

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

LESSON: HUMBLE YOURSELVES. . . CASTING ALL YOUR ANXIETIES ON HIM

1 PETER 5:6-7

MAY 30, 2021

MAIN POINT

Humble yourselves before the mighty hand of God. Cast all your anxieties on him.

CHURCH CONTEXT

Two Sunday's ago, Dr. Smith informed us of how God is stirring in his heart. Through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Smith is entering into a brief season of prayer and seeking the LORD. As a church, we want to join him in prayer and seeking God's presence for the next three weeks.

So, we are taking a detour from our normal routine of studying through a book in the Bible. We desire to be a church who is sensitive to God's leading. Thanks for joining in this journey!

Our goal for Sunday school during this time is to prioritize prayer. Where the typical or normal Sunday school practice is to teach/discuss a lesson for 40 minutes and pray for 20 minutes, we want to encourage our groups to flip their normal routine. We encourage you to teach/discuss a lesson for 20 minutes and then dedicate 40 minutes to prayer. (Teachers, feel free to cut the lesson short if you notice your teaching time is going to long. Prioritize praying.)

INTRODUCTION – TIPS AND EXPECTATIONS (5 minutes)

Praying for 40 minutes might seem daunting. No worries, this is new to most of us. Here are some tips and realistic expectations for how this time might go.

1. We have a guided plan – As class leader this morning, I'll provide instructions and designated segments for us to pray.
2. Everyone is welcome/encouraged to pray – Some of you may feel comfortable praying out loud and perhaps others don't. Just know that during this time, no one is grading prayers, making judgments, or criticizing others. Scripture informs us, "And when you

pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matt. 6:7-8). Our hope is that you feel comfort and freedom to pray out loud knowing that you pray to a Father who already knows what you need. If you are guest with us, we are glad you are here. We would love for you to pray, but no pressure.

3. At the same time, our prayer time might feel uncomfortable – And that is ok! This is a new venture for us. There may be extended times of silence. People are welcome to take a different posture than normal. Praying for 40 minutes might seem long for some, and someone might get restless. All this is ok. We can stretch ourselves in prayer and through any perceived awkwardness.
4. Allow yourselves to enjoy it. If I am honest, when going to extended prayer times, I often assume the time will be hard, awkward, pressured, or boring. I hate to admit it, but it is true. However, despite often going begrudgingly, I discover that many extended prayer times surprise me in how refreshing, enjoyable and how fast the time goes by. So, if you are hesitant, allow yourself to be surprised with the joy of prayer.

EXPLANATION // 15 minutes

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 5:6-7

From the verses, why should a person cast their anxieties on God?

Do you think these verses provide a promise to us from God? If so, what is the promise(s)?

On a scale from 1-10, do you consider yourself an anxious person?

Is anyone willing to share what anxieties they are facing?

In these verses, Peter gives us one command, one purpose, one expression, and one reason.

The Command: Humble yourselves

One of the clearest messages given in the Bible is that humility is necessary before God. Simply put: He is God and we are not. He is Creator and we are his creation. He knows all things and we only know a few things. He exists for all eternity and we live momentary lives. He is all-powerful and we cannot guarantee in our strength that we will have tomorrow. Truly this humble recognition is foundational to our lives. The fearful and humble recognition that God is God and we are not is the beginning of wisdom, life, purpose, and true peace. Indeed apart from humility we oppose God.

The Purpose: So that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Why would we want to humble ourselves before God? Because he promises to exalt us in his proper timing. It is awesome to realize that it is within the nature of God to bless the humble and oppose the proud. 1 Peter 5:5 says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Why is this? Why does God oppose the proud? Because God alone is worthy of boasting in, praise, and rejoicing in. He will not share his glory with another. Therefore, to boast in oneself or to live one's life neglecting the existence of God, means that God will oppose that person. Indeed, one may either willingly and happily submit to God's mighty hand and in it find rest or one may be forced to submit to God's mighty hand due to his opposition. Either way, all will submit and every knee will bow.

