

THE DANGER OF LORDSHIP.

1 Pet.5:1-7

Beloved in the Lord:

The beloved apostle Peter, writing as a fellow elder, admonishes those in governmental leadership not to be "lording it over possessions, but to be examples to the flock" - 1 Pet.5:3. He remembered the grace of the Lord in restoring him before his brethren, after denying Him thrice. The Lord entrusted Peter with that dearest to Himself, His lambs and His sheep, to feed and tend them - John 21:15-17. In love, Peter now appeals to his co-elders to serve and rule in love for the flock. This love must be divine and pure, for pride and self is to be judged in order to rule for the Saviour's glory.

THE DANGER OF LORDSHIP - The leadership can turn into "lordship", which indicates the mistake of forgetting the flock is not their's, BUT GOD'S. The Apostle Paul and Apostle John were both aware of this - Acts 20:28-30; 3 John. At the Last Passover and institution of the Lord's Supper this peril appeared: - "There was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And He said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, but it shall not be so; he that is greatest among you, let him be the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" - Luke 22:24-26.

This danger is prominent among saints today; caused by the growing clerical and democratic spirit prevailing greatly. It's existence indicates that leaders forget that God's flock is not theirs, BUT HIS! - while they seek the pre-eminence. All who assume leadership "must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief" - Heb. 13:17. It is not merely giving account for the condition of the sheep; most of all to give account to God for their conduct toward the sheep! Peter declares that divine approval of the leadership is when they are EXAMPLES to the flock. The great responsibility of leadership is LEADING BY EXAMPLE. See Hebrews 13:7.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBMISSION - The spirit of submission between younger and older brethren is the Spirit of God's exhortation, to prevent a widening breach. "Likewise, ye younger submit yourselves to the elder" He writes, which can mean when not in agreement! Here is a divine principle that younger brethren respectfully be subject to godly elders. Why such counsel given? There is the danger of young brethren exercising their own wills, when not having a spirit of submission; and insisting the introduction of innovations among the flock, that are natural to youth in their appeal. This can be contrary to the spiritual experiences of elder brethren and if done may result "in the blind leading the blind and both fall into the ditch" - Matt. 15:4. It can also be contrary to the Word of God!

All are encouraged to "be subject one to another", for the spirit of submission prevailing among the saints, will produce the precious fruit of humility among all. It has been stated by a servant of God - THE GREATEST MISSION IN THE WORLD IS SUB-MISSION!

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY - "Be clothed with humility" Peter writes. How important it is to acknowledge that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble". What a terrible curse pride is; but there is tremendous power in humility! How needful to heed the words following - "Humble yourselves therefore UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, that HE may exalt you in due time, casting ALL your care upon Him". Was it not the MIGHTY hand of God that crushed and bruised His beloved Son, which proved that He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" - Phil. 2:8. Then how can we do less than heed the exhortation - "Let this mind be in YOU, which was also in Christ Jesus" - Phil.2:5. Surely, he that is too big to be little, is too little to be big!

Woulds't thou be chief? Then lowly serve!
Woulds't thou go up? - Then go down!
But go down as low as you will -
The Highest has been lower still.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

