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# **22** | 1 PETER 5:5-7Growing in Spiritual Maturity

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**Announcements**

1. Welcome visitors!
2. Small Groups this week
3. Thanks for all who came out to Jedidiah Josiah Rowe’s memorial service

Open your Bible if you will to 1 Peter 5:5-11. Today we are looking at “Growing in Spiritual Maturity.” It’s our last message in Peter. Next week we begin a new series on the Old Testament Festivals from Leviticus 23. You are not going to want to miss this. It’s a series on the prophetic significance of the festivals. Some of them pointed to Christ’s first coming. And some pointed to Christ’s Second Coming. I can’t wait for Jesus to come again. You will not want to miss this series.

## The Butterfly

Pain is a blessing in disguise. Struggle and affliction are necessary in God’s plan. Pain and struggle must run their course in order for proper growth to occur.

I learned of the man who found a cocoon of the emperor butterfly. He took it home to watch it develop. One day a small opening appeared. He observed the caterpillar struggling for several hours to pass it’s body pass a certain point – a very small opening. Finally, this well-intentioned scientist concluded there must be something wrong. So he took a pair of scissors, and snipped the remaining top of the cocoon. The moth emerged of course very easily. The body was large and swollen, it’s wings small and shriveled. He expected in a few hours that the wings would spread out in natural beauty, but they didn’t. Instead of having the natural ability to fly, the moth crawled around dragging around shriveled wings and a swollen body – without the ability to fly.

Only later did the man understand that the constricting cocoon and the struggle was necessary to pass through, because the struggling through that constricting hole was God’s way of passing fluid from the body into the wings – that the wings might be large and developed and the caterpillar be transformed into a butterfly able to fly with ease.

God wants you to live a transformed life, and that only comes through struggle, pain, and difficulty. If we cut it off, we will be walking around with swollen fleshly habits in our life with shrunken spiritual wings, and no power to fly.

## Growing in Grace

1 Peter says in **1 Peter 4:17**, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household [family] of God.” Peter then considers his own self. Lord, let judgment begin with me. This judgment of God’s people can never be condemnation, for “there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (**Rom 8:1**) Judgment – not condemnation but examination – should always begin with leadership. The example and examination should always begin with leadership. Peter says, because **judgment always begins with God’s family**, let’s invite God’s examination of us, and let’s begin with the elders. For 5:1-4, Peter examines the elders of the church. In 5:5-14, Peter deals with the members of the church. Are you growing spiritually? Is there evidence of Christ’s life in you? That’s the whole idea of regeneration. Ezekiel 37 says we were all dead, dry bones. But now we are alive! That’s what Peter explains. Let’s stand as we read.

**1 Peter 5:5-14**, “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. 13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.”

I want to talk to you about growing in spiritual maturity. You know, one of the great needs in the last days, and I believe we're living in the last of the last days, is to be mature, because if you're not mature, if you're immature, in perilous times you're going to, perhaps, find yourself folding up and caving in when you ought to be standing up for the Lord Jesus Christ. So I want to talk to you about how to hang tough when the going gets rough because I have an idea that the going is going to get quite rough. 1 Peter is really a handbook for survival, to teach you how to endure in desperate days.

**Christians are called to grow here in at least two ways**

Grow in Humility (5:5-6)

Grow Serenity (5:7)

##### Grow in Humility (5:5-6)

## The Submission of Humility

**1 Peter 5:5a**, “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.”

We are called to submit to elders. Wow, that a tall order. But we can do it because the Chief Shepherd is watching over us. Wives are to submit to husbands, children to parents, and the spiritually less mature are to submit to the elders. This implies that the elders of the church are to be mature. This does not mean elders have to be 40 or 50. I was an elder and a pastor at 25. Timothy was young, and Paul urged him, “Let no one despise your youth” (**1 Tim 4:12**).

