

Exegetical Notes for 1 Peter 5:5

KEY

ACC = Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI (Gerald Bray, Ed.)

ATR = Word Pictures in the New Testament (A.T. Robertson).

BAG = Bauer Arndt and Gingrich: A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.

BKBC = Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John, Hebrews - Revelation (Craig A. Evans, Gen. Ed.).

B&W = Syntax of New Testament Greek (James A. Brooks and Carlton Winbery).

Barclay = The Letters of James and Peter: Daily Study Bible Series (William Barclay).

Bullinger = Figures of Speech Used in the Bible (E.W. Bullinger).

Calvin = Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XXII (John Calvin).

DNTT = The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Colin Brown, Gen. Ed.).

Fickett = Peter's Principles: A Bible Commentary for Laymen (Harold L. Fickett, Jr.).

Grudem = Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1 Peter (Wayne Grudem).

Grudem2 = Systematic Theology (Wayne Grudem).

Guthrie = New Testament Introduction (Donald Guthrie).

Expositors = The Expositor's Greek New Testament: Volume Five (W. Robertson Nicoll, Ed.).

Keener = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Craig S. Keener).

Leighton = 1 & 2 Peter: The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Robert Leighton).

Lewis = Integrative Theology (Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest).

MacArthur = MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter (John MacArthur).

Maclaren = Expositions of Holy Scripture: 1 Peter (Alexander Maclaren).

Metzger = A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (Bruce M. Metzger).

Michaels = 1 Peter Word Biblical Commentary (J. Ramsey Michaels).

Morgan = The Westminster Pulpit (Volume VIII) (G. Campbell Morgan).

NLEKGNT = New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament.

Schreiner = The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude (Thomas R. Schreiner).

Shedd = Dogmatic Theology (W.G.T. Shedd), 3rd edition.

Kittle = Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (G. Kittle and G. Friedrich, Eds.).

Turnbull = Proclaiming the New Testament: Volume 5 (Ralph Turnbull, Ed.).

Vincent = Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament (Marvin R. Vincent).

Wuest = First Peter in the Greek New Testament (Kenneth S. Wuest).

Basic Diagram of 5:5

Ὁμοίως,
νεώτεροι,
ὑποτάγητε
πρεσβυτέροις·
πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις
τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε,

ὅτι [ὁ θεὸς
ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται,
ταπεινοὶς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

**You young 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.**

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT:

Ὀμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις· πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι [ὁ] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

You young 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.

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- I. Younger believers must be subject to the elders
- II. All believers are to be clothed with humility
- III. God is opposed to the proud and gives grace to the humble

INITIAL SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Looking Up: Be Considerate of your Spiritual Leaders
- II. Looking Out: Be Considerate of One Another
- III. Looking Good: What Humility Does and Doesn't Look Like

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): The mandate for subjection to spiritual leaders and humility toward one another.

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): The younger are especially to be considerate of the elders, while everyone is to be clothed with humility, for God is opposed to the proud but grants grace to the humble.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Be sure God likes what you're wearing.

PURPOSE OF THE SERMON (on the basis of the CPT what does God want us to learn and do?): God by your grace grant us humility!

SERMON SUBJECT/THEME (what am I talking about):

SERMON COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what am I saying about what I am talking about):

INITIAL CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: Be sure God likes what you're wearing.

MEMORABLE CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: Be sure God likes what you're wearing.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: The Greatness of Being Least

FINAL SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Looking Up: Humility as Submission to the Elders (5a)

II. Looking Out: Humility as Consideration for One Another (5b)

Why does God esteem humility and hate pride?

- 1) It is an affront to His majesty
- 2) It is an affront to His sufficiency

What does a prideful, self-centered person look like?

- 1) Is self-centered; likes to talk about themselves and their accomplishments
- 2) Always has to be right
- 3) Loves the spotlight
- 4) Has to have things their way according to their desires or convenience
- 5) Gets angry easy
- 6) Is self-righteous
- 7) Is like Diotrephes

What does a humble person look like?

