

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	45		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	1 Peter 5:6, 7		
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COUNSEL FOR CARES

Bill Mounce is a very accomplished Greek scholar. He recently commented on a sermon by Alistar Begg on 1 Peter 5:6-7, *Humble yourselves (tapeinōthēte) therefore; under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast (epiripsantes) all of your anxiety on him, because he cares for you* (NIV). “Begg’s question was on the relationship between the two Greek words. In the Greek, as well as the more formal equivalent translations, the answer is obvious. *epiripsantes* is an adverbial participle explaining something about *tapeinōthēte*; part of humbling yourself is to cast your anxiety on God. A proud person thinks that they can handle life and wants to stay in control; the humble person realizes that they can trust God to handle the anxious issues of life. So the ESV writes, ‘Humble yourselves . . . casting all your anxieties on him’ (see also the NASB and CSB). Part of the thinking behind more dynamic translations is to shorten the length of the Greek verse, which all translations do to varying degrees, due to English style; it is common to find participles translated as indicatives (NIV, NRSV, NLT). The NET makes the connection explicit: ‘And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand, *by casting* all your cares on him.’ The KJV also makes it more explicit with a colon; ‘Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him.’ This becomes an example of a translation losing information for the sake of English style. Personally, I like longer sentences. I know English is shortening its sentences, but I don’t like it. When my kids were young, I would not let them watch a certain cartoon show Saturday mornings because the hero never used more than five words in a sentence. I later discovered that there are areas in the brain that are only developed through the discipline of reading longer sentences, so I felt vindicated. Along with longer sentences I like semicolons, another wonderful tool that indicates connections between thoughts and allows you to formulate ideas that are more complex. But if we give in to short sentences, then we lessen our ability to specify the precise relationship between two thoughts. Greek did this by beginning sentences with conjunctions; we used to do this with longer sentences and punctuation. It is much harder to indicate those relationships now.”¹

- I. ***Peter instructs us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. According to verse 7, how are we to do so?*** “Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.” This expression, as Kistemaker points out, “is Old Testament language that describes God’s rule in regard to Israel. God showed his powerful hand in leading the nation Israel out of Egypt (see, e.g., Exod. 3:19; Deut. 3:24; 9:26, 29; 26:8). In the New Testament, too, the mighty hand of God is evident. Mary sings: ‘He has scattered those who are proud . . . but has lifted up the humble’ (Luke 1:51-52; and see the parallel 1 Sam. 2:7). God’s hand disciplines some people and defends others.”² We humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God by “casting all your cares upon Him, because he cares for you.” Barclay helpfully notes, “The Christian must cast all his anxiety upon God. ‘Cast your burden on the Lord,’ said the Psalmist (Psalm 55:22). ‘Do not be anxious about tomorrow,’ said Jesus (Matthew 6:25-34). The reason we can do this with confidence is that we can be

certain that God cares for us. As Paul had it, we can be certain that he who gave us his only Son will with him give us all things (Romans 8:32). We can be certain that, since God cares for us, life is out not to break us but to make us; and, with that assurance, we can accept any experience which comes to us, knowing that in everything God works for good with those who love him (Romans 8:28).”³ “Note carefully that the text does not command, ‘cast all your anxiety . . .’ This clause is not another command nor the main verb of these two verses which go together to make up one sentence. True, it has the flavor of an imperative (a command), but in the Greek text, it is not an imperative. Grammatically, this is a *verbal participle of means* which tells us **how** we are to handle the command of verse 6. ‘Casting’ is dependent on the preceding clause and tells us how to ‘be humbled.’ We could translate it ‘by casting all your care on Him.’ ‘Casting’ is the Greek verb *epiripto*. It was used of casting garments on a beast of burden. I am reminded of Psalm 68:19, which says: ‘Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation.’ The point is, we are to move from the sphere of trusting in our own resources and trusting in our strategies for life to resting in God and His resources.”⁴ When we read 1 Peter 5:6-7 carefully, we find a very amazing and unexpected truth: anxiety is directly related to pride. “It is pride that makes us anxious. When we are proud we are not prepared to hand everything over to God’s control. We say to ourselves, ‘I’ve got to work this out without any help from anyone at all.’ When we get into that frame of mind we should remember that God’s mighty hand is over us and that he will protect and provide for us.”⁵ Jonathan Edwards declared, “in order to a person’s being rightly disposed to the work of praise, he must be an humble person. A proud person is for assuming all praise to himself and is not disposed to ascribe it to God. It is humility only that will enable us to say from the heart, ‘Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory.’ The humble person admires the goodness and grace of God to him. He sees more how wonderful it is that God should take such notice of him, and show such kindness to him, that is so much below his notice.”⁶

- II. ***How is anxiety related to pride?*** How is anxiety related to pride? At first glance the two appear to be the extreme opposites. When we hear the word “pride,” what picture comes to mind? The picture of a man who is confident that he is in control of the situation; so confident, that he may be boastful or arrogant. When we hear the word “anxiety,” what picture comes to mind? The picture of a trembling little fellow, biting his fingernails, totally overwhelmed by the situation, fully aware that it is out of his control. Do you see how pride and anxiety are, indeed, related? They both have to do with a sense of control. Pride is the delusion of being in control (note James 4:13-16). Anxiety is the desperation that accompanies the realization that you are not in control (cp. Matthew 14:28-30).
- III. ***When Peter instructs us to cast all our cares upon the Lord, he is alluding to Psalm 55:22. What is the Psalmist teaching in this passage?*** “Cast your cares on Jehovah and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall” (Psalm 55:22). When we find ourselves overwhelmed with a sense of care or anxiety, the Psalmist instructs us to transfer our burden to the Lord. We are to inform Him of the burden we are bearing, then we are to entrust ourselves and the burden into His hands. But note that the Psalmist does not say the Lord will take the burden away; on the contrary, the Psalmist assures us that the Lord will sustain us. That is to say, the Lord will supply us with the grace that will enable us to successfully endure the trial to its appointed conclusion.
- IV. ***What assurance does Peter give us in verse 7?*** Peter continues this teaching on the cure for anxiety by assuring us of the Lord’s compassion and care for us: we are to cast all our care upon Him “because he cares for you.”⁷

ENDNOTES

¹ Mondays with Mounce, https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/english-style-and-loss-of-meaning-1-Peter-5-6,7_294.

² Simon Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Peter and Jude* (Baker, 1987), p. 198.

³ William Barkley, *The Daily Study Bible: James & Peter* (St. Andrew Press, 1976), p. 272.

⁴ J. Hampton Keathley III, <https://bible.org/article/counsel-concerning-our-cares-1-peter-56-7>. J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M. was a 1966 graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary (one of S. Lewis Johnson's prized pupils) and a former pastor of 28 years. In August of 2001 he was diagnosed with lung cancer and on August 29th, 2002 he went home to be with the Lord. Hampton wrote many articles for the Biblical Studies Foundation and on occasion taught New Testament Greek at Moody Bible Institute, Northwest Extension for External Studies in Spokane, Washington.

⁵ Michael Bentley, *Living for Christ: 1 & 2 Peter Simply Explained* (Evangelical Press, 1990), p. 169.

⁶ *Sermons of Jonathan Edwards* (rpt. Hendrickson Publishing, 2005), p. 113.

⁷ I have adapted this outline from Donald F. Ritsman, *Bible Study Courses: 1 Peter 5:5-7, Exploring the Passage*, 2018.