* Like a body, we need to submit to one another
* Everyone in the Flock of God submits to Jesus (5:4)
* The flock submits to elders
* Elders submit to elders

## The Suit of Humility

**1 Peter 5:5b**, “Clothe yourselves, all of you, with **humility** toward one another.”

Peter says to the younger: it matters what you wear. You want to pay for the stuff where the seams bust and the rip and go out of style. What God offers is free but it costs.

Clothe (*egkomboomai*) literally means “to tie something on oneself,” such as a work apron worn by servants. Here it describes figuratively covering oneself with an attitude of humility as one submits to authorities over him.

**Humility** here is *tapeinophrosunēn*, “lowliness of mind,” or “self-abasement.” It describes the attitude of one who willingly serves, even in the lowliest of tasks (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1–5; 2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 2:5–7). Perhaps even more so than today, humility was not an admired trait in the first-century pagan world. People saw it as a characteristic of weakness and cowardice, to be tolerated only in the involuntary submission of slaves[[1]](#footnote-2)

As Peter wrote this verse, he likely recalled Jesus’ tying a towel on Himself and washing the disciples’ feet, including his own, as recorded in **Lk 22:24-27**, “A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Even as Jesus was rejected by man, he said in **Psalm 22:6**, “I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.” He was content to be a worm.

## The Seriousness of Humility

**1 Peter 5:5c**, “for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (quoting Pro 3:34).

* The prophet Isaiah stated the principle well, “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (**Isa 57:15**; *cf* 66:2).
* **Mt 5:3-4**, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”
* **Psa 34:18**, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”
* **Psa 51:7**, “The sacrifices of [what we give to] God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

## The Scope of Humility

**1 Peter 5:6**, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.”

* God wants to use you.
* Follow Jesus’ Example in **Philippians 2:5-8**, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him…”
* The example of Joseph in Genesis 37-50.

##### Grow in Serenity (5:7)

**1 Peter 5:7**, “Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” There’s a reason we are told, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). He cares for you. That’s the centerpiece of the Gospel: God’s love.

**Explanation**

* He cares for you! He is the Chief Shepherd. He will leave the 99 and go after the wandering sheep (**Mt 18:10-14**). He loves you.
* **Mt 16:18**, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
* He said to **Jeremiah** in **1:5**, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

**Illustrations**

* Things in the mirror are closer than they appear. Can I say God is closer than he may appear in your life? Sometimes the cares in your life seem bigger than your God. But God is bigger than anything in your life. He’s the biggest and closest.

**Encouragement**

* **Isaiah 26:3**, “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”
* **Phil 4:6**, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Paul wrote these words while confined to a Roman prison. His circumstances may not have been pleasant, yet he penned these words.

The circumstances of your life may appear unbearable, but there is hope because Christ is aware of what you’re facing. He knows all about the bill due at the end of the month and your lack of money to pay it. He’s already aware of the doctor’s report that will mean you must face even more treatment. Wherever your prison happens to be, God is in it with you.

* Cast your cares on Jesus! He’s our Advocate. **Heb 7:25**, “He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”
* Luther: “Pray and let God worry.”

You see, worry is faith turned inside out.

The word cast here speaks of a very deliberate act, a definite and deliberate, a decisive act. How many of you have a problem? How many of you have a care? How many have a, an anxiety? They come to all of us. You have, as a mature Christian, you have to resolutely cast that anxiety upon the Lord. It's one of the marks of maturity.

**Conclusion**

We are living in Babylon, but we can grow in Babylon. We are like the palm trees in the desert.

They survive the dry times. If you are in Christ, you will survive those dry times. When you think about it, this whole world—apart from Christ—is a desert. But God can give His children the grace, the ability, to flourish—to grow, to be strong, to be fruitful, to be beautiful, even in a desert place. God can make “rivers in the desert” (Isa 43:19).

They have an amazing root system that hits the water below

Palm trees bend but do not break. O in Christ we can bloom in this desert called Babylon!

1. John F. MacArthur Jr., [*1 Peter*](https://ref.ly/logosres/mntc1pe?ref=Bible.1Pe5.5b-6&off=759&ctx=r+him.+The+word+for+~humility+here+is+tap), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 277. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)