

HOPE AGAIN: When Life Hurts and Dreams Fade

STUDY FIFTEEN

Hope Beyond Dissatisfaction: A Formula That
Brings Relief*1 Peter 5:5–7*

No attitude is more important to those who wish to be truly successful than humility before the mighty hand of God.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHAT does success look like? Is it the businessman whose savvy financial decisions amassed millions of dollars? Maybe it looks more like the famous actress whose face is recognized by people across the globe? Or is “success” synonymous with “power”—like the political authority a nation’s leader wields? Perhaps the successful person is the one who maximizes personal pleasure—someone whose life mantra is, “Eat, drink, and be merry”

Countless people across the globe have achieved grand wealth, global fame, great power, and endless pleasures. Yet many of these “successful” people will admit that their hearts have deep desires for something more . . . *relief*.

If we find ourselves tempted to see success as the world does, then it’s time to reconsider what true success is. And instead of living for those fleeting idols, we must choose to let *God’s* definition of success shape our convictions.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will open the letter of 1 Peter to consider the one character trait that will lead someone toward achieving success by God’s standard. Only by cultivating this quality will someone be able to find true contentment in his or her soul.



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1 Peter 5:5–7



PREPARE YOUR HEART

When you feel shackled by the anxieties of life, humbly admit your need to God, and allow Him to release you from your heavy bonds. As you prepare to open His Word today, pray to Him, and allow Him to lift the weight of worry off your soul.

Father, I want to achieve success by Your standards—not by the standards of the world. As I search the Scriptures today, help me find true relief as I pursue Christlike virtues like faithfulness, love, and humility. In Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In the previous section of 1 Peter, the apostle offered specific instructions to the “elders” of the church community—to those revered servant-leaders whose lives reflected the character of Christ (1 Peter 5:1–4). He exhorted these elders to serve God’s flock as caring shepherds.

In the next section, Peter by contrast turns his attention to “you who are younger” (5:5). What kind of relationship did Peter exhort these younger people to maintain with their spiritual shepherds?

In the remainder of 5:5–7, Peter described the one virtue that allows a believer to carry out such a command.



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Observation: A Command, a Reason, a Result, a Means

Peter carefully constructed his instructions in *1 Peter 5:5–7*. He opened the passage with an essential command. Then, he went on to offer a *reason* for the command, a *result* of the command, and a *means* by which a believer can carry out this command. Look for these elements as you observe this passage.¹

A Command: What charge did Peter give to “all of you” in *5:5* regarding their relationships with one another?

A Reason: According to *5:5*, why is it important for communities of believers to obey Peter’s command?

A Result: In *5:6*, Peter reiterated his initial command, but this time he added some additional color. What will happen in the future to those who heed Peter’s words? What contrast do you see in this verse?



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A Means: According to 1 Peter 5:7, how can a believer practically carry out Peter’s command from 5:5?

“He cares about you” (5:7). *What a relief!* Jesus cares about even your smallest fears and worries. So give them over to Him. As you cast off your anxiety, you will grow in dependence on Him and so clothe yourself with true humility.



Interpretation: Relief for the Soul

As Peter brought his first letter to its conclusion, he narrowed his gaze on one essential virtue: humility. The Greek noun for humility is *tapeinophrosyne*, and the Greek verb that describes humble behavior is *tapeinoo*. Look up these words in the Greek dictionary available at billmounce.com. Based on your study, define biblical “humility” in your own words.



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In the Old Testament, “the mighty hand of God” (see *1 Peter 5:6* NASB) referred to the absolute power of the God of Israel. Look up *Exodus 3:19–20* and *Deuteronomy 9:26–29*. Based on these passages, what kinds of actions does this mighty hand of God accomplish? (For help, look at page 266 of Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s commentary, *Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter*.) How does trusting in God’s mighty hand lead a believer to better cultivate humility?

When we truly humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, we willingly accept His discipline, and we gratefully acknowledge His deliverance from those awful days and nights of loneliness and shattering disappointment and humiliation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to *1 Peter 5:7*, a believer demonstrates true humility by *not* worrying. In what ways can worrying about life’s troubles reveal pridefulness?

You want a simple formula for relief? Watch closely. Submission plus humility minus worry equals relief. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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 **Correlation: Humble Wisdom**

In *1 Peter 5:5*, the apostle quotes *Proverbs 3:34*, which sits nestled within a series of similar proverbs that share a similar theme. As you read *Proverbs 3:32–35*, note the contrast in each verse between the actions and characteristics of a faithful follower of God and the one who rejects God and His ways. Record the descriptions in the chart below.

Proverb	Faithful Person	Unfaithful Person
3:32		
3:33		
3:34		
3:35		

As you look at your chart, what kinds of characteristics go with humility?

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Based on these proverbs, how does God treat those who pursue humility? How do these verses relate to the message of *1 Peter 5:5–7*?

Humility is an essential ingredient in the recipe for godliness. And a godly life is a full life . . . a *successful* life. And living a life pleasing to God is the only way to find contentment, satisfaction, and relief for the soul.



Application: Our Great Need

In his application of *1 Peter 5:5–7*, Pastor Chuck identifies three “needs” for every Christian who wants to succeed by God’s standards and find true relief for the soul:

1. *We need discipline to restrain our own hellish pride.*
2. *We need direction so we can know to whom we should submit.*
3. *We need discernment so we can spot the beginning of anxiety.*

Which of your personal successes leads you to feel a sense of sinful pride? What practical steps can you take to restrain these feelings of pride and embrace humility?



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Whom has God placed over you in a position of authority? In what ways do you find it difficult to submit to these authorities? How can pursuing humility help you better navigate your relationships with these people?

What worries burden your soul today? What would it look like for you to admit humbly that you cannot bear the weight of them any longer? In what practical ways can you cast your anxieties on to Jesus and allow His mighty hand to carry the load for you?

What does success look like by God's standards? *Humility*. This virtue is the glue that binds us to our loving God who cares deeply for us. So stop grasping on to your fears, worries, and anxieties. You can't bear them on your own. Hand them over to Him. It is His joy to carry them for you.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I can't make it through this life on my own. So thank You for caring for me—for always being willing to carry the burden of my deepest fears and worries. Help me trust Your mighty hand, and give me the strength to clothe myself with humility today, tomorrow, and for the rest of my days. I pray these things in Jesus' strong name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

