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*Hey small group leaders! Our new series, "Red Letter Challenge", starts NEXT WEEK! This will be a very important season in the life of our church. As a leader and shepherd, we hope you will set the temperature by approaching this season with humility, teachability, and vulnerability. **PLEASE READ the final section of this guide** for an overview of the resources to make the most of this series, empowered by the grace of God.*

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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**"The ultimate test of our spirituality is
the measure of our amazement at the grace of God."**

[Martyn Lloyd-Jones]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
 - In his conclusion, Peter aims to ground his readers in the true grace of God. He wants the Christ followers to stand in God's grace because of all its effects (described in v. 10-11). His admonishments are aimed to keep them in this grace and to return to this grace when they stumble. He implies the importance of being under biblical spiritual authority, along with instructions for what that means. He also prescribes humility and the casting of cares onto the Lord. Finally, he warns of the devil and commands an alertness coupled with resistance against him.
- **Ch. 5 Commentary & Devotional**
 - Use this commentary and short video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Walk With Humility & Shield Yourself From Satan**
 - These would be encouraging resources to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.

What are you grateful for or what has brought you joy in the last week?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“He leads the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.
All the Lord’s ways show faithful love and truth to those who keep his covenant and decrees.”*

[Psalm 25:9-10]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today’s discussion is.

Where do we most want to be? Positioned, standing firm in the true and triumphant grace of God!

PASSAGE || Leader Note Have someone read the passage aloud slowly. Consider having someone else read the passage aloud again, possibly in a different translation.

- 1 Peter 5:1-14

DISCUSSION || Leader Note Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

1. How might the phrase “shepherd God’s flock among you” challenge common perceptions of church leadership and using our spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ? *This challenges the perception that church leadership and the use of spiritual gifts is about authority or control. Instead, it emphasizes caring for, nurturing, and guiding others as a shepherd would with sheep. It promotes a model of leadership and using our spiritual gifts as relational and service-oriented, focused on the well-being and spiritual growth of others rather than personal power or status.*
2. In the sermon we heard, *“Belong ... deeply and really belong to a biblically-led body of believers.”* How well do you “belong” in our church family? Is there an invitation from God to belong in a deeper way in this season? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
3. In v. 5, Peter advises younger people to submit to their elders. How might this principle of submission be both challenging and beneficial in the context of our church family? *Submission can be challenging due to tendencies toward independence and resistance to authority, especially if younger people feel misunderstood or undervalued. However, it can be beneficial as it fosters a learning environment, promotes unity, and helps maintain order within the church. Submission doesn’t mean blind obedience, but rather respect and willingness to learn from the wisdom of others. When practiced correctly, it can lead to growth, understanding, and stronger relationships within the church community.*
4. How can the call to “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another” transform a church family’s dynamics and relationships? *When a church family embraces humility, it fosters an environment of mutual respect, love, and support. Members are more likely to listen to and serve one another, prioritizing others’ needs over their own. Humility opens the door for vulnerability and authenticity, allowing people to share their struggles and joys without fear of judgment, which strengthens the community’s unity and deepens relationships.*
5. In the sermon we heard, *“Treasure and nurture a mindset of humility.”* How is God challenging your idea of humility as a Christ follower? How do you treasure and nurture a “mindset of humility”?
6. Verse 6 says, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time.” What does this suggest about the timing and nature of God’s response to our humility? *This suggests that God values humility and will respond to it, but His timing may not align with our expectations. God’s response is not necessarily immediate; it implies a divine timing that might come after enduring trials or after significant personal growth. God’s exaltation often comes in*

ways that align with His greater purpose for our lives, which could be spiritual elevation rather than worldly success. It teaches patience and trust in God's wisdom and timing.