- 1) Hate his sin more than the sin of others
- 2) Is a servant to others
- 3) Isn't out to make a name for himself
- 4) Doesn't always have to be right
- 5) Demonstrates genuine love and care
- 6) Defers to the needs of others
- 7) Is like Christ

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

See context notes on 5:1-4.

This verse is strongly connected to 5:1-4 and serves as a bridge to vv. 6 ff. The word "likewise" (ὁμοίως) points backward, as does the word "elders." And the words "submit" (ὑποτάσσω) and "humility" (ταπεινοφροσύνη) point forwards.

Three Steps of Exegesis

- ❶ Do an initial translation of the entire passage.
- ❷ Do a detailed analysis of the grammar, working verse-by-verse to the end of the passage.
- ❸ Do a detailed exegesis of the passage by way of a "shot-gun" approach, using all the exegetical tools.
 - √ In no particular order:
 - Work from critical commentaries to practical.
 - Word studies and cross-references (analogy of the faith).
 - Applicational analysis - applicational issues arising from the text.
 - Theological analysis - theological issues arising from the text.
 - √ "Blast away" at the passage until I am content with my exegesis, main idea, and outline.
 - Smooth away all of the wrinkles.
 - The process is to yield an accurate "statue" as I chisel away the debris.

Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs:	ποιμάννατε (ποιμαινω = to tend, shepherd Verb: Second Person Plural Aorist Imperative Active). ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπω = to reveal, disclose Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).
Nouns:	παθημάτων, (παθημά = suffering Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).
Participles:	μελλούσης (μελλω = to be about to Present Active Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular).
Adjectives:	(ἐπιεικής = gentle, kind Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).
Pronouns:	(ἐγώ = I First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Nominative Singular). ὑμῖν (συ = you Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural). (αὐτός = He, Him Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular). (τοῦτο = this Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

5:5 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις· πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι [ὁ] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοὶς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

ὁμοίως, (ὁμοίως = likewise).

νεώτεροι, (νεώτερος – comp. of νεός = young; here: young man || Adjective: Masculine Vocative Plural). Vocative of Direct Address.

ὑποτάγητε (ὑποτάσσω = to submit || Verb: Second Person Plural, Aorist Imperative Passive). Imperative of Command.

πρεσβυτέροις (πρεσβυτέρος = elders || Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.
"Here the antithesis between younger and elder shows that the word refers to age, not to office as in 5:1." [ATR] Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1,17.

πάντες (πας = all, every || Adjective: Masculine Vocative Plural). Vocative of Direct Address. Every one of you regardless of age or class.

δὲ ἀλλήλοις (ἀλλήλων = one another, each other || Reciprocal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην (ταπεινοφροσύνη = humility || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Manner.

ἐγκομβώσασθε (ἐγκομβοομαι = to clothe or tie on oneself || Verb: Second Person Plural, Aorist Imperative Middle). Imperative of Command. Reflexive Middle.

"Pollux explains (ἐγκομβ. as the apron worn by slaves to protect their tunic . . ." [Expositors]. Derived from κομβός, a *roll, band, or girth: a knot or roll of cloth*, made in tying or tucking up any part of the dress. The kindred word ἐγκομβωμα, from which the verb is directly formed means *a slave's apron*, under which the loose garments were girt up. . . . Hence the figure carries an exhortation to put on humility as a working virtue employed in ministry." [Vincent] Vincent adds that Bengel paraphrases the thought as: "Put on and wrap yourselves about with humility, so that the covering of humility cannot possibly be stripped from you." Cf. Jesus girding himself with a towel in John 13. Cf. Peter's interest (13:9ff.). Peter learned the lesson: John 21:15-19.

ὅτι ὁ θεός (θεός || Noun: Masculine Nominative Singular). Subject Nominative.

ὑπερηφάνοις (ὑπερηφάνος = proud, arrogant || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Disadvantage. Cf. James 4:6; Romans 1:30.

