

1 Peter 5:8-14

WITHOUT THE WORD OF GOD YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR SATAN

Jesus once gave an illustration about the importance of building on a solid foundation. Today's section of 1 Peter emphasizes why that foundation is so essential. But before we get into that, let's go back and summarize the first seven verses of 1 Peter 5 for those who may not have been with us last week.

1 Peter 5:1-7 NAS:

- 1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,*
- 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;*
- 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*
- 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*
- 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*
- 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,*
- 7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.*

Submission, here described as being humble, is a very important concept in the Christian faith and it is extremely difficult to practice in our daily lives. It requires discipline and a complete trust in the Word of God. Submission is an act of faith. We are trusting God to direct our lives and to work out His purposes in His time.

So why do we have difficulty submitting? Often it is because we are afraid we will lose something. Maybe we are afraid we will lose control of a situation, or possibly we fear losing ourselves, or losing a position. Perhaps, when growing up in a dysfunctional home, we came to think that we couldn't trust anyone other than ourselves. Maybe parents or siblings leaned on us instead of our being able to lean on them. Some people, with poor boundaries, may believe that if they submit to God they would be totally absorbed and will have no individuality left. There are many reasons for finding it difficult to submit to God and to the standards in His Word.

It requires taking that huge step in faith to find out that we gain so much more than we

lose when we submit ourselves to the Lord. We gain a far more solid sense of identity because of knowing who we are in Christ. We gain a sense of security because we don't have to control everything but can rest in our powerful God who holds the whole universe together. After the step is taken we realize it was far more risky not to submit completely to the Lord.

A person who is truly submitted to God views other people, both saved and unsaved, very differently than before. The principle of love now operates in their lives and they look for what is good for the other person. They know that the mighty hand of God that directs our lives can also direct in the lives of others.

Verse 6, which calls us to be submissive and to humble ourselves before God indicates that “*at the proper time*” God will exalt us. The implication of “*exalt*” is that God will lift us up, elevate us out of the difficulty that we are in. We must patiently wait for that “*proper time*,” which usually is not the same as our timing. God never moves too soon or before the person is ready for it. This verse reminds us of Proverbs 15:33 NAS, which reads in part:

Before honor comes humility.

Christ, our Lord, suffered the indignities and humiliation of the Cross before He was exalted to His rightful place in Heaven. Moses had to spend 40 years in the desert before God commissioned him to deliver the Jews from Egypt. Joseph spent the better part of thirteen years in jail before God lifted him to a position of power in Egypt. David spent many years as a fugitive before he was crowned King of Israel. Incidentally, David wrote many of the Psalms that comfort and encourage us today during those despairing years of being pursued by King Saul who wanted to kill him.

Warren Wiersbe has stated that one of the evidences of our pride is our impatience with God, and one reason for suffering is that we might learn patience (James 1:1–6). Here Peter was recalling words he heard the Lord Jesus say: “*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*” (Luke 14:11).¹

When we have this kind of relationship with God, we can obey the words of 1 Peter 5:7 NIV, which reads:

*Cast **all** your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

This verse is like many of God's promises. He makes a promise but specifies what we have to do in order to receive the benefits of that promise. In this case the benefit of receiving God's care for ourselves, of having Him intervene and grant us His peace, requires us first to cast **all** our anxiety on Him.

What is meant here by “*cares*”? The Amplified Bible includes these words in the translation: “*anxieties, worries, concerns.*” In fact let's read this verse from the

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Hopeful*. Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, c1982, p. 136.

Amplified Bible:

*Casting **the whole** of your care—**all** your anxieties, **all** your worries, **all** your concerns, once and **for all**—on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.”(1 Peter 5:7, Amplified Bible)*

Wiersbe comments that we must not hand our anxieties to God piecemeal, keeping those cares that we think we can handle ourselves. He points out that “If we keep *the little cares* for ourselves, they will soon become big problems. Each time a new burden arises, we must by faith remind the Lord (and ourselves) that we have already turned it over to Him.”²

Note that little word *all* in verse 7. We don’t pick and choose which burdens and anxieties we give to God. Verse 7 says give “*all*” to Him. Some well-meaning theologians have taught that we shouldn’t bother God with the little things. After all, they say, God gave us a brain and we are to use it to figure out and take care of some things. True, God gave us wonderful and marvelous brains and if that brain is really working, it will tell us it is wise to take everything, big and small, to God and ask for direction in how to use the wonderful brain He gave us (James 1:5; Matthew 7:7; Proverbs 2:3-6).