7. How does Peter's call to "cast all your cares on Him" connect with the preceding call to humility? *Casting cares on God requires acknowledging one's limitations and dependence on Him, which is an act of humility. Humility recognizes that we are not in control and that we need God's help. By casting cares on God, we demonstrate our trust in His care and ability to handle what we cannot. This reduces our pride and self-reliance, aligning us more closely with God's will and enabling us to experience His peace. It shows that humility and reliance on God are intrinsically linked; one leads naturally to the other.*
8. In v. 8, Peter warns believers to be sober-minded and watchful because their adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion. What practical steps can we take to remain vigilant against spiritual attacks? *Answers will vary, but may include: we can stay vigilant by engaging in regular prayer and meditation on Scripture, which equips us with spiritual discernment. Maintaining a consistent devotional life helps keep our minds focused on God. We should also cultivate a community of accountability, where we can encourage and support one another in faith. Being aware of spiritual warfare, and putting on the "armor of God" are practical steps for guarding against spiritual attacks. Staying connected with other believers for support and encouragement is also crucial.*
9. What implications does Peter's reminder that "the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world" have for the global church today? *This reminder encourages believers to understand that they are not alone in their struggles. It fosters a sense of solidarity and unity within the global church, prompting empathy and support for those facing persecution or hardships. It also encourages prayer for one another and the sharing of resources and encouragement. This can especially appreciate the freedoms we have and actively support those who are suffering for their faith.*
10. Verse 10 speaks of God restoring, establishing, strengthening, and supporting believers after they have suffered. How can suffering serve a purpose in our spiritual growth according to this? *Suffering can refine a believer's faith, stripping away reliance on worldly things and deepening our dependence on God. It helps develop perseverance, character, and hope (see Romans 5:3-5). Through suffering, we learn more about God's faithfulness, experience His comfort, and gain empathy for others in similar situations. It also often leads to greater spiritual maturity, as we become more resilient, firm in our faith, and secure in our relationship with God.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

I Peter ends with an exhortation: "The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. To Him be dominion forever. Amen ... *I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!*

If we TRULY believe that he is "the God of all grace", that should have a real and daily impact on our understanding of our relationship with God and our approach to spiritual growth. Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting, what is a step of obedience that you can take this week to live in God's grace?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!

God of All Grace

- Father, we thank you for the countless ways your grace has been shown in our lives. Help us to see the depth of your grace in every circumstance, and let it humble us, knowing that all we have and all we are is because of you.
- Teach us to lean not on our own understanding, but on your perfect will. Help us to grow in humility, recognizing our need for you in every moment, and trusting that Your grace is sufficient for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

RED LETTER CHALLENGE OVERVIEW || Leader Note We are asking EVERY small group to use our discussion guides for the duration of the Red Letter Challenge so there is unity among our church family. Below are additional resources that you can share and/or use either before, during, or after you gather. If you have any questions about this, please contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

- **Rock Bridge Red Letter Challenge page** —> rockbridge.cc/red
 - This contains an overview video and links to a 40 day Bible reading plan and Time With God, which complement and enhance the Red Letter Challenge series.
- **Personal Devotional Book**
 - These are for PERSONAL study and are NOT required for use with the discussion guides. If everyone in your group (or a majority) is using the devotionals, feel free to take 10-15 minutes to share your highlights. Another option is to have people share highlights through a group chat.
 - Books are for sale during our services (while supplies last). In addition, people can find these for sale online by searching “Red Letter Challenge devotional”.
 - [HERE](#) is a free audio version available. NOTE: this was made by another church, so please disregard the specific language used by them at the beginning :)
- **Participant Assessment** —> [HERE](#)
 - This free tool helps participants discover how they are doing in the five targets: Being, Forgiving, Serving, Giving, and Going. It has 40 questions and takes about 7-8 minutes.
 - It is recommended that people take this at the beginning of the series, so you should share the link with your group via text or email when you get it.
- **Videos** —> [HERE](#)
 - These short videos (6-8 minutes) can be sent to your group before you gather, watched at the beginning of your gathering, or sent to your group as a way to follow up the discussion. Use these videos in a way that best supports your group! They are NOT the main content of the discussion, just an enhancement!
- **Red Letter Disciple Podcast** —> [HERE](#)
 - This is a podcast by the creators of the Red Letter Challenge. It does NOT go along with the series, but does have podcasts about discipleship that will equip and encourage you. This would be best for people to listen to on their own.