ἀντιτάσσεται (ἀντιτάσσομαι = oppose || Verb: Third Person Singular, Present Indicative Middle). Descriptive Present. To resist. A strong / graphic word. It's to set in array against (as in military). Pride calls out God's anger. Cf. Mark 7:22, James 4:6.

ταπεινοὶς (ταπεινός = humble || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Advantage. Cf. Matt. 11:29.

δὲ δίδωσιν (δίδωμι = to give || Verb: Third Person Singular, Present Indicative Active). Descriptive Present.

χάρις. (χαρις= grace || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Direct Object.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

You young 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.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

You young men, likewise, be subject to your elders. (ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους)

Likewise (ὁμοίως) marks another transition. Cf. 3:1 and 3:7 where the NASB translates "in the same way".

νεώτεροι,(νεώτερος – comp. of νεος = young; here: young man; or young people || Adjective: Masculine Vocative Plural). Vocative of Direct Address.

b. on the basis of the 'young'—α. positive (οἱ) νέοι the young people (, Cyr. 5, 1, 25; 14, 115, 3; 2 Macc 5:13; 6:28; 15:17; , C. Ap. 2, 206) οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (πρεσβύτερος 1a) 1:3; 3:3; 21:6. σκοπὸν παῶσι τοῖς νέοις τιθέναι set a goal for all the young people 19:1 (οἱ νέοι for young people of both sexes: 8, 187 H.).—αἱ νέαι the young women Tit 2:4. [BAG]

ὑποτάγητε (ὑποτάσσω = to submit || Verb: Second Person Plural, Aorist Imperative Passive). Imperative of Command.

πρεσβυτέρους(πρεσβύτερος= elders || Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object. "Here the antithesis between younger and elder shows that the word refers to age, not to office as in 5:1." [ATR] Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1,17.

Note the shift from talking about elders as leaders to young men being subject to their elders. There is debate as to how exactly is Peter using the word here. It's clear that the word πρεσβύτερος refers to those holding the office of elder in verse 1. However, does it mean the same thing here, or is Peter shifting the meaning to all older men in the congregation (cf. Calvin).

Note JFB:

5. ye younger—The deacons were originally the younger men, the presbyters older; but subsequently as presbyter expressed the office of Church ruler or teacher, so Greek "neoterōs" means not (as literally) young men in age, but subordinate ministers and servants of the Church. So Christ uses the term "younger." For He explains it by "he that doth serve," literally, "he that ministereth as a deacon"; just as He explains "the greatness" by "he that is chief," literally, "he that ruleth," the very word applied to the bishops or presbyters. So "the young men" are undoubtedly the deacons of the Church of Jerusalem, of whom, as being all Hebrews, the

Hellenistic Christians subsequently complained as neglecting their Grecian widows, whence arose the appointment of the seven others, Hellenistic deacons. So here, Peter, having exhorted the presbyters, or elders, not to lord it over those committed to them, adds, Likewise ye neoters or younger, that is, subordinate ministers and deacons, submit cheerfully to the command of the elders [Mosheim]. There is no Scripture sanction for "younger" meaning laymen in general (as Alford explains): its use in this sense is probably of later date. The "all of you" that follows, refers to the congregation generally; and it is likely that, like Paul, Peter should notice, previous to the general congregation, the subordinate ministers as well as the presbyters, writing as he did to the same region (Ephesus), and to confirm the teaching of the apostle of the Gentiles. [JFB]

Some have proposed that the "younger" here refers to a sub-class of church leaders, akin to deacons. Cf. Acts 5:6. But this is unlikely (cf. Michaels, who mentions but rejects this idea, 288-89). K. Wuest adopts the interpretation saying that such guilds of younger men that existed in Asia Minor.

