
a *Grace Notes* course

First Peter

Lesson 3

1 Peter 1:19 to 2:2

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Grace Notes

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1 Peter 1:19 to 2:2**1 Peter 1:19**

“but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Verse 18 is the negative side and verse 19 brings us to the positive side of how Jesus purchased our salvation.

but with the precious blood of Christ

Verse 19 brings us to the culmination of the cost of redemption. The price tag for salvation is blood. How did God make possible our salvation? Not by works or religion but by the sacrifice of the life of Christ. Blood represents death by sacrifice.

Blood is an idea of life, not death. Blood poured out is to shed the energy of human life. Shed blood is sacrificial blood,

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul," (Leviticus 17:11).

As "the life of the flesh is in the blood" and was forfeited by sin, life eternal can be imparted only by the redemption made in the giving up of life by the sinless Savior.

The New Testament uses "blood" as death as the result of violence or execution. It carries the idea of a violent death (Matthew 27:25). This adds the additional component of sacrifice to physical death (Hebrews 9:7). Blood betokens Jesus' death by the shedding of His blood in redeeming sacrifice.

Note that he says "blood," not "death." A death might occur many ways but not necessarily by the shedding of blood. The shedding of blood points to sacrifice, sacrifice for sins.

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood," (Acts 20:28).

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him," (Romans 5:9).

"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission," (Hebrews 9:22).

Remember that Jesus did not bleed to death. Jesus voluntarily gave up His life. He "dismissed His spirit." His death was spiritual as well as physical. When He bore the sins of the world, He experienced separation from God. At that time God separated from Him because He bore the sins of the world.

Principle

God gives us life for death.

Application

The blood of Christ is the price of redemption. The price is sufficient to purchase eternal life. If there was any other purchasing power then Christ died for nothing,

"I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain," (Galatians 2:21).

At the moment of conversion, God gives us new life (regenerates us). We cannot grow into this life. Birth is an event. Therefore, no one can educate us into birth.

Spiritual birth means we pass from death into eternal life (John 5:24). At that moment we pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. Christians may not be able to pinpoint the exact moment when this happened to them. The main thing is to know that it happened.

The crisis of spiritual birth triggers the beginning of the spiritual life. That process extends from spiritual birth to our death or until Christ comes again. During this period God puts us into a sphere of development (2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 2:2). This development is as fast or slow as we apply ourselves to the Word of God. When we apply divine truth to experience, the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and makes them real, plain, tangible and useful to us.

but with the precious blood of Christ

Note the word "precious." This word fits the idea of ransom because ransom prices are high. There was great personal cost to the Lord Jesus. He could have stayed in heaven. If so, we would have remained in the slave market forever and spent eternity without Christ. That did not happen. Jesus did die for us. He paid that awful price.

Sacrificial death for sin is ridiculed today. To the Christian, there is nothing more valuable, dear or precious. The word "precious" indicates value. We value His shed blood because it cost Him a great price. "Value" carries the idea of costliness. The value of the shed blood of Christ is incalculable.

Shedding blood was a costly act. It cost the humiliation of Christ in becoming a man; it cost the death of His humanity. As in no other Scripture, God reveals the price of redemption. The Old Testament lamb prepared the way. The sacrificial lamb made it a necessity that blood be shed and that the lamb be without spot.

You may say, "Could not God have saved us some other way? Isn't there some other price that could have paid for our sin?" No! The nature of God demands that He is consistent with Himself.

If God is absolute, then He is absolutely holy. Anyone in His presence must be absolutely holy. For someone to go into God's presence (go to heaven), he or she must be as holy as God is. But you say, "I can't be that righteous!" That is true (Romans 3:10,23). In yourself you cannot. In fact, you already have positive demerit; you were born a sinner (Psalm 51:5). Because we were born sinners, then we were destined to become sinners in act. Sin is part of our nature. Therefore, there is no way for humans to save themselves. Salvation must come by another.

