

Leader's Guide

Session 7: 1 Peter 5:1–14

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what we want to walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: As believers lead and submit in their various roles within the Church, they should remain humble toward God in their suffering and watchful of the enemy until the day Christ calls them home in glory.

Head Change: To understand the serious nature of pride and its ability to divide us from fellowship with other Christians as well as God.

Heart Change: To crave genuine humility that leads us to surrender our concerns to the loving care of God.

Life Change: To confess whatever false hopes we cling to and instead cling to Christ as our ultimate hope.

OPEN

Describe a time when something you hoped in failed you. Maybe it was a relationship, career, salary, or something else along those lines. **What led you to trust in it in the first place? What have you learned about where to place your hope since?**

We all look to something for hope. It's a natural craving within all of us, but Peter has made it clear throughout his letter that Christ is our only ultimate hope. Everything else will fail us if given enough time. Let's take a closer look at that idea in our session today.

READ

Read 1 Peter 5:1–14.

DISCUSS

Over the last few weeks, we’ve worked through the bulk of 1 Peter and now we’ve arrived at the final chapter where Peter turns his focus primarily to responsibilities within the church congregation. He addresses both leaders and those who we might to today consider congregants.

Someone read 1 Peter 5:1–14.

Early in the session, Kyle said that as Christians we do not place our hope in our circumstances returning to the way they used to be. **Why not? What is the problem with doing so?** (Even in the best of times, we live in a broken world, which means that returning to the way things used to be would still mean returning to brokenness.)

Where does this passage encourage us to place our hope? (In our Savior, Jesus Christ)

Based on what we’ve studied so far, what is our motivation for holiness and joy in suffering? (Our hope in Christ and our identity in him)

When our hope is anchored in Christ, we can weather suffering faithfully, which will become visible to those who do not know Christ. As they notice, it will prompt them to ask about our joy providing us with opportunities to share the good news of our Savior. One of the primary ways we do this is through a unified Church.

When have you seen a leader shepherd for “dishonest gain”? When have you seen a leader shepherd for the good of the people? What was the difference in terms of their impact on their people?

What characteristics of church leadership do you find most easy to follow? How do those characteristics inspire you as a follower?

Peter also addresses those who are not in leadership, calling them to voluntarily submit to their elders and act with humility toward one another. As Kyle explained in the session, the biggest obstacle to Peter’s instructions is that of pride and the solution is humility.

A series of horizontal lines for taking notes, corresponding to the text blocks on the left.

What are some practical ways to “clothe” yourself with humility?

How does humility transform the ways in which we interact with one another? What are some practical ways that pride causes division?

In verse 5, Peter writes, “God opposes the proud.” Kyle keyed in on this point to remind us that God is not simply neutral or indifferent about pride. He actively opposes it. **In what ways does it change how you think about the potential for pride in your own life?**

What are some of the ways that you are contributing to unity within the body of Christ? How could you be more intentional about doing so based on everything you’ve learned from this series?

None of this comes easy. Perseverance in suffering, striving for unity, and rejoicing in hardship is a high call for anyone and only possible through the hope we have in Jesus Christ. And Peter tells us where to turn with our anxieties—God himself.

PEEK AT THE GREEK

Verse 7 gives us a beautiful picture of our Father in heaven. Peter writes that we are to cast our anxieties on the Lord because he cares for us. The word he uses is *epirripto*, which literally means, “to transfer one’s concerns.” In this verse, it appears in participial form, which is typically rendered less as a command (“cast”) as an explanatory action (“casting”). This form connects it to the previous verse as well showing us one of the ways we can combat pride and pursue humility. In other words, Peter is saying that we are to humble ourselves by casting our anxieties on God because he cares for us. To contend with feelings of fear or anxiety is not wrong, but to hold them to ourselves is a form of pride suggesting we believe they are up to us to solve. God cares for our concerns and asks us to give them to him. Doing so is an act of faith and one that cultivates humility within.

How have you experienced God’s care for your concerns in the past? In what ways has he been faithful to meet you in the midst of your anxieties?

What anxieties do you need to “cast” upon him today? What would change about your life if you were to do so?

According to verses 8–9, we also need to be watchful and resistant of the devil. **How should these instructions change the way you think about your spiritual life? Where do you need to be more watchful? More resistant?**

Peter also mentions that our struggles with the enemy are experienced by our “family of believers” worldwide. In other words, believers everywhere contend with the enemy just as we do today. **How should that truth inform the way you pray for other believers? How should it shape your humility and service toward them?**

Verses 10–11 cap off our reason for doing all of this, not simply following the instructions from this session, but those given throughout Peter’s entire letter—our sufferings are temporary and God is going to fix it all soon. **In what ways does that truth encourage you today? How should the temporary nature of our struggles comfort you wherever you find yourself today?**

We’ve devoted seven sessions to studying a difficult topic, but one that’s a guaranteed part of our Christian life. Suffering is never desirable, but we should approach it with hope knowing that God allows it to refine our faith and that he cares for us deeply. **What have you learned about 1 Peter that you did not know before this series? How has your understanding of this book and the Bible as a whole deepened as a result of this study?**

As you walk away from this series, what will you do practically to focus your hope on Christ’s return? How would it change your daily life if you were to do so?

LAST WORD

One of the great things about the Bible is that it’s realistic. Life is hard and Scripture reflects that. There will be trouble, but our hope today is in the fact that God cares and that one day we will be with him in eternity. Until then, we are called to persevere and to declare the glory of our God to the world. That starts in the Church.

Without unity among one another, we cannot effectively communicate the good news of Christ to those around us. So we should do everything we can to put to death pride in our lives and seek to serve one another in love, not out of begrudging duty, but out of a heart transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ. For now, there will be hardship and pain, but God allows it to mature our faith and strengthen our trust in him. So take heart. The sorrows of this world are expiring. Though they may feel burdensome today, they will soon be no more. Until then, rest in the peace that is yours in Christ.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Spend some time this week offering up your concerns and anxieties to God. Trust that he cares not only for your fears, but also for you yourself.

Confess: As the Holy Spirit convicts you, confess whatever pride you see in your life as a result of this session. Ask the Lord to cleanse you and replace it with humility.

List: Make a short list of 2–3 practical life changes you can make based on what you’ve learned from this study. Place it somewhere that you will see it daily and continue striving to live according to God’s Word in the days ahead.