In 1 Clement, written from Rome a decade or two after 1 Peter (see Introduction), the uprising of "the young against the old" (lit. "elders," 3.3; cf. Isa 3:5) is later explained as "the steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians rebelling against its elders" (1 Clem. 47.6; cf. 44.3-6; see also 54.2b, "only let the flock of Christ have peace with the elders set over it"). [Michaels, 289]

1 Clement 47:

Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached?(2) Truly, under the inspiration(3) of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos,(4) because even then parties(5) had been formed among you. But that inclination for one above another entailed less guilt upon you, inasmuch as your partialities were then shown towards apostles, already of high reputation, and towards a man whom they had approved. But now reflect who those are that have perverted you, and lessened the renown of your far-famed brotherly love. It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession,(6) that such a thing should be heard of as that the most stedfast and ancient Church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters. And this rumour has reached not only us, but those also who are unconnected(7) with us; so that, through your infatuation, the name of the Lord is blasphemed, while danger is also brought upon yourselves.

1 Clement 44:

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and there would be strife on account of the office(1) of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed those [ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions,(2) that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them,(3) or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blame-lessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry. For our sin will not be small, if we eject from(1) the episcopate(4) those who have blamelessly and holily fulfilled its duties.(5) Blessed are those presbyters who, having finished their course before now,

have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure [from this world]; for they have no fear lest any one deprive them of the place now appointed them. But we see that ye have removed some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly and with honour.

1 Clement 54:

Who then among you is noble-minded? who compassionate? who full of love? Let him declare, "If on my account sedition and disagreement and schisms have arisen, I will depart, I will go away whithersoever ye desire, and I will do whatever the majority(15) commands; only let the flock of Christ live on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it." He that acts thus shall procure to himself great glory in the Lord; and every place will welcome(16) him. For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."(17) These things they who live a godly life, that is never to be repented of, both have done and always will do.

The use of "likewise" which doesn't mean "act the same way" but "continuing the same subject" (So Grudem). This would not be a clause that would be used to introduce a new subject (older men in general as opposed to the pastors of v. 1).

It is also possible that the word "elders" shifts meaning in this verse, so that in vv. 1-4 the reference is to those who are in an official position of authority, but now Peter turned to those who that are older. This solution is possible, but it seems unlikely, for the interpretation that does not require a change in definition for the term "elders" should be preferred. And the verse is tied quite closely to the previous section with the term "likewise" (*homoios*, deleted in the NIV). We have seen in 3:1 and 3:7 that the term "likewise" binds paragraphs together when complementary entities are addressed (e.g., husbands and wives). Another possibility is to limit the "younger" to a part of the congregation. Perhaps the young are those who young in faith, neophytes who have been recently baptized, or perhaps as in Titus 2:6-8 those who are young are given a particular exhortation, especially since young people may tend to be more independent and less inclined to submit to those in authority. The former notion is quite unlikely, for the evidence is insufficient to indicate that the term "younger" refers to those who are recent converts. Further, the argument depends upon alleged parallels to the Qumran literature, and such parallels are not firmly established. Nor is it likely that we have a reference to young people recently appointed as elders. It is possible that "younger" refers to entire congregation, which is contrasted to the elders. If this interpretation is correct, the term "younger" is used because generally speaking the remaining believers are younger in contrast to the elders. The designation "younger" is a suitable "formal counterpart" to "elders." A decision is difficult, but we probably should understand Peter to refer to those who are literally younger, perhaps because younger people would be more apt to act rebelliously. This view is suggested by the address to "all" (*pantes*) that follows the younger—introduced by "and" (NRSV, *de*—unfortunately deleted by the NIV). The "and all" (NRSV) could imply that now the entire congregation is addressed instead of merely the "elders" and the "younger." [Schreiner, 237]

Hilary of Arles:

By "young men" Peter means everyone who occupies a subordinate role in the church. But note that those also are superiors must also act humbly, for humility is what should be common to both. [Introductory Commentary on 1 Peter, cited in ACCOS]

Hilary of Aries (c. 401-449). Archbishop of Arles and leader of the Semi-Pelagian party. Hilary incurred the wrath of Pope Leo I when he removed a bishop from his see and appointed a new bishop. Leo demoted Aries from a metropolitan see to a bishopric to assert papal power over the church in Gaul. [cited in ACCOS]

One would wonder why, in that culture, the younger wouldn't by default respect those older and those in authority. Unless the Greco-Roman world at that time (in contrast to Israel) was not overly conscious of respecting those who are older and in positions of authority.

