

# Committing To Christ

THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS - 1 PETER 4:19-5:11

## Easy to Say, Hard to Do

In this lesson, Peter is telling a suffering, battle weary people to again commit their souls unto Christ in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Of course, that is easy to say but very hard to accomplish when in the midst of conflict. Difficulties can overwhelm us, and when they do, they can cause us to lose sight of our position in Christ and our purpose.

The same is true of soldiers. They can lose sight of their objective when in the middle of a military conflict. This is called the fog of war. When the bullets suddenly fly, and mortar rounds explode, it is not unusual for soldiers to become uncertain of their real strength and position, not only of their foes, but also of their friends. The stress of combat, brings moments of uncertainty and confusion.

In military terms, there are five factors generally used in overcoming the fog of war: technology, leadership, training, experience, and planning. Military leaders understand the serious dangers associated with the fog of war. If the soldiers are



not properly prepared, they can become so disoriented that they can lose their lives.

In like manner, Peter is writing to his spiritually battle worn brethren and calling upon them to be soldiers for Christ. In this passage, he reminds them of five elements God provided. When heeded, they will get them through life's trials. He begins by telling them to, "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator" – 1 Peter 4:19.

But how does this help? What does this mean? What does this look like? What action is Peter calling these saints to do?

This lesson will examine the five vital truths revealed in this passage. We will then discuss practical ways to apply them in our lives.

**“Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you”**

## 1. What is Peter asking his readers to do in 1 Peter 4:19?

**WE MUST COMMIT THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS TO CHRIST** — 1 Peter 4:19.

- a. The power we need in any conflict is from God.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” — 2Cor. 10:4

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” – Eph 6:10-12

- b. Peter is entreating his audience to commit the keeping of their souls to Christ . . . “as unto a faithful Creator.” It does not matter if our conflict is a physical illness, emotional struggle, persecution, ridicule, or a spiritual battle. The first thing we must remember is to commit the safe keeping of our souls to Him. When we do this, we can be brave in conflict. We will be confident of His promise that He will never leave or forsake us. Furthermore, through the conflict He will mature us and thereby establish, strengthen and settle us in our faith. Notice 1 Peter 5:10-11 —

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. “

## 2. To whom is Peter appealing in 1 Peter 5:1-4? What is his purpose?

**THE ELDERS MUST LEAD** – 1 Peter 5:1-4.

- a. “It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep” – W. Phillip Keller.

“The behavior of sheep and human beings is similar in many ways . . . Sheep do not ‘just care of themselves’ as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.” (A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979], 20-21.

For example, God has created most animals with an uncanny instinct to find their way home. But if sheep stray into unfamiliar territory, they become completely disoriented and cannot find their way back home. Sheep need a shepherd to guide them, provide for them, protect them and sometimes also to rescue them from harm. Sheep spend most of their time eating and drinking. But if they become lost, they are helpless to find adequate food and water. Left to themselves, sheep will indiscriminately eat both healthy and poisonous plants, or overgraze and ruin their own pasture. They need to be led to water that is not impure and stagnant.

Because sheep are naturally passive and virtually defenseless against predators, and when attacked their only recourse is to flee in panic. The Shepherd must be continually on guard to defend and rescue the sheep from attack. — John MacArthur, 1 Peter [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004], 1 Peter 5:1.

- b. Because of this, Peter is exhorting the elders to feed (*Shepherd*) and to take oversight of the assembly of believers.

In 1 Peter 5:2, the Greek term for “feed” is ποιμαίνω *poimaino*, which means, “to tend as a Shepherd”

This passage is linked to the early parts of the letter where Peter addresses Christians who were suffering persecution. They were being attacked for righteousness sake. So Peter exhorts the elders among them to shepherd their troubled assembly.

- c. The first and obvious point is that the Holy Spirit has appointed spiritual leadership within the assembly with the responsibility of leading God’s children. They are men who rule while laboring “in the word and doctrine.” They are to lead every church in every city. Their qualifications are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

He is calling this group to feed and lead the flock of God. The assembly needs leadership. This leadership is part of God’s provision. They are to help His church through the fog of spiritual conflict.

- d. These leaders are to Shepherd.

This term ποιμαίνω (*Feed/Shepherd*) embodies all the aspects of shepherding. They are to edify and strengthen the assembly with the deep truths of God’s Word. This will produce discernment, conviction, consistency, power and effective testimony to the greatness of the saving work of Christ. No matter what the New Testament terminology identifies the shepherd and his task, underneath it all is the primacy of biblical truth. He is to feed the flock. As Peter tends to God’s heritage, the other elders are to do the same for the flock they are appointed over.

