

Living Life in the Midst of Hostility  
1 Peter 5:6-11

ETS: Peter gave ways to live in light of Satan's prowling about

ESS: The fear of the Lord will result in living as Peter instructs in light of Satan's activity

OSS: I want people to have the right kind of fear

PQ: Are you living in the fear of the Lord

UW: Fear

**ME**

FEAR is a powerful motivator!

According to [Psychology Today](#) article *The Most Powerful Motivator: How fear is etched into our brains.*

- “There are many things that motivate us. But the most **powerful motivator** of all is fear.”
- “Our most vivid memories are born in fear. **Adrenaline** etches them into our brains....Nothing makes us **more uncomfortable** than fear.

**WE**

For the last 1 ½ years the world has been gripped in **fear** due to the COVID-19 virus

- We have **lockdown** entire states and countries
- We have **destroyed small businesses** and the **economy**
- We took away the senior proms, dances and other school activities
- We closed our **churches**
- We have been **wearing** masks
- Now, we are being warned about new variants—  
Ex. The Delta variant

## **Fear is a powerful motivator**

Reuters article (April 10, 2020): In global war on coronavirus, some fear civil rights are collateral damage

- In Armenia, journalists must by law include information from the government in their stories about COVID-19. In the Philippines, the president has told security forces that if anyone violates the lockdown they should “shoot them dead”. In Hungary, the premier can rule by decree indefinitely.
- “In many ways, the virus risks replicating the reaction to Sept. 11,” said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights

Watch....People were fearful and asked governments to protect them. Many governments took advantage of that to undermine rights in ways that far outlasted the terrorist threat,” he told Reuters.

## **Fear is a powerful motivator**

Type in “**The next Pandemic**” in Google and you will see headlines from

- “The Next Pandemic is Already Happening”
- “Are We Ready for the Next Pandemic Because it is Coming.”

**H.L. Menken** “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, *most of them imaginary.*”

- IF you can keep people living in fear, you can **control them!**
  - You control people by **promising safety** if they will **do** as you **say!**

**Peter** is writing to people who are living in a **hostile environment!**

- It is an environment that is very conducive to **FEAR!**

- FEAR of being arrested for being a follower of Christ
- FEAR of being harassed
- FEAR of losing relationships
- FEAR of losing jobs

Sadly, we may be seeing this happening in America.

Recently, Christian media ministry SkyWatchTV produced a documentary on child sex trafficking, *Silent Cry*. The film, written and directed by Josh Peck, received three awards at the 2021 Telly Awards. It was one of five productions to receive a gold People's Telly from among more than 13,000 entries.

- From May 30 to June 5, SkyWatchTV did a series of broadcasts discussing and promoting the documentary on child sex-trafficking.
- On June 3, YouTube closed down their channel – which has 250,000 subscribers—alleging violation of its policy against “harassment, threats, and cyberbullying.”
  - YouTube gave them no warnings or additional explanation.
    - Usually, in order for a channel to be deleted, it must receive three ‘strikes.’

- The SkyWatchTV channel had no strikes but was shut down by YouTube

How do we go about our daily lives in an increasingly **hostile environment**?

How do we handle FEAR?

Is there a FEAR that can be to our benefit?

## GOD

Turn to **1 Peter 5**

**In 1 Peter 5:1-5** Peter is giving instructions to the **leaders** in the church.

**1 Peter 5:1-5** “I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. <sup>5</sup> In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because **God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**”

- Clearly, this is **beneficial** section for **leaders**, but I felt that preaching on this passage will be **better suited** for a leadership conference, etc.

So, I want to **focus** on the **following verses** because I think these are what we need to focus on as we wrap up this series...

- Peter gives us general exhortations about how to live in the midst of suffering/struggle.

**1 Peter 5:6-8** “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”

REALITY We have an adversary the devil who is “prowling around...looking for anyone he can devour!”

- Should we live in FEAR of this fact?

YES, but not in the same kind of way you are thinking about FEAR!

The FEAR we should be living in is the FEAR OF GOD!

- WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?
- HOW does living in the FEAR of GOD help us?

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

## **LIVING HUMBLY BEFORE GOD**

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

- Peter has been talking about **leaders** and **followers** in the previous verses.
  - In **verse 5** Peter told the **young men** to “clothe themselves with humility toward one another”
    - Peter said that the **reason** why was found in **Proverbs 3:34** “for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Now in **verse 6** Peter states: ““Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time”

- **Prior to verse 6**, Peter talked about humbling ourselves in our relationships to each other.

- In **Chapter 3:8** he tells us as **Christians** to be **“humble in spirit”** in our relationship to each other and in
- In **Chapter 5:5** he told the **young men** to be humble in their **relationship** to the **leaders** of the church.
  - But now, Peter tells **US ALL** to be **humble** in our relationship to **God**.

