

1 Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

In this session, we begin chapter 2 of 1 Peter. Verse 1 begins with a “therefore”. Because of this, we should probably take a moment and remember what we have talked about up to this point so we know what it is “there for”. What have we talked about?

- Author - Peter an apostle of Jesus
- Audience – Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia
- We are to have joy during trials
- Our hope comes from the things to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ
- We are born again and are to put off the old self.
- We are to have a healthy fear of the Lord.
- We are to love others zealously.

What else have we talked about that stuck out to you? Take a moment to think about that a write down what you come up with. With these things in mind, what is Peter referring back to when he says therefore in verse 1 of chapter 2? I believe it points back to multiple things.

- We are children of God (v14/17)
- We are to be holy (v16)
- We are to be obedient to the truth (v22)
- We are not to conform to the former lusts; put on the new self (v14)

Because we are children of God who are called to be holy, obedient to the truth and are to put off the old selfish ways, we are “therefore” called to put aside malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Another way of putting this verse is: Since you are children of God, do not do evil things, lie, be a hypocrite, have a jealous desire for other peoples’ things or speak falsely about another person. At the root of all these things is the “old self” and selfish ambitions. We should not have a desire to take part in any of these things. The idea of putting aside or putting off things is not specific to Peter. In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus we find the following:

Ephesians 4:22, 25, 31

²²*that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.*

²⁵*Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor for we are member of one another*

³¹*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

Putting off these things is part of the growing process. We do not get this right the very first time. It is safe to say that there has only been one person throughout all of history that was able to inherently put off these things (the things of the flesh/old self). So how is it that we (Christians) grow out of these things? Peter sheds some light on that for us in the next verses.

Peter compares Christians to newborn babies. If you have ever been around a newborn, you know that they get hungry, and that hunger is accompanied by crying to let mom and dad know it is time for another feeding. There are two things that we can learn from this picture that Peter has given us. First, the milk is what gives the baby the nutrients it needs to grow. Without the milk, the baby will not grow or survive. What we also see in this picture is the baby's longing, or a strong desire for the milk. The same is true with the life of a Christian. The pure milk of the word, or pure spiritual milk as some translations have it, is the Christian's key to growth. The word is what gives us the spiritual nutrients that promotes spiritual growth. Also, like the newborn, Christians should have a longing for the word. It should not be something in a glass case that says, "break in the event of an emergency". We should have a strong desire to spend time in the word, to grow out of the newborn phase of our faith and to grow closer to God. Also, if we do not take in the milk of the word, we will never be ready to handle the meat and potatoes.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not able, ³for you are still fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

We must take in the word to grow beyond taking in milk. We have to have a desire to take in solid foods. However, if we do not put aside the things of the flesh, the things of our old self, the former lusts we cannot and will not ever be ready to grow spiritually. We must choose a side, our flesh or God.

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other...

While this passage is speaking about serving money, the concept presented can be applied to any manner of the flesh. Again, you can serve God or the flesh, not both. One who desires the word will be one who puts aside things of the flesh and grows into the holy, obedient child of God they were called to be. The one who does not take in the word is like a mechanic with the training but without certifications. They have learned some but lack the desire to study and learn to obtain certifications that will let them work on other issues with the vehicle. This mechanic is the one who gets stuck doing oil changes the rest of their career. This is not very fulfilling.

Peter throws in one more little statement (verse 3) that is pivotal to Christian growth. Simply put, you must be a born-again Christian to experience spiritual growth. The one who has tasted the kindness of the Lord is the person who has tasted (heard) the gospel (kindness of the Lord) and has accepted it as truth. Psalm 34:8 says

O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him!

The refuge the Lord offers is salvation and it is only through faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross on our behalf.

Application Questions

- How much time are you spending in the word?
- Do you have a longing/strong desire for the word?
- Is spending time in the word a priority for you or just something to mark off the to-do list?
- If you have not been spending time in the word, why do you think that is? What has been getting in the way?
- Have you been trying to serve two masters?
- What steps can you take to get into God's word and to develop a longing to be in the word?

Final Remark

Now that we are children of God, we must put aside old, fleshly ways and grow and strengthen our spirits by spending time in the word. We will not grow without being in the word. I encourage you, spend time in the word. Do not be like the mechanic mentioned above who has no desire to grow and live a fulfilling life. Be excited about the living, breathing word of God. I'll say it one more time: Spend Time In the Word!