

Humble Yourself and the Monster of Anxiety

Psalms 55:5, Psalms 94:19, Psalms 27:1, Psalms 34:4, Psalms 46:1-2, 1 Peter 5:6-7, Psalms 55:22, Matthew 6:25-34, 1 Peter 2:25, 1 Timothy 3:6, Romans 12:3, 1 Samuel 15:17, James 4:6, Psalms 31:9, Psalms 31:5

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The strength of youth is most evident when the body is at the prime of its physical development. But physical strength mustn't be confused with spiritual strength because they're different.

Peter spent three and a half years in earthly association with Jesus and various episodes in his life showed he was a self-determined, self-energized man.

But, on the eve of the crucifixion, Peter learned a valuable lesson. Previously he had boasted of an action he would never do relying on his personal strength, but found that under trial and testing, that strength evaporated.

He learned that dependence on God was the only way of satisfaction. Later he would write in 1 Peter 5:6-7, *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."*

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Over the years Peter became more and more dependent on God; walking in humility he became a humble man of God.

The academic may write about things he knows nothing about, but it's the man who's gone through failures and advancement in growth who's qualified to speak on those things.

When you have to deal with people's personal problems, and the problems of life, you need experience.

One thing that's quite common today is the appointment of young men to the ministry, men who may love the Lord, but have no experience in life.

Experience is a necessary requirement when you're dealing with the overseeing of God's people. Paul recognized this and warned Timothy why we mustn't have novices leading God's people.

1 Timothy 3:6, *"He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil."*

That's why the churches in New Testament times and later had elders who were qualified, holy, and disciplined. In fact, the word "elder" means a man of maturity, an older man, a man of good standing.

Now, Peter was qualified to speak on this matter because he knew failure. Remember Peter walked with God Himself on earth. He was instructed by the Creator of the universe.

In our focal passage of 1 Peter 5:6-7, Peter made two commands which are necessary to walk with God. The first command was *"humble yourselves."*

1 Peter 5:6, *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*

The humbling Peter is telling us to do isn't a "maybe" but a direct injunction from God, and when we do that, He will exalt us.

Yet, it's still an act of personal decision. There are those who take it to heart and those who don't.

Romans 12:3, *“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”*

Humility preserves peace and order in all Christian churches and societies; pride disturbs them. Where God gives grace to be humble, He also gives wisdom, faith, and holiness.

To be humble, and subject to God, will bring greater comfort to the soul than the gratification of pride and ambition. But it's to be in God's own, wisely appointed time; not our time.

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Peter's second command, which is also necessary in order to walk with God, is found in verse 7, *“cast all your anxiety on him.”*

What a tremendous privilege it is to cast all our anxieties on God. “All our anxieties” means everything that trouble us; everything that causes us to worry and doubt; everything that cause us to become miserable.

In Psalm 31, David was in dire straits and because of his anxiety, He requested that God deliver him, so into God's hand he committed his spirit.

Psalm 31:9, *“Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief.”*

David probably had more trials and troubles than most of us ever will. Yes, he prayed for deliverance, but he also recognized that God was his fortress. That God cared for him in his sorrows and would sustain him.

The secret is to not to take back our commitment to God. For a lot of us, that's our problem. We commit then we take back.

Psalm 31:15, *“My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.”*

If we truly believed that *“our times are in God’s hands,”* then we could sleep contentedly in trust. Our faith in God’s ability is what holds all this in place.

God’s always faithful, He’ll never fail us. We must place all our times and our life into God’s keeping and just let it rest there.

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That’s why I find that in every situation, especially in difficulty and testing ones, the Psalms are a marvelous help.

There’s something for every unpleasant condition in which we find ourselves. How many times could we have empathized with the psalmist when he wrote:

Psalm 55:5-6, *“Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.”*

All of us just want to be content and not be troubled or anxious. It’s in times when our troubles are really bad that we wish we could fly away from it all. However, that’s not possible.

We hope for some solution from the hand of man but that’s not going to happen. So, what can we do? What’s available? That’s what’s great about the Psalms. These wonderful songs have the solution.

Peter tells us to *“cast all your anxiety on him,”* but his words of advice have already been given. Listen to what the Psalmist wrote:

Psalm 94:19, *“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.”*

Psalm 34:4, *“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”*

Psalm 46:1-2, *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea”*

Gathering them up we have, *“The consolations of God delight the soul; the Lord answers and delivers; and He is a very present defense.”*

Of course, all of this requires trust and commitment. Does God always answer? He certainly does, though not always in the way we might expect.

But remember, God’s not a fair-weather God to be called on only in difficult circumstances.

If you look at Psalm 46, verse 2 you read a positive statement that results from recognizing God to be our refuge and strength, *“we will not fear.”*

Once we take this to heart, then there will be no fear, no anxiety. It’s a hard lesson to learn, but we must let go in faith and let God take full control.

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This is why Peter tells us to *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

This word *“cast”* means to throw fully and completely on the Lord, to leave it with Him, and not try to rake it back again.

When we’re able to do that, what more glorious fact can we want than the affirmation, *“He cares for you.”*

The Psalmist even understood this. Psalm 55:22, *“Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”*

What difficulties can we not get over in the firm belief in His wisdom, power, and goodness! We must be humble under His hand.

Cast all your cares; personal cares, family cares, cares for the present, and cares for the future, for yourselves, for others, for the church, cast all your cares on God.

These cares are burdensome, and often sinful, when they arise from unbelief and distrust, when they torture and distract the mind, when they cause us to be unfit for duties and hinder our delight in the service of God.

The remedy is, to cast our cares upon God, and leave every event to His wise and gracious disposal. Firm belief that Divine will and counsels are right can calm our spirit.

Truly the godly too often forget this and fret themselves for no purpose. This why we must refer everything to God. The golden mines of all spiritual comfort and good are wholly His.

Will He not furnish what's fit for us if we humbly lay the care of providing for us upon His wisdom and love?

Peter constantly witnessed the way God cared for all who submitted themselves to Him; how they found all their satisfaction and resources in Him.

That's what he wants his readers to understand. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Peter knew the Lord's care to be ongoing.

Jesus even told the crowds this same thing:

Matthew 6:25a, *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”*

Matthew 6:31, *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”*

Matthew 6:34, *“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

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Conclusion

There are times, in our trials and suffering, when we feel there’s just no earthly help. This is when we need to cast all that anxiety on God.

There are times when we feel the fight’s too great or too unrelenting, that’s when we need to cast all that anxiety on Him.

There are times we feel that no one understands our problems: personal trouble, debt, loss of a loved one. Cast all anxiety on God.

Our Father in heaven is a compassionate God whose mercy and grace are wonderfully sustaining.

In chapter 2, Peter presents another aspect of God’s great care, that of a shepherd.

1 Peter 2:25, *“For you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

One of the functions of a shepherd was to gather up fallen and injured sheep. He would place that sheep on his shoulders and support it with all the strength of his being.

This human shepherd's tenderness and compassion - the motivation of love - is a pale reflection of the true dispensing love of the true Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for His sheep. He's the Chief Shepherd Who provides the unfading crown of glory for faithful shepherds.

As Guardian He's well able to protect us from all the anxieties and troubling concerns of life. He cares for us. His divine heart of love reaches out to the hurting sheep.

We must cast all our anxiety upon Him because He really cares for us.