**This is not a suggestion, but a command.**

- Why would Peter have to command us to “humble” ourselves in relationship to God.  
Remember the **context**: suffering for the cause of Christ.

As a Christian when you are **laughed at** for taking a stand for Christ, what is the first thing you do?

- Typically, you may feel hurt, but at the same time **proud**.
  - You are proud that you **stood** for **Jesus**.
    - Then you **suffer again** for the cause of Christ, again you take your stand.
      - Again you are **hurt** but **proud**.
  - Again, the same thing happens and again you do the same thing.

- However, as a human, you **begin** to **expect God** to **REWARDED** you in some way.

It is easy for us as Christians to **expect** that God will start to **shower blessing** upon us for our stance for him—BUT WHAT IF HE DOESN'T BEGIN TO SHOWER YOU WITH BLESSINGS?

- What will your **reaction** be then?

Although the **context** is suffering for the cause of Christ, let's add the **additional context** of suffering in general.

- Say you get diagnosed with a **disease**.
  - You put your **trust** in **God**.
  - You tell others that you are going to **depend** upon God to see you through this illness. Days, weeks and months pass by.
    - However, instead of getting better you begin to get worse. Then in the midst of your suffering, another tragedy strikes. You lose a loved one or your job or whatever.
- What will your reaction be then?

Peter commanded these believers to “**Humble themselves under the mighty hand of God**” because

he knew that things were probably **going** to get **worse** before they ever began to get better.

- Peter understood that many times we give God a **trial period** and then if He doesn't **perform** the way we want Him to, we **quite**.
  - We **walk away**.
    - Ultimately, however, **we fail** not God.

However, Peter is telling us NOT to **give up** on God and decide to go at life alone, he is commanding us to **“Humble themselves under the mighty hand of God”** no matter how bad life gets.

- Notice the **contrast** in this verse.
  - On the one hand is **“humility”** on the other hand is the **“Mighty hand of God.”**
    - Why the contrast? Reminder:
      - No matter how **out-of-control** life seems,
      - No matter if the **bad guys** seem to be **winning**,
      - No matter if the **cancer** is slowly taking your life,
        - **God is the Mighty One**—not the bad guys, not the corrupt governments, not the cancer.

**Why should we humble ourselves before God?**

- Why? *So that He may exalt you*

### HOW does God **exalt** someone?

- By **using** their life to **accomplish** His purpose.
  - Humility before God is an **act of faith**.
  - Humbling yourself before God means that you are **willing** to let Him **direct your life** and you are allowing Him to use your life for His purpose.

But notice when this **exaltation** takes place: “**at the proper time.**” The “**proper time**” may not be **until years into** your suffering.

- The “**proper time**” for **Joseph** was not until after **15 years** of being in the slammer.
- The “**proper time**” for **Moses** was not until **40 years** in the desert and then God sent him to deliver the Israelites.
- The “**proper time**” for you may not be for another 5, 10 or 15 years.
  - In fact, the “**proper time**” may not be until “after” your **death**.
  - It is possible that you will **suffer your entire life** yet you **die without relief**. However, if you go through **suffering with submission** to God, **humbling** yourself before Him, giving Him the glory, God will use your suffering to “**exalt you at the proper time.**”

The **underlying principle** we must remember is that *we do not see the entire picture.*

- We don't know when the “**proper time**” is, but God does!

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

### **RELYING on GOD**

Who are the majority of people looking for answers about this pandemic?

- **The Government!**
  - Constant press briefings about this virus
  - The CDC website is our “go to” website
  - Dr. Fauci is who we are told we should listen to (he is the highest paid government employee, btw)

WHEN you are in FEAR you RELY on WHOMEVER you think has the answers!

**1 Peter 5:7** “**casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.**”

Unlike the command to “**humble**” yourself and unlike the other commands that follow this verse, *this is not a command.*

- Why, because it will be an **automatic response** to someone who has **humbled** themselves before the Lord.
  - If you are “**humbling**” yourself under the “**Mighty Hand of God**” then your **response** will be one of actively “**throwing upon God**” the burdens that you struggle with.

### George Muller

- He cared for 10,024 orphans during his lifetime
- He established 117 schools which offered Christian education to more than 120,000.

Müller never sought donations from specific individuals and relied on the Almighty for all of his needs.

- He never made requests for financial support, nor did he go into debt, even though the five orphanage homes cost more than £100,000 to build.
- Many times, he received unsolicited food donations only hours before they were needed to feed the children, further strengthening his faith in God.

Müller was in constant prayer that God touched the hearts of donors to make provisions for the orphans.

- For example, on one well-documented occasion, thanks was given for breakfast when all the children were sitting at the table even though there was nothing to eat in the house. As they finished praying, the baker knocked on the door with sufficient fresh bread to feed everyone, and the milkman gave them plenty of fresh milk because his cart broke down in front of the orphanage.

