

An Urgent Call to Shepherd God's Flock

Detailed Outline

Part 4 of 5

III. Peter's Call to Shepherd God's Flock in God's Way (vv. 2-3) (cont.)

C. "Not Domineering over Those in Your Charge, but Being Examples to the Flock"

The third unworthy motive for an elder is a far more subtle and widespread temptation than that of greed. It is the desire to rule over others.

1. The verb for "domineering over" (*katakyrieuo*) means "ruling over" or "lording it over." This term is used here in a negative sense. The idea is seeking to control people.
2. Jesus, on the other hand, in what has been called the "great reversal," taught servant leadership and modeled it for his disciples:

"I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27b ESV).

- a) He taught that leaders are to serve one another, to act humbly toward one another, and to live in loving brotherly community. It is others-oriented leadership, not self-oriented leadership. It is giving one's life for the building up and advancing of others.
 - b) Jesus Christ, thus, taught a style of leadership that emphasized service and humility. This does not mean people do not have authority to shepherd and oversee people. It means they are to exercise their authority in a way that builds up other people and is not abusive.
3. The clause, "those in your charge," further strengthens the concept that the people are not the elders' possessions to be ruled over. The people do not belong to the elders; they belong to the One who assigned them to the elders' care, that is, to God.
 - a) *Kleros* means an "allotment" or "portion assigned to someone" (Acts 1:17; 8:21). *Kleros*, then, is something given, not earned. In this context, it is not land, money, or responsibility that is allotted, it is God's people. Thus the elders are prohibited from ruling over them as a lord rules over his subjects. The people are not the slaves of the elders.
 - b) Peter is saying that God has allotted portions of the whole flock of God to various groups of elders (John 10:16; 1 Peter 5:9). In a similar way, Peter refers to the specific flock of God in which the respective elders function as "the flock of God *among you [in your care]*" (1 Peter 5:2; italics added). The elders, then, are not to rule over their allotted portions of God's flock. Peter's warning against ruling over others certainly demonstrates that elders had authority to govern.

4. In contrast to ruling over others, elders are to be examples or models of godly living.
 - a) Much of the Bible is biographical, demonstrating by example how and how not to live for God. Jesus is the greatest example of all and the chief example to follow (1 Peter 2:21).
 - b) So in the church, the elders' primary style of leadership is to model Christ. They are to be role models. Ultimately in the end, people follow those they respect and love. People don't care what your title is. They care about how you live and minister to others.
5. Throughout this epistle, Peter emphasizes the importance of humility and submission (1 Peter 2:13-3:12; 5:5). If elders are petty rulers over the local church, others will follow their example, fighting one another to gain power and recognition. This is the wrong role model, as we will see in the next verse.