Peter was one individual who had the personal experience of God caring for His own. He had seen Jesus heal his mother-in-law (Mark 1:29–31); Christ had helped him pay his taxes (Matthew 17:24–27), and had given him a great catch of fish on more than one occasion (Luke 5:1–11; John 21:3-6). Jesus repaired the damage when Peter cut off the ear of Malchus (Luke 22:50–51; John 18:10–11), and even delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12).

How does God show His love and care for us when we give our cares to Him? Again Wiersbe suggests that God performs four wonderful ministries on our behalf.

- (1) **He gives us the courage to face our cares honestly and not run away.** “*Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*” (Isaiah 41:10 NAS)
- (2) **He gives us the wisdom to understand the situation.** “*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.* (James 1:5 NAS)
- (3) **He gives us the strength to do what we must do.** “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*” (Philippians 4:13 NAS)
- (4) **He gives us the faith to trust Him to do the rest.** “*Commit your way to the*

² Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Peter 5:5.

LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.” (Psalm 37:5 NAS)³

It’s important to avoid the concept that God is our magic genie. He is not! Submission is the key. If we consider God to be a genie, then we are in control, commanding Him to do our bidding. That is almost blasphemous. Rather we submit to God first. We acknowledge He is Lord and that He is in control. Look back at verse 6, “*humble yourselves. . . under the mighty hand of God.*” Get the sequence right and then you will reap the benefits.

Now let’s move on to the next important message Peter has for us in this chapter.

1 Peter 5:8,9 NAS:

8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

9 Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.

It is very interesting that in verse six we have a picture of our mighty God, and in verse 8 we have a caution about the devil roaming about as a hungry lion. And what do we see in the middle? You and me with cares and anxieties. That’s no accident. When we are torn with burdens and anxieties we have a choice. We are in the middle between a powerful, loving God who wants to help us and an enemy who wants to devour and destroy us. Satan is one contributor to our cares and problems. He is the Christian’s adversary, our enemy. The word devil means *accuser* and *slanderer*. Christ said that the devil “. . .was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies” (John 8:44 NAS).

Recall that Peter earlier in the book had encouraged his readers by writing:

1 Peter 4:4,14 NLT:

4 Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you.

14 So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

Now they would meet “the lion” in their fiery trial. Peter is about to give them several practical instructions to help them get victory over their adversary. Warren Wiersbe has also said:

“Since I have no mechanical ability, I admire people who can build and repair things. During a church building program, I was watching an electrician install a complex control panel. I said to the man, ‘It just amazes me how you fellows can calmly work on those lines with all of that power there. How do you do it?’ The

³ Ibid.

electrician smiled and said, “Well, the first thing you have to do is respect it. Then you can handle it.”⁴

We must respect the fact that Satan is a dangerous enemy. Satan is a serpent. Have you ever seen a rattlesnake that can dart quickly and bite you before you know it? Satan is a deceiver and a manipulator. He often comes clothed as a harmless sheep or an angel of light, but he is anything but. Watch out! He really wants to devour you.

From the beginning of time Satan has been out to destroy God’s people. Keep that in mind. Verse 8 opens with the words, “*be sober*,” in some translations. In this case it’s not referring to drinking but to being serious minded and alert. Our culture makes light of Satan and his work by describing him as if he were a cartoon character with red horns and a pitchfork, and with sayings like, “the devil made me do it.” We hear the word “devilish” or the phrase “oh, you little devil” used to refer to light-hearted mischief. All this is a carefully laid plan of Satan’s to keep us from taking him seriously. He is strong and clever and has an army to assist him in his tactics against us.

Because Satan is so subtle at times, we must constantly “be vigilant” and always on guard. His strategy is to counterfeit whatever God does. According to the Parable of the Tares, wherever God plants a true Christian, Satan seeks to plant a counterfeit.⁵ Turn if you will to Matthew 13 and follow along as we read a parable told by Jesus explaining how Satan works. Matthew 13:24–30 ESV:

*24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,
25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.
26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.
27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’
28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’
29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.
30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time (Judgment Day)⁶ I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat (believers)⁷ into my barn.’ ”*

Satan would succeed in deceiving us were it not for the Word of God and the Spirit of God. John wrote this in 1 John 2:18–27, The Message:

⁴ Op cit.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ My addition for clarification.