George Muller in *Signs of the Times* “The beginning of anxiety is **the end of faith**, and the **beginning of true faith** is the end of anxiety.”

Peter states that we are to be **actively** casting our anxiety upon God.

- The word for “anxiety” or “care” means the “state of being pulled apart.”
- You know the feeling—you feel you are being **pulled up** by the roots because of a **disease** or a **circumstance** in life that has broadsided you.
- You feel that your world is **shattered** because you stood up for Christ and you are being **rejected** by your family, friends and co-workers.

Peter states that we must cast “**all**” our anxiety upon God. We can’t keep anything back.

You know that we like to **hoard** our **pain**.

- We **love** to **stew** over the wrong someone did to us.
- We love to **soak** and **sour** in our own pity party over the suffering that we are enduring.
- We love to **sulk** in **pity** because we have suffered for Christ.

It is easy to say that we are casting all our anxiety on Christ, but too often we like to keep **back a morsel** or two for our enjoyment. But Peter tells us that we must give it all up to God.

To RELY ON GOD is...

- *Not* to care for, but to **care about**.
- *Not* to fix, but to be **supportive**.
- *Not* to judge, but to **allow another** to be a **human** being.
- *Not* to be in the middle, arranging all the outcomes, but to **allow others** to **affect** their own **destinies**.
- *Not* to deny, but to **accept**.
- *Not* to nag, scold, or argue, but instead to **search** out my own **shortcomings** and **correct** them.
- *Not* to regret the past, but to **grow** and **live** for the **future**.

- *Not* to cut myself off. It's the **realization** that I **can't control** another.
- *Not* to try to change or blame another. It's to **make the most of myself**.
- To **fear less** and to **love more**.

**WHY should we RELY on God?**  
*“Because He cares about You”*

In the days of the **country store**, a little boy used to accompany his mother when she went shopping.

- The storekeeper always said, "Take a handful of candy, Son."
  - But the boy never would.
- The storekeeper would reach into the box and give him a handful.
  - One day his mother asked, "Why is it, when he asks you to take a handful, you never do?"
    - The boy replied, "Because his hands are bigger than mine."

Peter knew that **God cares** for His own—God's hands are **BIGGER** than yours!

When you read the four Gospels, you discover that **Peter** shared in some wonderful **miracles**.

- Jesus **healed Peter's mother-in-law** (Mark 1),
- Jesus **gave** Peter a great **catch of fish** (Luke 5),
- Jesus **helped** Peter pay his **temple tax** (Matt. 17),
- Jesus **helped** Peter **walk** on the **water** (Matt. 14),
- Jesus **repaired** the damage Peter did to the **ear** of **Malchus** (Luke 22),
- Jesus **Delivered** Peter from **prison** (Acts 12).<sup>1</sup>

*Peter knew that God cared for him.*

Did the fact that God cared for Peter **change the reality** that Peter was going to **die** as a **martyr** as predicted by Jesus? No!

- To say that *God cared for Peter*, like He cares for us, does not mean that we will **not suffer** or **die suffering**.
  - **Peter suffered beatings, imprisonment,** and ultimately **death** for Christ, but he knew that despite those things *God still cared for Peter*.

**Americans have it all wrong.**

- We think that to say that **“God cares for me”** means that I will NOT have **struggles, suffering** or **problems** in this life.

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<sup>1</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (1 Pe 5:5). Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

- The fact that we go through those things does not **negate** the reality that God cares for us.
  - Think about it, if you want to see how much God cares for you look at **Calvary!!**
    - If that is all God ever did—sending Jesus to die for our sins—that is **more than enough evidence** that God cares for us; that is more than **enough** of a **reason** to proclaim that God cares for us.

*You cannot **doubt** God's love and His **care** for you in light of Calvary.*

- It may **seem** you are **alone** in your suffering, but **God still cares** for you enough to stay with you and **never forsake** you.
- It may seem **you** are **alone** in your **suffering**, but **God still cares** for you enough to have sent His Son Jesus to die so that you might have eternal life.

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

**PRACTICING DISCERNMENT**

**1 Peter 5:8** “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”

- 2nd **command**: “Be sober-minded”
  - Like his 1st command to “humble ourselves”, this command is also found throughout Peter’s letter.
    - **1 Peter 1:13** he told us to “be sober in spirit”
    - **1 Peter 4:7** “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.”

In the **ancient world** when you wanted to **emphasize** something you said it **three** times.

- Apparently, Peter is really wanted them and us to “Be sober in spirit.”
  - In fact, he wants us to be **sober in spirit** so much so that he **restates** his command and states “be on alert.”

“Be sober” in other words, be **clear-headed** in your thinking.

