

Lesson 4: Transforming Character (part 2)

A Series Thru First Peter

Transformative Love

In our lesson today, we will see Peter address love for the brethren. We find this issue repeatedly addressed in the New Testament. Jesus gave his disciples a new command to “love one another...just as I have loved you.” (John 13:34) In fact, it would be this love that would cause others to realize they were Jesus’ disciples. (John 13:35) Within this same discourse with his disciples, just hours before being arrested at Gethsemane, Jesus repeated the command to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12, 17). The apostle Paul wrote of having affection for one another (Romans 12:10) and loving one another (Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12). And in his epistles, the apostle John repeated the command he received from Jesus, that we should love one another (1 John 3:23, 4:7, 4:12; 2 John 5). We should also note that Jesus commanded that we even love our enemies (Matthew 5:44), from which we may infer that we should love our brothers and sisters in Christ even if some of them make it difficult. We all have our moments when we are not easy to love.

1. **Redeemed By The Blood (1:18-19):** Peter builds on what he stated in 1:17 about living in “fear” of God. He uses Passover language to speak of Jesus as “a lamb without blemish and without spot,” but God did not merely pass over our sins — they were taken away. (Compare John 1:29; Hebrews 9:12-14) We were “redeemed” (Greek *lutroō*), a word that means to make a payment to liberate or to ransom. In this case, Peter’s readers were set free from empty religion to serve God.
2. **God’s Redemptive Plan (1:20):** Peter states that Jesus was “foreknown” (Greek *proginoskō*), which means to know beforehand. In this context, God foreknew the future work of Jesus to redeem us. (Compare Revelation 13:8).
3. **Faith in God (1:21):** Peter’s readers believe in or trust in God. ONE CANNOT BELIEVE NOTHING; faith must have content, and here it is faith in God who raised Jesus from the dead AND gave Jesus glory — the same glory referenced in 1:11 that refers to Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, becoming heir of all things, and Jesus’ imminent return to implement his kingdom. As a consequence, we have “faith and hope” in God, and it is this shared “faith and hope” that should affect how we interact with others in the family of God. If our faith and hope is fixed on the return of Christ, the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:5), we should be obedient (1:14) and holy (1:15-16).
4. **Love of the Brethren (1:22-23):** The new birth has implications. Peter says that by obeying the “truth” and being “born again” they have “purified their souls” (1:22) and now have God’s imperishable seed within them (1:23). The word “soul” means our experience of life just as it did in 1:9. We have been morally purified through the Spirit, and that reality should not become experienced truth as we live and grow in obedience to God’s word, which is living. (Compare Heb. 4:12) Peter anticipates “love of the brethren” (Greek *philadelphia*) which is affection with an emotional bond, but commands “love” (*agapaō*) which is volitional love to do in another’s best interest.
5. **God’s Word Endures (1:24-25):** Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6 and 8, but it helps to read all of Isaiah 40:3-8. Peter witnessed the fulfillment of this passage in the ministry of John the Baptist. Peter applies the passage to say that the “gospel” is the “word of the Lord” and as such, it lives and endures forever. Peter’s point is that this “word of the Lord” stimulates love for the brethren WHICH ALSO SHOULD ENDURE.