The only way for us to be as righteous as God is righteous (Romans 3:24-26) is through someone who never sinned Himself. Jesus was never a slave to sin. He did not receive Adam's sinful nature because He was virgin-born. He was not a sinner by nature nor by act. He was the only truly free man. "The wages of sin is death."

This is a principle God set up in Genesis three. Jesus never sinned so He did not have to die. He chose to die. As the only free man, He bought us

out of the slave market of sin with the purchasing power of His blood. Jesus paid for our sins with his blood.

Principle

Jesus obtained our salvation at great personal cost.

Application

The cost of our redemption is high – the shed blood of Christ. The commodity of salvation of the soul is so high that neither money, nor religion nor tradition could purchase it. How can Christians squander their life, which cost the death of our Lord Jesus?

By his death on the cross, Jesus opened the door of the slave market of sin. We will stay in the slave market if we do not open the door.

How can you walk through the door? By faith, accept the work Christ did for you on the cross. Just walk through the door believing Christ opened it for you. Jesus paid for every sin you have ever personally committed or ever will commit.

This is why we gather around the Lord's supper. We remember the Lord's death; we remember the purpose of His death – He died for our personal sins upon the cross. God instituted a system for nailing in our minds the preciousness of the sacrifice of Christ's death for our sins. He made possible the escape from judgment to come. This is the clear sound of the gospel.

Do you cherish the death of Christ for your sins? What value is His death to you?

as of a lamb

It is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:14). The paschal lamb represents a perfect sacrifice. The lamb symbolizes innocence. When priests sacrifice the lamb, it represents the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty.

Jesus obviously was not a literal lamb. This is representative analogy. Old Testament sacrifices were representatives of the death of Christ. Blood represents what Jesus did on the cross. All of the sins of the world were poured upon the Lord Jesus on the cross and judged. When He completed His work on the cross, He cried, "It is finished," (John

19:30). Then He dismissed his spirit and entered into the presence of the Father.

The book of Revelation presents Jesus as the "Lamb" 29 times (5:6; 7:14; 13:8). Revelation is the book of the Lamb.

The word "lamb" in our verse occurs four times in the New Testament, always with reference to Jesus as the innocent lamb who suffers vicariously for others (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19).

Since Jesus was crucified at the Passover, he was seen as the paschal lamb – "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us," (1 Corinthians 5:7). At the Passover, priests slew lambs to atone for sins. Jesus is our Passover, a lamb sacrificed for our sin. The paschal lamb's blood blots out sins by expiation (John 19:36).

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the expected Messiah. Jesus is the embodiment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament. "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1: 29). "Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'" (John 1: 35).

Principle

Jesus took away our sins by sacrificing himself in our place.

Application

Jesus was innocent. He did not have to die. He chose to die because He wanted to forgive our sins. He took our hell that we might have His heaven.

Will you receive His heaven today? Will you accept by faith that Jesus did all of the suffering necessary for your sins. There is nothing that remains to be suffered. He did it all. He takes away the sins of the world. That includes your personal sins. Do you believe it?

without blemish

"Without blemish" means that which constitutes a defect or blemish either in the physical or moral sense. Numbers 6 uses it for the absence of defects in sacrificial animals (Numbers 6:14; 19:2). Jesus

presented himself as an offering without blemish to God, (Hebrews 9:14).

In the Old Testament, when Israelites brought his lambs on the Yom Kippur (the greatest day in the Jewish calendar), they dare not bring a blemished lamb. They would never think of bringing a lamb that they could not sell at the market. They would never think of bringing a lamb that was blind or lame.

Just anything was not good enough for God. The lamb had to be "without blemish or without spot." God did not want any bruise found upon it. Leviticus 22 contains the qualifications for the lamb:

"Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the Lord. 23 Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24 You shall not offer to the Lord what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land. 25 Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf," (Leviticus 22:19-24).

Old Testament sacrifices always had to be physically perfect. They could have no scar or limp. God was very particular then and He was very particular later when Christ came as the Lamb of God. God was very particular about the Lamb to come. He demanded a Lamb without defect and without defilement. That is a qualification for payment of sin.

Principle

Jesus met all of our imperfections with His perfection.