Age, of course, is relative to some degree. A 30-year old is an elder to an 18-year old, and a 50-year old is young compared to a 70-year old. (why I like to hang out with elderly obese homely people, so I look young, handsome and fit!)

So this is a special charge to the young men (20s and 30s) to submit themselves and their families to the elders of the church who would usually be in their 40s to 60s).

Additional concern that during times of great stress (context of suffering) the younger one's may be more impatient or impulsive in dealing with that persecution. When I was younger I had much more of a "Just kill em' all" mentality.

While the younger men may be more apt to grow impatient or rebel, the Bible is clear that all members of the church are to be in submission to the elders of the church.

It may also be, as Grudem contends, that the word "men" (νεώτεροι, from νεώτερος) is meant in a generic sense of men and women. "The masculine plural noun would be used to refer to a mixed group of men and women as well." [Grudem, 193]

The Epistle of Polycarp (5:3) also uses the same words in expressing the need for the younger to be subject to their elders and deacons, "as to God and Christ."

On submission to the pastors, see 1 Cor. 16:15-16; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7,17. Note 5:1-2.

My contention that today, for the most part, submission to leadership is meaningless. We default to an American rugged individualism where our priesthood as an individual believer trumps any need to submit to anyone.

Revisit principles from the submission outlined in 2:13-3:1. You may disagree with a decision your pastors make, but you need to adopt the attitude that, "They are the ones that will give an account for my soul and I will submit to them." Cf. My submission to the elders at SEVBC.

Is there a time to complain? No! Is there a time to express concern? Yes! Is there a time to break with a church? Yes! It's not an all or nothing proposition!

Smooth relations in the church can be preserved if the entire congregation adorns itself with humility. When believers recognize that they are creatures and sinners, they are less apt to be offended by others. Humility is the oil that allows relationships in the church to run smoothly and lovingly. Pride gets upset when another does not follow our own suggestions. Peter grounded this admonition with a citation from Prov 3:34, which is also quoted in Jas 4:6. The citation is closer to the Septuagint than it is to the Hebrew text, but the meaning in both cases is essentially the same. Believers should heed the injunction to be humble because God sets his face against the proud, but he lavishes his grace upon the humble. Those who submit to God's sovereignty in humility will find that he will lift them up and reward them. [Schreiner, 238]

Perhaps another allusion to Ezekiel 9 (verse 6). From my sermon notes on 5:1-4 in that regard:

B. Peter begins with a word that is curiously omitted by the NIV:

Therefore . . . Yet it's a word that reflects the gravity of the call.

1. The word connects this passage to what we saw in chapter 4 – Namely verse 17

Something we saw back on October 18th ==>

For [it is] time for judgement to begin from the house of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what will [be the] end of those who are disobedient to Gospel of God?

a. Peter is alluding to Ezek. 9

When Peter says ==>

...[it's] time for judgement to begin (lit.) from the house of God...

he uses a phrase "house of God" that was always used to refer to the Temple in the O.T. (LXX).

In Ezekiel 9 – t/Prophet Ezekiel receives a prophetic vision from t/Lord. Remember, Ezekiel writes in the 6th c. BC. He was taken captive along w/his countrymen when Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, captured t/southern K.D. of Judah. Ezekiel speaks prophetically to t/Hebrew captives in Babylon.

In ch. 9 he has a vision in which he sees t/Lord calling 'Executioners' of judgement" come upon Jerusalem to judge her for her sins.

One messenger of God puts a mark on the forehead of all who were found to 'sigh and groan' over the 'abominations' committed in Jerusalem (9:4-5).

Then the executioners of judgement are told to kill all who do not have the mark on their foreheads (9:5-6). The mark is a sign of repentance.