- Peter restates by saying “be on alert.”

- In other words, be **vigilant** like you would if you knew someone was going to break into your house on a certain night.

WHY? Be “sober-minded”?

*“Because Satan wants to destroy you!”*

Again, for **emphasis** and **clarity**, Peter restates whom we are fighting against.

- He states: “Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
  - He calls our enemy “your adversary.”
    - The word “adversary” refers to an **accuser** or a legal opponent.
  - Then he refers to Satan as “the devil.”
    - The word “devil” refers to one who is **slandorous** and **malicious**.
      - Satan is our opponent; he is our **enemy** and he will do whatever it takes to destroy you.

Peter commands us to “be sober-minded” and “be alert” because the devil “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

- The verbs “**Prowls and seeking**” are both in **Present active tense**.
  - As the old Hal Lindsey book proclaimed, “**Satan is alive and well on planet earth.**”

I am convinced that ONE WAY Satan wants to **destroy US** is through **FEAR!**

- He wants **Christians** to live in FEAR!
  - **WHY?** So we can be controlled!

When Satan tempted Eve in the **Garden of Eden** what tactic did he use? **FEAR!**

- He instilled in EVE...**FOMO** = “**Fear of Missing Out!**”

**Genesis 3:1-4** “Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’” 4 “No! You will certainly not die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Here is what happens when you give into FEAR:

- When you are **gripped by fear**, your **rational capabilities** shut down – in other words, you stop thinking clearly
  - RESULT: You can be easily **manipulated** by **ANYONE** that **promises safety** from the **threat**.

Remember, Satan is the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:14)

- Our world-system (e.g., politics, religion, academia, etc.) is under his sway
  - The MORE we move away from the underpinnings of the Scriptures in America, the MORE we move under the sway of the “god of this world.”

DO NOT FORGET,

- That Satan is the **“Father of Lies”** (John 8:44)
  - He is a **master manipulator**
    - He knows how to sprinkle in just enough truth to get you to swallow a lie!
- That Satan’s end-game is to **“Seek, kill and destroy”**—especially the true children of God.

**REALITY:** IF you can put people in a state of FEAR you can control them!

**John Adams**, one of the founders of America, wrote: “Fear is the foundation of most governments”

- Without the **foundation of biblical principles** a government will seek to rule by instilling fear in people!

**George Orwell** wrote: “Political language. . .is designed to make lies sound truthful...”

Atheistic **philosopher Voltaire** stated that “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”

The technological advances of the last century have given those in **power** the **ability** to **propagate *their* narratives** and engage in **fear mongering** to an extent never before seen in history.

- We have a **culture** living in **fear**!

Believers... we are **NOT** to **live in fear**!

- IF You are Living **HUMBLY** Before God, you are not going to worry about going against the grain

- IF You are **RELYING** Upon God you are not going to live in FEAR

Being “**Sober-minded**” is about practicing **discernment**?

- **Discernment** is the ability to make a smart judgment about something.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 “but test all things. Hold on to what is good”

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

How do you practice discernment?

### **1. Know the Scriptures!**

- 2 Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

How do you practice discernment?

### **2. Don't blindly accept what you are told!**

**Acts 17:11** “The people here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they

received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

- Common phrase used in media “The experts say”
  - ME: Who are these experts?
  - ME: Who employs these experts?
  - ME: What is the track record of these expert
  - ME: What makes someone an expert?
- Common phrase used in media “Scientists say”
  - ME: Who are these Scientists?
  - ME: Who employs these Scientists?
  - ME: What is the track record of these Scientists?
  - ME: What makes someone a Scientists?

Don't blindly accept what you are told!

- Look at the **data** yourself
- Don't rely on just one media source—every media source has it's bias!
  - Btw, 37 years ago, 50 companies control the media in America.
    - 90% of the media is controlled by 6 companies in the United States.
- **Social Media** companies are determining what you should see and what you shouldn't see.
  - Ex. **Wallstreet Journal** May 27, 2021  
“Facebook Ends Ban on Posts Asserting Covid-19 Was Man-Made”

- “Facebook in February began the ban on claims the virus was man-made or manufactured as part of a list of misleading health claims that aren’t allowed.”
  - WHY the ban in the first place?
  - What other things are being banned because FB, Twitter, YouTube, etc. are deeming they shouldn’t be allowed?

How do you practice discernment?

**3. Ask the questions: who, what, when, why and how?**

Believers... we are **NOT** to live in fear!

**WE**

There is more to unpack, but for now there are three things we need to remember and do in the midst of difficult times:

1. Live Humbly Before God
2. Rely on God
3. Practice Discernment

IF WE will do these things, we will NOT live in FEAR!

If you have been living in FEAR, my question is  
“WHY”?

**PQ: What fear drives you?**