

DESIRING GOD

As new born babes, desire the pure milk of the Word



It had to be amazing for the 1st Century believers to hear firsthand testimonies of Jesus' life, ministry, death, burial and resurrection. Imagine what it would have been like to hear Peter, or James- the brother of Jesus, or the Apostle John give their eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life.

Think about it. Many of those Peter wrote to in this letter may have had that experience. They heard from eyewitnesses the amazing

news of Jesus being raised from the dead. Some may have even been in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost and were saved when Peter preached. As a result, they experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit which led them to repent of their sins and were transformed by the power of Christ. Then, not long afterwards, they found themselves exiled because of their faith.

Yes, they gained new life in Christ; they watched the Jerusalem church explode into existence. Their Christian walk was exciting until persecution fell upon the church, scattering many to the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Nothing could have prepare them for this. Their intense trials forced them to leave their homeland. Husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, cousins and friends all left under harsh circumstances. Jobs were lost. They faced serious financial issues. The daunting task of arranging transportation, finding new jobs and housing, along with the sorrow of leaving familiarity and family was overwhelming.

They were like their forefathers who fled the harsh treatment in Egypt for the Promised Land. Their fathers witnessed the 10 plagues followed by the dividing of the Red Sea. They witnessed firsthand the spectacular deliverance of God . . . Then came the unexpected hardships of their wilderness wanderings.

It only took three days for their forefathers to forget what God had done. Now Peter is writing to this new generation of believers, exiled in their wilderness of trials. It is amazing what a little bit of hardship reveals.

We face the same struggle. Gloriously saved! Wonderfully changed! Fantastic fellowship! . . . Then the trials of life come.

I can remember the excitement I experienced when I placed my trust in Christ. The fellowship, the songs, the growth, and the astonishing things I learn from the Word of God were wonderful. . . . Then my company transferred me to another state.

My moving van was broken into. Most of my belongings were stolen. I was alone, in a new job, living in a new city, with no friends, and no church home.

Trials come in many forms, but trials they are. The believers Peter wrote to were facing all sorts of hardships which caused many to struggle with their faith.

So Peter wrote to these suffering exiles to explain what they will needed to do to remain faithful to the end. This passage suggests five perspectives that, if followed, will lead us to a stronger, more consistent desire for the Word of God.

Study Questions:

1. **The 1 Peter 2:1 passage begins with a “wherefore” (therefore). What is Peter referring to?**

“WHEREFORE.” It is a reminder of what He just wrote. It is an important pause. It connects the writers thoughts to the previous passage and encourages the reader to reflect again on the words already given.

- A. To **REJOICE** in their what God had done – 1 Peter 1:5
- B. To **REMEMBER** that their trials are but for a season and for a purpose – 1 Peter 1:6-9

- C. To **RECOUNT** for it was – 1 Peter 1:10-12
- **PREDICTED** by the Old Testament prophets. They longed to see the grace we received. – v. 10
 - **REVEALED** by the Holy Spirit of God - v.11
 - **PREACHED** to the world at great cost by the apostles – v. 12
 - **GAZED UPON** by angel's – v. 12c . . . meaning the grace we received is so amazing and wonderful even the heavenly hosts are astonished by it.
- D. To **RESPOND** to this marvelous grace from God
- With hope, holiness, and honor – 1 Peter 1:13-17
- E. And to **REST** in the amazing life they now possess. It is an incorruptible inheritance; with imperishable value, planted by an incorruptible seed, the word of God. – 1 Peter 18-25

2. The last item in chapter one refers to the imperishable value of God's Word. How can this help us stay on course?

First, We must see the Word as our Life Source

A. Wherefore, (2:1a)

1) Wherefore refers back to 1:23-25

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Peter 1:23

And also “. . . The word of the Lord endureth for ever” – 1 Peter 1:25

2) In those verses “the seed, which is ... imperishable”—the gospel – produces the new birth.

3.) God's Word is the source of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). God's transforming grace works through the Word to create new life

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” - James 1:18

The Word, operates not as a perishable natural seed but as an imperishable divine seed. It is the life source of the believers' continued spiritual transformation and growth.

3. In view of what has already been written, what is the second feature Peter is telling his readers to do?

“laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” - 1 Peter 2:1

Second, We Must Eliminate Sin

- A. Sin draws us away from the Lord. It robs us of a desire to be near him. It us steals the delight we once had in God’s Word. Therefore, we must “laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings”
- B. “Laying aside” is an imperative participle – Literally, “you must continually be laying aside” Stripping off those spoiled garments of sin.
- C. In ancient Christian baptism ceremonies, those being baptized customarily took off and discarded the clothes they wore to the ceremony. Following their baptisms, they put on new robes they received from the church. Exchanging clothes symbolized the salvation reality of laying aside the old life and taking up the new (Rom. 6:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). If such a transformation really occurred in someone’s life, he should be putting aside all sins that are a hindrance to fully desiring God’s Word
- D. Note the emphasis on the word “all” used three times in this verse.
- 1) **ALL MALICE:** is the first category of sin Peter lists. Malice (which in English has the idea of desiring to harm someone else) is an all-inclusive word (kakia) for sin referring to general wickedness and baseness.
 - 2) **ALL GUILE:** Second, believers are commanded to eliminate all guile or deceit, a term (dolos) literally referring to “bait” or a “fishhook.” It denotes dishonesty, falsehood, and treachery. Luke used the same term in Acts 13:10 when citing Paul’s rebuke of Elymas the magician for being “full of all deceit and fraud”