Peter include several aspects of Shepherding.

- 1) First, elders are to oversee the flock.

In 1 Peter 5:2b we find the Greek term *episkopos*. It means “to have oversight.” Sometimes it is translated “Bishop.” The Shepherd must watch over the flock. He is to assess their condition, so as to lead, guard, and feed them.

- 2) The second aspect: The life of the elder must be an example for the flock to follow— 1 Peter 5:3b.

- a) They should willingly serve according to the will of God — 1 Peter 5:2b.

- b) It is not for undue profit or ill gain. Filthy lucre or sordid profit goes beyond seeking wealth but speaks of shameful acquisition – stealing or dishonest gain — 1 Peter 5:2c.

- c) Rather, they should serve with eagerness, according to the high calling and privilege they are given — 1 Peter 5:2d.

- 4. They must not lord over the Lord’s heritage. That is, they must not domineer over people and circumstances. They must not be oppressive, or use intimidation to lead. Those traits of demagoguery are what the unredeemed use, not what God’s appointed leaders should use — 1 Peter 5:3a

Godly leadership is what God's flock needs to survive the fog of war and be successful in the task God has appointed His church. And when Christ, the Chief Shepherd shall appear there will be a crown of glory.

### 3. What is Peter asking the young men and the rest of the assembly to do in 1 Peter 5:5?

#### **THE CHURCH MUST LINE UP UNDER**

- a. "Likewise" — 1 Peter 5:5a. Don't miss the meaning of this word. Likewise, refers to what was commanded of the elders. In other words, just as the elders were exhorted to fall in line with the chief Shepherd and submit to His leadership. So must the younger fall in line according to rank. I am not sure why the younger are singled out. Perhaps their youthfulness caused some to run ahead of the leadership. Whatever it was, it was causing problems within the community.
  - b. The terms, "submit" and "subject" are the same Greek word ὑποτάγητε (*hupotasso*), meaning, everyone in the church should "be subject one to another" or "to line up under."
  - c. **First**, God's provision for His people entails us yielding to Him. He is the Creator of all things. He provides all the power we need. He provides the light and guidance when in battle, and in the midst of the fog of war. **Second**, part of God's plan is leadership. He blesses the organized effort of the leadership to move the assembly forward so the church will walk according to His plan. God does not ordain chaos nor does He bless the idea of everyone being out for themselves. **Third**, for God's plan to work smoothly, it requires everyone falling into line. As the word, submit *hupotasso* implies, the church must "line up under" as God has instructed.
4. What five items are mentioned in 1 Peter 5:6-9a. Discuss what these terms mean and what they will look like when we practice them.

#### **WE MUST REMEMBER OUR TRAINING**

- a. We must be clothed in humility, with each other and under the hand of God. See Psalm 25:9; Daniel 10:12; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:3-5; Ephesians 4:1-2; James 4:10. Humility is inseparably linked to submission, because the truly humble and only the humble submit. The term clothe literally means "to tie something on oneself," such as an apron worn by servants. Here it figuratively describes how one should cover themselves with humility.

Furthermore, the term humility is *tapeinophrosunen*, or "lowliness of mind," or "self-abasement." It describes the attitude of one who willingly serves, even in the lowliest of tasks. (see John 13:3-17)

- God is opposed to the proud - Proverbs 3:34, 6:16-17a; 8:13; James 4:6
  - God gives grace to the humble - Job 22:29; Ps. 37:11; Prov. 22:4; 29:23; Matt. 11:29; Luke 10:21; 18:13-14; 1 Cor. 1:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:7-18
- b. We must trust God. We do this by casting all our cares upon Him; for He cares for us.

As believers endure humbly and submissively, they find their strength in the midst of trials, by means of confident trust in God's perfect purpose. Casting, means to throw something on someone else. It is used in Luke 19:35 of throwing a blanket over an animal. We are to cast or to throw all our anxieties, discontentments, discouragements, despair, questions, pain, sufferings, and whatever else we encounter upon the Lord.

- c. We must be self-controlled – sober.

To be sober refers to our self-control in relation to intoxication. Here, as in other New Testament usages, it has a metaphorical connotation. It includes ordering and balancing life's important issues, which requires the discipline of our mind and body in order to avoid the intoxicating allurements of the world.

- d. We must be vigilant.