Yet, astoundingly, those who willingly submit and humble themselves will find the goodness of God. God promises to exalt them in his proper time.

Admittedly, we do not always know the time in which God exalts those who humble themselves. He simply promises us that his timing is proper and good.

The expression of humility: Casting all our anxieties on him

What is one specific way that we humble ourselves before God? The word "casting" is a participle modifying the command to humble ourselves. Peter is describing how one humbles

himself or herself: by casting their anxieties on him. The idea of casting is to throw. The word is used in Luke 19:35 when the crowd casts their cloaks on the donkey that Jesus used to ride into Jerusalem. The idea is to give a burden over to someone or something else. Implied in the idea is that a person trusts in the object carrying the burden. Peter is telling us to cast our anxieties on God because he has a mighty hand who can sufficiently carry them and resolve them in his good timing. We humble ourselves by allowing God to carry our anxieties.

The Reason: Because he cares for you

What an amazing declaration and basis for humbling ourselves before God! The God who exists from all eternity, who is all-powerful, and who is all-knowing cares for us. Truthfully, he cares for you more than you care for you. There is no limit to his love and no end to his love.

PRAYER – 40 minutes

So. . . we have a God who wants to carry our burdens. He does not carry them begrudgingly. He invites us to cast them towards him. Indeed, you express humility towards God when you pray and cast your anxieties on Him.

For this week, each prayer prompt will consist of three parts.

- First, the class leader can announce the prompt and read a verse associated with a theme.
- Second, inform the class you will give them roughly 30 seconds to be quiet before the Lord. During this time, be still. Think about the verse that was just read. Ask yourself what stands out to you about the verse? Take a moment to listen and let God speak to you through the verse. Then, let the verse guide how you pray.
- Third, as a group, take 5 minutes to pray over the prompt and how God leads you to pray. Encourage the group to allow for everyone in the group to pray who wants to pray. (Teachers, by letting the group know they have 5 minutes, this allows them to pray in such a way that gives others in the group time to pray.). Depending on whether you structure your group into smaller groups or one large group, feel free to be flexible on whether to spend 5 minutes exactly or a little more or less.

First Prayer Prompt: Mighty Hand of God (8 minutes)

- Read Scriptures:
 - 2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence
 - Hebrews 1:3 - He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his

power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- Jeremiah 10:12 - It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.
- Ephesians 1:19-21 - And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
- Say, "Take time to listen and be silent before the Lord." Be silent for 30 seconds.
- Say, "*Spend time in your group recognizing God's might and power. Pray with awe and wonder.*"

Second Prayer prompt: Humble yourselves (8 minutes)

- Read Scriptures:
 - James 4: 13-17 - Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.
 - James 4:1-9 - What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions^[a] are at war within you?^[b] ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴You adulterous people!^[c] Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched

and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- Be silent for 30 seconds
- Pray as the Lord leads. Pray with humility and honesty. Pray that you can draw near and resist the devil.

Third Prayer Prompt: Praying for God's timing (8 Minutes)

- Read Scripture:
 - Isaiah 40:31 - But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.
 - Psalms 27:14 - Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!
 - 2 Peter 3:8-9 - But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
- Be silent for 30 seconds.
- Pray as the Lord leads. Pray with a willingness to endure in prayer, with submissiveness to God's timing.

Fourth Prayer Prompt: Casting your anxieties on him (8 minutes)

- Read Scripture.
 - Matthew 6:25-34 - ²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?^(a) ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we

wear?' ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- Isaiah 55:8-9 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- Matthew 11:28-29 - ²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
- Be silent for 30 seconds
- Pray as God leads. Pray specifically for your burdens and anxieties.

Fifth Prayer Prompt: Pray with gratefulness for God’s care and love. (8 minutes)

- Read Scripture.
 - Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
 - Romans 8:35-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Jeremiah 31:3 - The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
 - Ephesians 3:17-19 - So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and

height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

- Be silent for 30 seconds
- Pray as God leads. Thank him specifically for his love in your life.