentals.

Peter in the conclusion of this epistle beginning in **V. 5** gives to his readers a series of imperatives. These imperatives are not addressing specific external behaviors as much as they are addressing certain inward attitudes.

How are attitudes fundamental to Christian maturity? If we do not have proper attitudes we will never be able to get our behavior right. If our attitudes are bad then our behavior will be bad. If a young person has a bad attitude toward another young person, or in other words they view this person, let us say in a hostile way, there is no way that this young person's behavior could be anything but hostile.

If we are going to become mature Christians characterized by right actions we need to possess right attitudes. We need to get the fundamentals right. Let us take a moment and read these concluding verses of **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. (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, (7) casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. (8) Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (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. (10) And 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. (11) To Him be dominion forever and ever, Amen.

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(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 (13) 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.

What is the first fundamental attitude that Peter mentions?

AN ATTITUDE OF SUBMISSION

Let us read **V. 5** “**You younger men likewise, be subject to your elders.**” Certainly submission is not a new theme in this epistle. We saw various groups of people being commanded to be submissive to various authorities earlier. In **1 Pet. 2:13-17**, Christians in general were being commanded to be submissive to governmental authorities. In **1 Pet. 2:18**, Christian slaves were being commanded to be submissive to their masters. In **1 Pet. 3:1-5**, Christian wives were being commanded to be submissive to their husbands. But here in **V. 5** we see that Peter is not yet done with this very important attitude of submission. Peter commands the church and more specifically the “**younger men**” in these churches to whom he is writing to be submissive to their “elders.”

Perhaps Peter when referring to “**elders**” means that the “**younger men**” should submit to the “older men.” If so, this is simply a general statement regarding proper Christian relationships between age groups, similar to **1 Tim. 5:1-2** where it says, “**Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, (2) the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.**” Does the scriptures teach us that the young should show respect for those who are older than they. And the answer is yes.

Certainly the Scriptures teach us to respect our elders or in other words to respect those who are older than us, but this is not likely the group that Peter has in mind. Because of the context and the connective “**likewise**” it would seem most likely that Peter is speaking to the same group that he addressed in **VV. 1-4**. And who was that group? The elders, the shepherds, the church leaders of local congregations.

The younger men of the church, particularly those who are diligently working - eager for change and further service- are the most likely group to conflict with the church elders. If the eldership is stagnant or ineffective; if the church leaders appear to be taking the church in a wrong direction the younger men are the ones most likely to be discontent.

Peter has just exhorted the elders not to lord it over the people or in other words to not exercise their authority in serving themselves but rather to serve those entrusted to their charge. Peter now turns that around and basically says “Just as the leaders are to be serving the congregation by exercising their authority unselfishly and sacrificially. You young men likewise serve the church, the flock of God by being submissive to the elders.

The word for submission is the word HUPPOTASSO. It is a military term meaning to “line up under.” So he is saying in effect, “If you truly want to serve the church unselfishly and sacrificially get in line with the elders and pastors of the flock.”

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It is extremely distressful when a servant's mentality is somehow lost in the inner-workings of a church. Either in respect to the leaders or in respect to the people. The elders are to serve the fellowship by not lording it over the flock or in other words not to use their authority to serve themselves and the people are to serve the flock by exercising submission to their church leaders. THIS IS A FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDE.

I have seen in my lifetime gifted people who have been given by God great gifts but who have never learned to slay their own pride and ambition. Who have never learned to submit to someone's else's leadership and authority. This failure on their part is not only a tragic personal loss to them but a tragic loss for the whole of the church of Christ.

ATTITUDE OF HUMILITY

Let us again look at **V. 5-6**, “... 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) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”

The word “humble” means to “bring low.” In other words we are “**not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think**” as **Rom. 12:3** tells us. If we can just continually remind ourselves that apart from God's grace we would have nothing, we could do nothing, and we would be nothing, it would be extremely helpful when it comes to being obedient to the command to “**clothe ourselves with humility.**”

If we are going to be obedient to this command we must first of all clothe ourselves with humility toward others.

TOWARD OTHERS (V. 5)

Look at **V. 5** “.... and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” The word “clothe” literally means “to tie or put on” any kind of garment. Some understand the picture as that of putting on a beautiful garment. But more probably, the picture is that of a slave tying on an apron to serve. The garment of humility must be put on, not as a matter of external show, but as a characteristic attitude, a willingness to serve.

