

The heart of a leader is critical to the well being of the body. Here elders are specifically addressed. There are several words used in the N.T. to identify these leaders, including bishop, presbyter, overseer, or pastor. In many contexts today the pastor is most often identified as this person, although other congregations would designate a number of men as elders to lead and guide the local ministry. Certainly in this passage we can find principles that apply to various levels of leadership positions where the heart of the leader determines the well-being of the body.

Gospel-Based Leadership Principles: (1 Peter 5:1-4)

1 Peter 5:1-3, 1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

This passage shows us 10 gospel principles that leaders must embrace for the health of those they lead:

1. Humility: *I appeal as a fellow elder* (1a)
 - Peter was a prominent apostle, yet claims no special privileges.
 - We must never think of ourselves as better than others.
2. Mercy: *a witness of Christ* (1b)
 - Peter saw Jesus suffer, but actually botched his witness and denied Christ.
 - Remembering our past mistakes should make us merciful toward others.
3. Stewardship: *God's flock* (2a)
 - We aren't owners of God's people.
 - To lead well, we remember everyone is God's possession, not ours.
4. Intentionality: *watching over them* (2b)
 - Christian leaders are given the metaphor of Shepherding to reflect on.
 - Like a shepherd with sheep, we carefully watch over others to protect, nourish, tend and feed them.
5. Pure Motives: *because you are willing* (2c)
 - Leading, while at times difficult, should be a calling that brings joy, not a burden: *not because you must*
 - Gaining a reputation or money should not goal: *not pursuing dishonest gain*
6. Servant's Heart: *eager to serve* (2d)
 - Luke 22:24-27: *...I am among you as the One who serves.*
 - Jesus washed their feet as an example for us all to follow — do what needs to be done (John 13).
7. Gentleness: *not lording it over those entrusted to you* (3a)
 - When leaders care more about getting the job done than people, they can act tyrannically or domineering.
 - Jesus wants us to lead differently by gently reasoning with and influencing them toward godliness.
8. Role Model: *being examples to the flock* (3b)
 - It's important to "practice what you preach" and live by the same rules you ask others to use.
 - It goes without saying that our lives must be visible and accessible if we are going to be an example.
9. Christlikeness: *Chief Shepherd* (4a)
 - Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10) and our main example of gospel leadership.
 - Christian leaders will be held accountable by the Jesus as our true sacrificial leader.
10. Patience: *you will receive the crown of glory* (4b)
 - Leaders must not seek and need the praises of those whom they serve. We aim to please Jesus.
 - They must wait for Christ to judge their ministry and reward them in the future.

What is our motive to lead like this?

- Look back to the cross: *Christ's sufferings*(1b)!
- Look forward to Christ's return: *when the Chief Shepherd appears* (4b)!

Gospel-Based Life Principles [RECAP FROM LAST WEEK]: (1 Peter 5:5-9)

1 Peter 5:5-9, 5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1. Humble yourself: *clothe yourselves with humility* (5-6)
2. Trust God with your worries: *Cast all your anxiety on him* (7)
3. Watch out for temptation: *Be alert and of sober mind* (8)
4. Resist the enemy: *Resist him...* (9)

Jesus obeyed each of these four commands Himself: Philippians 2; Mark 1; Matthew 26; Matthew 4.

Life & Leadership is Powered by God's Grace: (5:10-14)

1 Peter 5:10-14, 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. 12 With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

It's never our strength or effort that helps us to this, it's:

1. Grace of promised glory: *his eternal glory in Christ* (10-11)
 - If you've trusted Christ, your future glory is guaranteed.
 - At the perfect time: *after you have suffered a little while*.
 - God will: *restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast*.
2. Grace for today's problems: *Stand fast in it* (12)
 - Wait, Peter's letter about suffering for Christ is described as grace? Yes The life of prioritizing Jesus no matter the cost, is where God meets you, helps you, and blesses you. Not the easy life!
3. Grace of the local church: *chosen together with you* (13-14)
 - God showed up for Peter & Silas & Mark (14) and He will for you too!
 - *She who is in Babylon*: this is likely a code word for the persecuted church in Rome.
 - *Greet one another with a kiss*: our cultural equivalent would be a hug or handshake.