⁷ Ibid.

18 Children, time is just about up. You heard that Antichrist is coming. Well, they're all over the place, antichrists everywhere you look. That's how we know that we're close to the end.

19 They left us, but they were never really with us. If they had been, they would have stuck it out with us, loyal to the end. In leaving, they showed their true colors, showed they never did belong.

20 But you belong. The Holy One anointed you, and you all know it.

21 I haven't been writing this to tell you something you don't know, but to confirm the truth you do know, and to remind you that the truth doesn't breed lies.

22 So who is lying here? It's the person who denies that Jesus is the Divine Christ, that's who. This is what makes an antichrist: denying the Father, denying the Son.

23 No one who denies the Son has any part with the Father, but affirming the Son is an embrace of the Father as well.

24 Stay with what you heard from the beginning, the original message. Let it sink into your life. If what you heard from the beginning lives deeply in you, you will live deeply in both Son and Father.

25 This is exactly what Christ promised: eternal life, real life!

26 I've written to warn you about those who are trying to deceive you.

27 But they're no match for what is embedded deeply within you—Christ's anointing, no less! You don't need any of their so-called teaching. Christ's anointing teaches you the truth on everything you need to know about yourself and him, uncontaminated by a single lie. Live deeply in what you were taught.⁸

The better we know God's Word, the better we will be in detecting Satan at work and know the true from the false. Again John writes in 1 John 4:1–6 ESV:

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁸ Eugene Peterson, *The Message*.

1 Peter 5:9 instructs us to resist Satan. This is an active position. How do we resist? Peter says, “*be firm in your faith,*” and “*know you are not alone.*”

To be firm in our faith means we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior from sin and have made Him Lord of our lives (verse 6) and that we know the Word of God, the Bible, thoroughly. This is the foundation on which we stand so we can resist the devil. We wear the complete armor of God as described by Paul in Ephesians 6:10–18 ESV:

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

It is important **never** to get involved in a dialog with Satan or his associates. Eve made that mistake, and the human race has been dealing with the consequences ever since. Also, never try to fight Satan in your own way. Jesus is our model for how to resist Satan most effectively. Let us see just how Jesus resisted Satan in Matthew 4:1-11, The Message:

1 Next Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test. The Devil was ready to give it.

*2 **Jesus prepared for the Test by fasting forty days and forty nights.** That left him, of course, in a state of extreme hunger,*

*3 which the Devil took advantage of in the **first test:** “Since you are God’s Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread.”*

4 Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth.”

*5 For the **second test** the Devil took him to the Holy City. He sat him on*

top of the Temple and said,

6 “*Since you are God’s Son, **jump.**” The Devil goaded him by quoting Psalm 91: “He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you so that you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone.”*

7 Jesus countered with another citation from Deuteronomy: “Don’t you dare test the Lord your God.”

8 For the **third test**, the Devil took him on the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth’s kingdoms, how glorious they all were.

9 Then he said, “They’re yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they’re yours.”

10 Jesus’ refusal was curt: “Beat it, Satan!” He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: “Worship the Lord your God, and only him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness.”

11 The Test was over. The Devil left. And in his place, angels! Angels came and took care of Jesus’ needs.⁹

In each temptation, Jesus answered by quoting Scripture. He used God’s Word to respond to Satan. So we must be familiar with the Bible so that we know what to say when tempted. It is a good practice to memorize verses that can come to our aid when we need them.

Another source of strength cited in verse 9 is to remember you are not alone in your trials. Other Christians struggle with the same experiences of suffering. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:13 NAS that

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Our temptations or trials are “*common*”; that is, your brothers and sisters in Christ are faced with similar situations. Also, the Christian is never alone because God is always with us. He has said, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” (Hebrews 13:5).