This expression by Peter of “clothing ourselves” conjures up the picture of Christ in **John 13** washing the disciples of feet. Remember what happened? It said, “**Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, (4) rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. (5) Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.**” Why did Jesus do this? Because he did not consider Himself above the work of a servant. He was humble.

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How will our humility be demonstrated if we in fact clothe ourselves? We will be the servants of men. The greater our service if unselfishly motivated the greater our humility.

This is not an easy thing to do. It is not an easy thing to clothe ourselves with humility. It is not an easy thing to honor the exhortation of Paul in **Phil. 2:3** “**do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.**”

It is not an easy thing, so why should we do this? Look at the next part of the verse, “**For God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.**” This is a very good reason to remain humble. This is a quotation from **Prov. 3:34**. James quotes the same verse in **James 4:6**. The bottom line is this. We do not want God fighting against us. The Bible teaches us that God hates pride and it is the proud who resist, clothing themselves with humility. Looking out for number one is not the way you want to live. If we do this, we will ultimately find ourselves being opposed by God. And there is no question who is going to win this battle. And there is no question who is going to lose this battle.

We have seen that Peter starts out with exhorting us to humble ourselves to one another. But he goes on. Look at **V. 6** “**Humble, yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.**” We are not only to humble ourselves in respect to one another but certainly and most importantly we are to humble ourselves before the Lord.

TOWARD THE LORD (V. 6)

We are not only to be willing to serve others. But we are to serve the Lord. And we are to do this no matter what the outward circumstances of our lives might be.

Look at the “**under the mighty hand of God.**” The mighty hand of God is an O.T. symbol of God’s covering power. God’s controlling power. God’s sovereign power. As we live our lives we need to live our lives with a clear understanding that we are living our lives under the “**the mighty hand of God.**” What is taking place around us and even to us is not happening by accident. All of these things are ultimately being orchestrated by God in order to accomplish His purposes.

TO DELIVER - I believe most of you are probably familiar with the history of the nation of Israel. The father of the Jewish nation was Jacob. It was his twelve sons that became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. His family during a severe famine left the land of Canaan to live in Egypt. It was there that they grew into a great nation while in slavery. But there came a time when God responded to their cries of suffering and set about to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. Look at **Exod. 3:19-20** “**But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. (20) So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it.**” The mighty hand of God became the delivering hand.

TO TEST - I believe most of you are probably aware of the story of Job. A righteous man whom the Lord allowed Satan to test in order to demonstrate the integrity of his devotion to the Lord. But even though it was Satan who was inflicting the pain Job understood the fact that it came to him by way of the mighty hand of God.

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Let us read **Job 30:20-21** **“I cry out to thee for help, but thou dost not answer me; I stand up, and Thou dost turn Thy attention against me. (21) thou hast become cruel to me; with the might of Thy hand Thou dost persecute me.”**

TO CHASTEN - Israel, at this point in time has been scattered among the nations because of their disobedience and rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. But there is a day coming. Most likely at the end of the tribulation period when the Lord gathers them together in order to purge the unbelieving out from nation of Israel before Jesus establishes His Millennial kingdom. This chastening, this purging is said to be done by the Lord’s outstretched hand. Look at **Ezek. 20:33** **“As I live, declares the Lord God, “surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you.”** The outstretched hand of God is seen in this passage as a chastening hand.

If this is so, if the mighty hand of God is simply in His sovereignty expressing itself in power in the affairs of men, even now each one of us are under his mighty hand. It may be that you are presently under the delivering hand of God. Or it may be that you are presently under the protecting hand of God. Or it may be that you are presently under the chastening hand of God. Whatever circumstances that you are presently experiencing must be seen as having coming to you by the mighty hand of God.

If we are going to therefore humble ourselves under His mighty hand we must put away our grumbling and complaining spirits. If we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God we need to come to the place in our lives where we can give thanks in all things because with the eyes of faith we CAN SEE GOD’S MIGHTY HAND.

Peter then tells us that those who do will **“at the proper time be exalted.”** This is simply reemphasizing the truth that Christ stated, **“whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”** These readers were presently suffering greatly. But if they would humble themselves under the mighty hand of God in this their time of testing persevering though being persecuted they had the certain confidence of future glory.

CONCLUSION

IF WE ARE GOING TO LIVE MATURELY AS CHRISTIANS WE NEED TO DEVELOP CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDES.

WE NEED TO HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF SUBMISSION.

WE NEED TO HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF HUMILITY.