The reason we must cultivate the above attitudes of submission, humility, trust and self-control is that we face a fierce and relentless adversary — Satan and his demons. If we are not vigilant we will become victims of the enemy.

- e. We must resist Satan and his temptation.

1) By being clothed in God's Armor - Eph 6:10-17.

2) By submitting to God - James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9.

James 4:7 — “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

1Pet. 5:9 — “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

3) By giving no place for him (Satan). — Eph. 4:27 — “Neither give place to the devil.”

## 5. What are some of the works of Satan?

- a. He deceives when he appears as false ministers of righteousness.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” — 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

- b. He has his own doctrines.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils**” — 1 Timothy 4:1

His own doctrines may not appear to be evil. All they need to be is a slight twist of the truth. Eve was deceived by Satan simply because she added to the Word of God.

“Ye shall not eat of it (the fruit of the tree of good and evil), **neither shall ye touch it**, lest ye die” — Genesis 3:3.

How many of us have been deceived by Satan because we did not know God's Word accurately. The deviation may seem so small. In fact, it may seem good. **Don't eat the fruit** was the command. Therefore, we foolishly add to the command what we think will be a good precaution. **Don't touch the fruit**. Yet, if you were to believe the latter part and accidentally touch the fruit and not die, it may look like God was lying. It gives room for Satan to say, “Surely you will not die, but you will be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

- c. Here are some of the things Satan sows.

1) Lies that sear the conscience — 1 Timothy 4:2.

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”

His emissaries may assure us that its ok, it feels good, it will make you happy, it will take away the pain. Certainly, God does not care because you have suffered so much. Certainly, God’s people don’t care. The lies of Satan have started whole movements. If we are not moored in the Word of God. If we fail to examine the Word and seek God in prayer, we are in danger of being stifled.

2) False Worship and Rituals — 1 Timothy 4:3

Forbidding to marry. That is, sacrifice your life by not marrying, and God will bless you. Yet men have been tormented with desires because of this false idea. Furthermore, the godly fail to reproduce and claim the land. False ideas about sexuality are established. It opens the doors of temptation and for perverse activity and bondage.

Satan deceives with false appearances, false doctrines, and false rituals.

3) Satan Sows Tares in Our Midst - Matthew 13:24-20, 36-43.

Tares are weeds sometimes called darnel. They look exactly like wheat in the early stages of growth. In fact, only an expert can tell the difference. Only in the later stages of growth can the differences be seen. At that point you cannot pull them out unless you damage the wheat crop. If the seed of the tare is mixed with the wheat seed it will poison the flour because of the particular fungus which develops in the seed. Satan sows tares in the church. They claim Christ as their Savior, they do good, they come and worship. It is almost impossible to tell them apart. Yet there maybe signs. An unclear testimony. No victory over sin habits. Strange doctrinal views. When these souls populate the church they can sow discord, lies, they prey on others for their gain, and they fail to act in faith.

4) He hinders the saints.

1 Thess. 2:18 “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

He hinders us through unsaved men.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

It may be family members, it may come from friends, it may be co-workers, but they can hinder our walk. He can also hinder us directly through illness — Job 2:7.

“So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”

By physical affliction - 2 Cor. 12:7.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

He hinders us by whispering lies. He accuses the saints - Job 1:7-12. 2:2-3; Zech. 3:1-4; Rev. 12:9-10. He tells us that we are no good. He uses discouragement to cripple us. More saints have fallen and quit because of discouragement. Some never found rest — wallowing in guilt.

Some fill their heads with lies and incorrectly perceive their situation and become discouraged. Some allow the root of bitterness to take hold.

5) He can prompt us to sin.

a. He prompted David to sin.

1 Chr. 21:1 And **Satan stood** up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

b. Satan influenced Peter to rebuke the Lord - Matthew 16:22-23.

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. <sup>23</sup> But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

c. We are in a warfare. If we are not suited up and armed we will not be able to stand.

6) Victory is simple.

a. Christ is our strength - John 15:5-6.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

b. When in the wilderness, Christ overcame Satan’s temptations. He also gained victory over the demonic realms through-out His public ministry and Christ defeated Satan at the cross - John 16:11 - “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

Heb. 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the **devil**;

8) We must resist Satan.

a. We do this by being clothed in God’s Armor — Ephesians 6:10-17. By submitting to God — James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9

James 4:7 — Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1Peter 5:9 — Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

b. By giving no place to him.

Ephesians 4:27 - Neither give place to the devil

## 6. WE MUST HONOR AND WORSHIP CHRIST - 1 Peter 5:9b-11