

# 1 Peter 5:3

by John Gill

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*Elders in the church should not be domineering or arbitrary in their authority, but rather set an example for the flock and teach the doctrines of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 2:24-25, Titus 2:7-8, Hebrews 13:17, James 3:1, 1 Peter 5:3

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Humility in Service"

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## Description

John Gill emphasizes the role of church leaders as examples rather than tyrants, urging them not to dominate over God's heritage but to lead with humility and integrity. He explains that while elders are to be respected and obeyed in their rightful duties, they must not impose their authority in a domineering manner or dictate the faith of the congregation. Instead, they should model the teachings of Christ through their actions and character, serving as patterns of good works and embodying the virtues of charity, faith, and purity. The sermon highlights the importance of pastoral leadership that reflects Christ's love and guidance.

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## Transcript

Ver. 3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage,....

Or "clergy"; meaning not ecclesiastical persons, as presbyters, and deacons, who are supposed to be under the government of bishops, though not to be governed with tyranny, and in a haughty, imperious, and arrogant manner; to which sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering the words thus; "not as those who domineer over such that are appointed in the dignities of the priesthood"; but such cannot be designed, because they are presbyters, or elders, which are here exhorted not to use such tyrannical power and authority; wherefore the flock, or church of God, the people of Christ, and members of churches, in common, are here intended: the Ethiopic version renders it, "his own people"; who are the lot, portion, and inheritance of God, and Christ; and moreover, the several churches are the parts, portions, and heritages, for the word is in the plural number, which are assigned to the care of their respective pastors, and elders, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot: the word "clergy" is common to all the saints, and not to be appropriated to a particular order of men, or to officers of churches; and these are not to be lorded over by their elders, in a domineering and arbitrary way; for though they are set over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them, and should be submitted to, and obeyed in their right and lawful ministrations of the word and ordinances, and are worthy of double honour when they rule

well; yet they are not to take upon them an absolute authority over the consciences of men; they are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; nor to have the dominion over the faith of men, but to be helpers of their joy; and are not to coin new articles of faith, or enact new laws, and impose them on the churches; but are to teach the doctrines of Christ, and rule according to the laws he has given:

but being ensamples to the flock.

The Ethiopic version reads, "to his own flock"; that is, the flock of God; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, "heartily"; the meaning is, that they should go before the flock, and set an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and be patterns of good works to them, and recommend the doctrines they preach, and the duties they urge, by their own lives and conversations; and particularly should be ensamples to the saints, in liberality and beneficence, in lenity and gentleness, in meekness and humility, in opposition to the vices before warned against.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/1-peter-53/>

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