Peter learned these instructions the hard way. He may have been recalling the night Jesus was arrested. If he had known these things then, he may not have gone to sleep in the Garden of Gethsemane, or attacked Malchus (cut off his ear), or denied Jesus. He did not take the Lord’s warning “*to watch and pray lest you enter into temptation*” seriously (Mark 14:37-40); in fact, he argued with the Lord. Nor did Peter recognize Satan when the adversary inflated his ego with pride, told him he did not have to *watch and pray*, and then motivated him to use his sword. Had Peter listened to the Lord and resisted the enemy, he would have escaped all those failures. Both Peter and James give us the same formula for success: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). It is an important lesson God wants us to keep in mind

⁹ Op. cit.

always. Before we can stand before Satan, we must bow before Jesus. Peter resisted Jesus and ended up submitting to Satan.¹⁰

1 Peter 5:10-14 NLT:

10 In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.

11 All power to him forever! Amen.

12 I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you. Stand firm in this grace.

*13 Your sister church here in **Babylon** sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark.*

14 Greet each other with Christian love. Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.¹¹

Verse 10 assures us that our various trials are only temporary (1 Peter 1:6), but the glory that results is *eternal*. Paul made this same point in 2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT: “*For our present troubles are quite small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurable great glory that will last forever!*”

Do you remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:24–27?

24 “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.

25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.

26 But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.

27 When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” (NLT)

The foundation is essential. It makes all the difference as to whether we stand or fall. If our foundation is not on Christ and the Word of God, we will give in to Satan and will be “*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*” as we read in Ephesians 4:14.

¹⁰ Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Peter 5:10.

¹¹ Apparently Paul’s companion Silvanus, or Silas (Acts 15:22; 18:5), is the scribe who wrote as Peter dictated the letter (1 Pet. 5:12). “Babylon” is often used here in some translations in the place of “Rome” (5:13). The earliest understanding of “Babylon” interprets it as referring to Rome. Other interpretations that were held later are the ancient city of Babylon, a city in Egypt named Babylon, or a cryptogram for a place of exile. The majority of scholars favor Rome as the place of writing and take “Babylon” as a symbolic designation for the city, as in Revelation 17:5, 9 and 18:2, 10, 21.

1 Peter 5:10 is a wonderful promise. It gives hope, something to cling to, when you can't see the outcome. Some years ago when Betty was going through a crisis, God gave her this verse to cling to. At the time she couldn't see how it could ever be. But now, many years later, she sees the truth of this verse. When we submit ourselves to God during suffering and cling to His Word, resisting Satan, God will perfect us, that is, He will make us mature and complete. He will ground you securely and establish your faith on His firm foundation. What more could we hope for? What a wonderful promise!

Now this is such an easy thing to say. It is far more difficult to live through. Clinging to God's promises and resisting Satan made Christ sweat drops of blood. And it can feel as if we are gritting our teeth and that it is impossible to hold on for another minute. But our God is there and He holds on to us. He strengthens us second by second, minute by minute. No it is not easy, but it does yield worthwhile results.

When an unbeliever goes through suffering, he/she loses their hope; but for a believer, suffering should only increase their hope, if we respond to it as God directs. François Fénelon, a French theologian and writer who lived between 1651 and 1715, has written, "Happy is the soul that commits itself, by a sincere self-abandonment, into the hands of its Creator, ready to do all His will, and continually crying, 'Lord, what would You have me to do? Teach me to do your will, for You are my God!'" (Acts 9:6; Psalm 143:10)."¹²

In this process God builds our character. When we cooperate with Him in that process, God gets all the glory. Paul outlined this progression when he wrote in Romans 5:3,4: "*Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*" God builds character and brightens hope when a believer trusts Him and depends on His grace. The result is that God receives the glory forever and ever.¹³

Peter closes his letter with greetings and with a blessing. He opened the letter with a greeting of peace (1 Peter 1:2), so the entire epistle points to "God's peace" from beginning to end. What a wonderful way to end a letter that announced the coming of a fiery trial.¹⁴

Peter has given to us a valuable letter that encourages us to hope in the Lord no matter how trying the times may be. Down through the centuries, the Church has experienced various fiery trials, and yet Satan has not been able to destroy it.¹⁵ The gates of Hell have not prevailed and they never will. We can have hope because we know that God wins. Satan will one day be destroyed and we will live with Christ in peace, love, and joy. God will be glorified and worshiped forever. Then we will look back at our fiery trials and say it was worth it all!

¹² François Fénelon, *The Inner Life*.

¹³ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Peter 5:10.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.