

HUMILITY AND SERVICE

In 1 Peter 5:5–6, we read the following significant exhortation: "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." If God's people would universally practice this passage, it would prevent most conflicts and problems among brethren.

The thrust of this passage is seen in two concepts: "humility" and "service." We are to **serve** one another **humbly**. Humility is not for mere occasional or seldom use, but for constant wear as our "girding" ("clothing," KJV). The "girding" refers to the girdle or belt which was the sign of a slave. Peter may have even been reflecting on that occasion of more than 30 years before in the upper room in Jerusalem when the Lord "girded" himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4–6). The whole point of that object lesson was to teach His apostles exactly what Peter here exhorted all saints to do: to humbly serve one another.

The motivation of their humble service related to God's attitude toward such unselfish behavior. Those who are proud (and thus can never serve, but must always be served) are displeasing to God; He opposes and resists such. However, those who are humble bask in the favor/grace of God. Since this is God's attitude toward pride and humility, respectively, all are enjoined to humble themselves "under the mighty hand of God." Peter here depicts God as possessing a "hand" such as men possess. The hand is that member of the body with which we most frequently act and accomplish our tasks. It is simply transferred to God in a figure as that means by which He exercises His

Divine power and strength to bless or curse. The mighty hand of God will cast down the proud, but the same mighty hand will exalt the humble servant of others.

Although we **may** see those who humbly serve others reap rich rewards on this earth, there is no promise in this text of such immediate exaltation. Neither is it hinted that the exaltation relates to protection from physical suffering nor that it involves great wealth, fame, or authority. The exaltation promised is **true** exaltation in the home of the soul around the throne of God. There the Lord will bestow "the crown of glory that fadeth not away," and we will inherit the "eternal glory" unto which the Father has called us (vv. 4, 10). We should not grow impatient, even under suffering, for God will exalt us "in due time." God always does things according to His calendar: "...in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

—Dub McClish

Denton, TX