God tells the executioners, 'Begin from my sanctuary,' and Ezekiel adds. 'So they began from the elders who were inside the house' (9:6). The words 'begin from', used twice here, are the same words Peter uses to say that it is time for judgement to 'begin from' the 'house of God'.

So when Peter says in 4:17, "It is time for judgment to begin with the household of God," it is easy to see why he would say in 5:1, "THEREFORE, I exhort the elders among you . . ."

Why does Peter feel the need to exhort the elders? To remind them of their Ministry? Answer: The "fiery ordeal" in 4:12 is a judgment from God that begins with the house of God-and in the house of God begins with the elders, the leaders.

It is a fearful and wonderful thing to serve as an elder in God's house. However, if the elders are to lead t/CH into strength & glory, they will also have to lead t/CH into t/refining fire of God's purifying judgment. They will not stand above t/CH or outside t/CH giving suggestions for how to cope with suffering; they will lead the church into the fire.

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1. The Meaning Of "Be Subject To"

The first reason I think "some to others" is a better understanding of Ephesians 5:21 is the meaning of the Greek word *hypotassō* ("be subject to, submit to"). Although some have claimed that the word can mean "be thoughtful and considerate; act in love" (toward another), there is no hard evidence to show that any first-century Greek speaker would have understood it that way, for the term always implies a relationship of submission to an authority.

Look at how this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament:

- Jesus is subject to the authority of his parents (Luke 2:51)
- demons are subject to the disciples (Luke 10:17: clearly the meaning "act in love, be considerate" cannot fit here!)
- citizens are to be subject to government authorities (Rom. 13:1, 5; Tit. 3:1, 1 Pet. 2:13)
- the universe is subject to Christ (1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22)
- unseen spiritual powers are subject to Christ (1 Pet. 3:22)
- Christ is subject to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:28)
- church members are to be subject to church leaders (1 Cor. 16:15–16 [cf. 1 Clement 42:4]; 1 Pet. 5:5)

- wives are to be subject to their husbands (Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:5; compare Eph. 5:22, 24)
- the church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24)
- servants are to be subject to their masters (Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18)
- Christians are subject to God (Heb. 12:9; Jas. 4:7)

Here is the point: None of these relationships are ever reversed. Husbands are never told to be subject (hypotassō) to wives, nor the government to citizens, nor masters to servants, nor the disciples to demons. Clearly parents are never told to be subject to their children! In fact, the term hypotassō is used outside the NT to describe the submission and obedience of soldiers in an army to those of superior rank (see, for example, Josephus, War 2.566, 578; 5.309; compare the adverb in 1 Clement 37:2). The Liddell-Scott-Jones Lexicon even defines hypotassō [passive] to mean “be obedient” (p. 1897).

Of course, the exact form submission takes, the way it works out in practice, will vary greatly as it applies to soldiers, to children, to servants, to the church, and to wives. Within a healthy Christian marriage, there will be large elements of mutual consultation and seeking of wisdom, and most decisions will come by consensus between husband and wife.

For a wife to be submissive to her husband will probably not often involve obeying actual commands or directives (though it will sometimes include this), for a husband may rather give requests and seek advice and discussion about the course of action to be followed (compare Phlm. 8–9). This is probably why Paul used the broader term “be subject to” when speaking to wives, rather than the specific word “obey” (hypakouō), which he used for children (6:1) and for servants (6:5).

Nevertheless, a wife’s attitude of submission to her husband’s authority will be reflected in numerous words and actions each day which reflect deference to his leadership and an acknowledgment of his final responsibility—after discussion has occurred, where possible—to make decisions affecting the whole family.

But in spite of all these different forms of submission, one thing remains constant in every use of the word: it is never “mutual” in its force; it is always one-directional in its reference to submission to an authority.

And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε,)

Peter moves from the lesser to the greater, from addressing a sub-group to addressing the entire group.

πάντες (πας = all, every || Adjective: Masculine Vocative Plural). Vocative of Direct Address. Every one of you regardless of age or class.

τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην (ταπεινοφροσύνη = humility || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Manner.

