**Living Faithfully under Church Leadership Study Guide and Small Group Discussion Questions**

As the apostle Peter closes his letter to the persecuted Christians, he brings attention to the spiritual authority that God placed upon the Elders of the church. Peter gives weight to the responsibilities of the Elders and the congregation and how their fellowship will be strengthened if they faithfully accomplish them. After defining the roles of each group, Peter expects that they will hold each other accountable, ultimately fortifying their fellowship so that it can withstand the troubles that are still coming.

*2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

Why do you think God calls people to shepherd others? Why do you think there is a need for structure or order in churches? Do you think it would be better if everyone had equal authority and anyone can lead others?

Why do you think there was an emphasis on “not pursuing dishonest gain?” What are some dangers that Elders may face as they accept and fulfill their calling?

How do we ensure that Bishops, Elders, Presbyters, Overseers, and Pastors do not become lords to those that are entrusted to them?

*5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”*

How can we balance our view of God when we declare that He is all-loving and merciful, but at the same time, He resists or goes against those who are proud?

What favor do you think God bestows upon those who choose to be humble? How can we pursue humility and submission in our church?

*8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

What does it mean to you when Peter said that one should be alert and of sober mind?

In what ways can we stand firm in our faith, despite knowing that we are overpowered by the devil?