

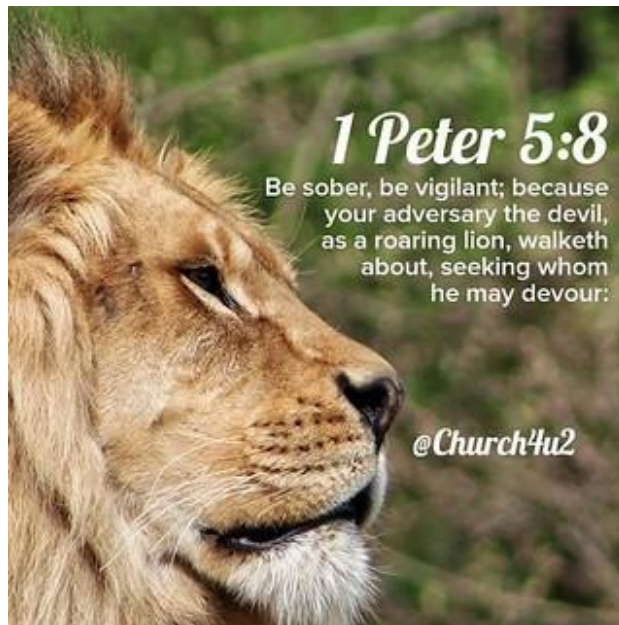
Please Don't Feed the Lion

A Bible Study Lesson of The Mt. Zion Church

We Have the Vision to be a LEARNING Church!

We are Seeking the Face of God!

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Introduction: The purpose of the following study is to assist students in their understanding of Satan's desire to inhibit God's people from achieving God's purpose. Students will discover that Satan is not to be compromised with nor is he anything but a destroyer. Through this study, students will learn basic steps to protect themselves from the plans of our ever-present enemy.

Focus Scripture: 1 Peter 5: 5-9

Supporting Scriptures: James 3: 14-16

Scripture Context

These verses represent the concluding thoughts of 1 Peter. In this passage, Peter wrote as the leader of the early church. He gave direction to those who were/are in leadership and those who were/are followers. Notice in verses 1-4 that Peter addresses the leaders. The passage then shifts in verse 5 to address to those who are followers. Thus, this whole section is to the full congregation of believers regarding their interconnected relationship in the ministry of Christ.

A few key words give us the relationship that he is referencing.

- **Elders**= those who are leaders, those who are older in the faith, those who are responsible for nurturing the congregation
- **Younger**=those who are the congregation, those who are under the authority of leaders, those who are younger in the faith.

*The term does not necessarily refer to age. Peter is focusing on leaders and followers therefore the context is not age related. Rather, it is a way to show relationship in terms of parent/child, big brother/little brother, big sister/little sister, or responsible parent/ obedient child.



Elders



Younger

I. Please Don't Poke the Lion

Peter highlights a lack of humility as instruments that *poke* or *awaken* our enemy, the devil. James 3: 14-16 clearly identifies how a lack of humility and structure invite the presence of evil into our midst. In relationship to the structure Peter is presenting (Elder, Younger; Leader, Follower), humility is necessary as we submit to authority.

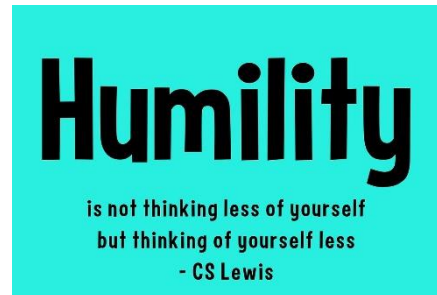
How does a lack of humility create an opportunity for the devil to start working?

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Devil, as used here means adversary, slanderous, and malicious.

When the people of God do not submit to authority and work together, we give the devil an opportunity to infiltrate what we are purposed to do for God! But how does it work?

First, when God's people do not work together, we bring within our ranks an adversarial spirit. This means, we bring in dissension, in fighting, pride, back biting, and negative speak. To be an adversary means we are at war with one another. Each person seeks their own purpose rather than seeking God's purpose.



Second, when God's people do not work together, a slanderous spirit is brought into the community. Slander is making false statements that damage someone. The devil uses a slanderous attitude to influence us to speak false statements about one another, about the work of God, and about God Himself. The devil will tempt us to a level of pride (the opposite of humility) so that we will speak against leaders and the program they are promoting. If you have ever heard or said, "I don't know why we are doing this, because this is not what I think we should do" but your intent was not about understanding rather it was about attempting to negatively influence yourself or someone to reject the plans of your God given leader, then you engaged in slanderous behavior. (long sentence!!!!)

These attitudes invite or wake up the devil to come into our midst and block the love and unity that God intends for us to display to others.

- How have you seen pride cause programs to fail in church or in other ministry areas?

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- What can you do when you see a lack of humility in yourself and others?

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II. Please Don't Feed the Lion!

In verse 8, Peter admonished the church to be sober and vigilant because the adversary is looking for people to devour. This section is a horrifying picture of what happens to those who do not follow this warning. To be devoured has the implication of someone who faces utter destruction or ruin. Thus, the devil is seeking to utterly destroy and ruin people.

Many of us have thoughts of people who have been destroyed because of their inability to humble themselves. The Biblical character Samson comes to mind as an example of a man with great power and ability, but his abundance of pride placed him in a place where he was a laughingstock for the enemies of God. See Judges 13-16 for the full story on Samson.

Let's look inwardly. When have you allowed your pride to cause destruction in your relationships, in your ministry, in your job, within yourself?

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Peter shares a God solution to our pride. This is seen at the beginning of verse 8. He wrote, be sober, and be vigilant. To be sober means to be clear-headed, self-controlled, and alert. Peter urgently wants his readers to be in a place of clear-headed focus so that we are prepared for the plans of our enemy. When we are undisciplined in our behavior we are not sober. When we are functioning in disunity, we are not sober. Even when we are lazy in our work for Christ we are not sober. To be sober requires self-control under the authority of God's word. Remember, it is not simply self-control. You and I are called to be directed by God's word and His spirit which tells us what to do, where to go, what to speak, and when to speak. We protect ourselves from the devil when we submit to His will (self-controlling our will).

Peter also wrote to be vigilant. This term means to be restrained, self-controlled, and serious. The follower who is vigilant is one who knows that we tend to want our preferences even when it may not be God's plan. We have a tendency to want our version of leadership even if we are not the leader. Often we behave as immature Christians who would rather see our way over the success of the

ministry. To this, Peter says be vigilant in your humility because the devil uses these attitudes as appetizers on his way to devouring people.

Closing thought: 1 Peter 5: 8 has in the middle of the sentence the phrase “the devil as a roaring lion”. The lion’s roar is a signal that he is in the vicinity or coming near and that you should get away.

What signals do you see in the current ministry you are a part of to identify that Satan might be on the prowl?

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