The word describes an attitude. The attitude of someone who willingly serves others, even in the most lowly of ways (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 2:5-7).

This was radical; humility was the mark of a slave in Greco-Roman culture. Cf. the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) and our status as "slaves" of Christ.

This is to adopt an attitude (cf. Phil. 2:5). Note Psa. 25:9; Dan. 10:12; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 5:3-5; Eph. 4:1-2; James 4:10.

If we are all humble (includes me and the other elders) we will mutually submit to one another when that is appropriate. Cf. Eph. 5:21 and context.

ἐγκομβώσασθε (ἐγκομβοομαι = to clothe or tie on oneself || Verb: Second Person Plural, Aorist Imperative Middle). Imperative of Command. Reflexive Middle.

"Pollux explains (ἐγκομβ. as the apron worn by slaves to protect their tunic . . ." [Expositors]. Derived from κομβος, a *roll, band, or girth: a knot or roll of cloth*, made in tying or tucking up any part of the dress. The kindred word ἐγκομβωμα, from which the verb is directly formed means *a slave's apron*, under which the loose garments were girt up. . . . Hence the figure carries an exhortation to put on humility as a working virtue employed in ministry." [Vincent] Vincent adds that Bengel paraphrases the thought as: "Put on and wrap yourselves about with humility, so that the covering of humility cannot possibly be stripped from you." Cf. Jesus girding himself with a towel in John 13. Cf. Peter's interest (13:9ff.). Peter learned the lesson: John 21:15-19.

FOR GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. (ὅτι [ὁ] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοὶς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.)

Words gleaned from Prov. 3:34. Peter quotes the LXX verbatim except he substitutes θεος for κυριος.

See greater context of Prov. 3:21-25.

ὑπερηφάνοις (ὑπερηφάνος = proud, arrogant || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Disadvantage. Cf. James 4:6; Romans 1:30.

ἀντιτάσσεται (ἀντιτάσσομαι = oppose || Verb: Third Person Singular, Present Indicative Middle). Descriptive Present. To resist. A strong / graphic word. It's to set in array against (as in military). Pride calls out God's anger. Cf. Mark 7:22, James 4:6.

ταπεινοὶς (ταπεινός = humble || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Advantage. Cf. Matt. 11:29.

"The word 'humble' is the translation of the Greek word rendered 'lowly' in Matt. 11:29, where it describes our Lord's character. The word is found in an early secular document where it speaks of the Nile River in its low stage in the words, 'it runs low.' The word means 'not rising far from

the ground.' It describes the Christian who follows in the humble and lowly steps of his Lord."
[Wuest, 127-28]

δὲ δίδωσιν (δίδωμι = to give || Verb: Third Person Singular, Present Indicative Active). Descriptive Present.

As for the quotation itself, the attentive reader of the epistle will have no difficulty concluding that the "arrogant" are the despisers of the Christian movement mentioned, for example, in 2:12; 3:16; and 4:4-5, while the "humble" are believers themselves, depicted as Peter wants them to be. The present tenses of the verbs ἀντιτασσεται, "opposes" (cf. James 5:6), and δίδωσιν, "gives" are at least in part futuristic. Although divine vindication in 1 Peter is a present certainty (cf. e.g. 3:12), it is fully realized only when "the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13) actually arrives. Peter's final appeal in vv 6-11 (specifically vv. 6b, 10) will be to this future vindication of those who now face ridicule and even suffering at the hands of the "arrogant." [Michaels, 290]

Paul knew from life experience that God gives grace to the humble (see 2 Cor. 12:7-10; cf. Acts 23:3).

Cf. the disciples who wished to be the greatest (Luke 22:24-26).

Search for self-significance. Christian idols today. Cf. Blog post by Dan Philips.