Hypocrisies: (hupokrisis), the term originally identified an actor who wore a mask. It refers to spiritual insincerity and pretense The word describes any behavior that is not genuine or consistent with what one really believes or says he believes

Envy: this term (phthonos) defines the attitude of those who resent others’ prosperity. It often leads to grudges, bitterness, hatred, and conflict.
 - 3) **ALL EVIL SPEAKING:** or all slander (katalalias), this is a word designed to sound like the whispers and tattles reported behind someone’s back in gossip and backbiting. It referred essentially to defamation of character.

Peter’s list of specific sins is not exhaustive but certainly is representative of evil. In fact, the first term, all malice, could encompass all the sins so that his readers were called to confession and repentance. This clears the way for an unhindered desire for the truth of God.

4. Remember, Peter is writing to believers of all ages. Some have known the Lord many years. In the past, some were used in mighty ways, but now, due to their afflictions, their desire for the Lord is waning. **So what does Peter tell them to do next?**

1 Peter 2:2 - “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word”

- A. Believers need God’s truth like a baby needs milk. Peter compares the strength of that longing for divine revelation to the singular and dominant desire of newborn babies.
- That sole and desperate hunger for milk is the newborn’s first expressed longing designed by God to correspond to their greatest need, and it illustrates how strongly believers ought to desire the Word. It is singular and relentless because life depends on it.
- B. To desire or to long for (epithēsatē) is an imperative verb (You must desire the sincere milk of the word.”
- a. God commands believers to strongly desire or crave something.
 - b. The apostle Paul used the word “desire” seven times and in each instance it expresses an intense, recurring, insatiable desire or passion.
 - c. Believers are to desire the pure milk of the Word. We are to crave what is unmixed and pure, that provides real sustenance, namely, the pure milk of the word.
- C. It is notable what Peter did not command. He did not charge believers **to READ the Word, STUDY** the Word, **MEDITATE** on the Word, teach the Word, **PREACH** the Word, **SEARCH** the Word, or **MEMORIZE** the Word. All of those things are essential, and other passages do command believers to perform them. However, Peter focused on the more foundational element—which believers need before they will pursue any of the other things—a deep, continuous longing for the Word of truth.
- D. Whether believers are recent converts or more mature in the faith, craving the Word of God is always essential to spiritual nourishment and growth. Jesus affirmed this when He told Satan in the wilderness, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Matt. 4:4).
- E. In view of postmodern culture’s relentless output of informational junk food through radio, television, films, the Internet, computer games, books, periodicals, and even so-called Christian pulpits—all of which causes spiritual malnourishment and dulls appetites for genuine spiritual food—believers must commit to regular nourishment from God’s Word.

- 5. What is the fourth feature found in this passage? What must they add to their faith? Discuss how we can effectively do this.**

Fourth, We Must Seek to Grow Spiritually

“that ye may grow thereby.” – 1 Peter 2:2b

- A. It is always sad to see a human being who is malnourished, weak, and underdeveloped. But far sadder is seeing believers who are spiritually malnourished and underdeveloped. All believers should be motivated by the opportunity to grow strong and mature in Christ, enjoying greater blessing and usefulness.

- B. The Word will grow them into the full, final expression of the sanctification aspect of their salvation, as Paul commanded the Philippians,

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” – Phil. 2:12-13

- C. Peter’s exhortation for believers to grow through the Word strongly implies the necessity of discontent with the present condition of spiritual development. It also recalls what Paul said about his dissatisfaction with the status quo in his life:

Phil. 3:7-14

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

- 6. What does Peter mean when he writes in 1 Peter 2:3, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious?”**

- A. Since his readers had tasted or experienced the kindness—goodness and grace—of the Lord in their conversion, they already knew how blessed and wonderful it was.

- B. Therefore, they should have desired more of that goodness through feeding on His Word. Believers ought to regularly survey the blessings of their salvation,

- 1) Remembering the many times God has answered their **PRAYERS**,
- 2) All the times He has **TOUCHED** their lives with His kindness and mercy.

C. The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16

D. Peter’s simple analogy comparing a newborn baby craving for its mother’s milk with a believer of any maturity level passionately longing for the Word of God concludes the apostle’s series of exhortations that began at 1:13.

- 1) First, as a result of their salvation, Christians are to respond to God by pursuing holiness (1:13-21).
- 2) Second, believers must respond to others in the church by loving them as brothers and sisters in Christ (1:22-25).
- 3) Finally, believers must respond to their essential need for the Word by continually desiring it (2:1-3).

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, ² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: ³ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” – 1 Peter 2:1-3

“