These are the ways in which you are to be humble in your life. First, look into yourself earnestly. Make a true evaluation of yourself. People select the good things in themselves but overlook their own defects. Every man is naturally his own flatterer; otherwise flatteries and false cries from other people would make little impression. They succeed because they are met with the same conceit. But let any man see his ignorance and set what he does not know against what he does know. He should place his secret follies and sins alongside his outward appearance of a blameless life. Then it will be impossible for him not to abase and abhor himself. Second, look on the good in others and tithe evil in yourself. Make that comparison, and you will walk humbly. Most people do just the opposite, and that foolish and unjust comparison puffs them up. Third, you are not required to be ignorant about the good that you genuinely possess. But beware of imagining that you possess what you do not. Fourth, pray much for a spirit of humility, which comes only through the Spirit of Christ. Otherwise, all your vileness will not humble you. When people hear about this grace or that grace, they soon think they possess it themselves and do not consider the natural enmity and rebellion of their own hearts and the necessity of receiving these graces from heaven. Therefore, in using all means of grace, be most dependent on the Divine Influence, and draw that grace to yourself through prayer. [Leighton, 230-31]

Some other quotes and thoughts from Leighton (pages 231-32):

Augustine says truly, "That which first overcame man [pride] is the last thing he overcomes" We need to be continually watching and praying and fighting our pride

'But gives grace to the humble." God's sweet dews and showers of grace slide off the mountains of pride, fall on the low valleys of humble hearts, and make them pleasant and fertile. The blown-up heart, puffed up with a fancy of fullness, has no room for grace. It is lifted up and is not fit to receive the graces that descend from above. "For the Lord bestows his blessings there, where he finds the vessels empty" (The Imitation of 'Christ).

Oh, my brethren, lack of this is the great reason behind everything else we lack. Why should our God bestow on us what we would bestow on our idol, self? Or if you do not idolize yourself, to idolize the thing, the gift that grace bestowed, is to put it in the place of God. Seek, therefore, to have your heart set on seeking grace, and do not rest in any gift or ignore God who gives all gifts. If we had this fixed in our hearts, our prayers would not be unanswered so often. "We are to rest in God above all things, and above all God's gifts" (Imitation of Christ).

This is the only way to grow rich quickly. Come to God in your poverty and desire his riches, not for your own sake, but for his. In everything that you seek to possess, have your eye fixed on God's glory. What you have, use; and what you want, vow that you will use to God's glory. Only concern yourself with God's glory in everything that you seek to possess. Then you will be like Hannah in her prayer for her son: "The LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him [her son Samuel] to the LORD" (1 Samuel 1:27-28).

It is undoubtedly the secret pride and selfishness of our hearts that hinders much of the bounty of God's hand in the measure of our graces. Till we let go of ourselves, the more we will receive from God. How foolish we are if we refuse so blessed an exchange!

Why does God esteem humility and hate pride?

- 1) It is an affront to His majesty
- 2) It is an affront to His sufficiency

What does a prideful, self-centered person look like?

- 1) Is self-centered; likes to talk about themselves and their accomplishments
- 2) Always has to be right
- 3) Loves the spotlight
- 4) Has to have things their way according to their desires or convenience
- 5) Gets angry easy
- 6) Is self-righteous
- 7) Is like Diotrephes

What does a humble person look like?

- 1) Hate his sin more than the sin of others
- 2) Is a servant to others
- 3) Isn't out to make a name for himself
- 4) Doesn't always have to be right
- 5) Demonstrates genuine love and care
- 6) Defers to the needs of others

7) Is like Christ

LEV 19:32 ' You shall rise up before the grayheaded, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the \Lord.\

JOB 22:29 "When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence And the humble person He will save.

ISA 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell {on} a high and holy place, And {also} with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. (NASB)

ISA 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the \Lord\, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (NASB)

ISA 66:2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the \Lord\. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. (NASB)

ROM 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (NASB)

EPH 5:21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. (NASB)

PHI 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; (NASB)

COL 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; (NASB)

HEB 13:17 Obey your leaders, and submit {to them}; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (NASB)

JAM 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore {it} says, "\God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.\" (NASB)

1PE 3:3 And let not your adornment be {merely} external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; (NASB)

1PE 3:4 but {let it be} the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. (NASB)