Application

God's Lamb ended all altars and sacrifice. Calvary was the last altar. God's last sacrificial lamb was the Lord Jesus on the cross. We must come to God by that Lamb or we will not come to God at all. There is no other way (Acts 4:12).

Jesus did not die upon the cross as a martyr. He did not die upon the cross to show how brave He

was. He died to pay for the sins of the world. He died to pay for your sins.

and without spot

"Without spot" means not to cause a spot or stain upon something -- spotless. "Without stain" pertains to being without that which might mar one's moral character -- "morally spotless, pure." In 1 Peter 1:19, this implies that Jesus is an unblemished offering because He is sinless.

Jesus was without blemish and without spot. Jesus was born without sin and committed no act of sin. There was no flaw in the character of the Son of God.

Jesus was the only one who could say, "For I always do those things that please Him." He was also the only person in the world who could say, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:29, 46). He said that to a crowd he infuriated with raw, unadulterated truth. Had there been anything that they could have thrown in his face, these enraged religionists would have done it right there. Later in John 8 they tried to kill him.

Jesus was sinless, stainless, spotless. He was the only one truly qualified to be the Lamb of God. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," (2 Corinthians 5: 21). "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth," (1 Peter 2: 22). "And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin," (1 John 3: 5). "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," (2 Corinthians 5: 21). "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth," (1 Peter 2: 22). "And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin," (1 John 3: 5).

Principle

We rest in Jesus' perfection before God.

Application: Judas: "I have betrayed innocent blood." Pilate: "I find no fault in this man." Pilate's wife: "Have nothing to do with this just person." Thief: "This man has done nothing amiss." Roman centurion: "Surely, this was a righteous person."

Jesus' perfection makes our imperfections stand out in hideous contrast. His infallibility sets in contrast to any other person who has ever lived. To use the word infallibility to any other person who has ever lived is unadulterated blasphemy.

Jesus is the only man who ever lived who never had to say, "I'm sorry" or "My mistake." He never made a mistake. Jesus stands in towering superiority above any other person. He was no mere religious leader. He was God made visible for 33 and one half years on earth.

1 Peter 1:20

“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

Speaking of redemption, Peter goes on to discuss the Redeemer and the redeemed (vv. # 20,21).

He indeed was foreordained

Remember God is not subject to time. There is no "before" and "after" with Him. God does not operate in succession. We use terms like "fore" or "before" because finite creatures can think in no other terms.

The verb "foreordained" means "to know in advance," to know about something prior to some temporal reference point. God knows about events before they happen. Before creation, He already knew about His plan to send Jesus to earth to redeem humanity. "Known to God from eternity are all His works," (Acts 15: 18).

It is possible to understand "foreordained" in the sense of "chosen beforehand." In this case God chooses or selects the Lord Jesus to come to earth in advance of some other event. The event in this case was creation. Before Genesis 1:1 (creation), God foreordained Jesus as Redeemer. That was before time or space ever existed. That was before Adam ever sinned.

Principle

God planned our salvation before the fall of humanity.

Application

God not only foresaw Calvary; He arranged it. Salvation was no afterthought. God did not say,

"Oh my, sin entered this world I created. Now I'm going to have to find a plan to save the world."

Redemption was no emergency measure. God was not in a bind to put a plan in place when things went wrong. Redemption from God's standpoint is an eternally present fact. It did not take place in time. Calvary was no act of desperation on God's part. It is an act of God's eternal design.

before the foundation of the world

"Foundation" comes from two words: firstly, "cast" and secondly, "down." It means "laying down, a casting down." God threw the universe into space by simply speaking a word. God laid down creation as a foundation. It was God who founded the world, not some neutral process.

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world," (John 17:24).

This is the pre-temporal love of the Father for the son. "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." God elected believers before the foundations of the world," (Ephesians 1:4).

The Bible also uses the phrase "the foundation of the world" in the sense of from creation onwards: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world," (Matthew 13:35).

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,'" (Matthew 25:34).

"that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation," (Luke 11:50).

"For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' although the works were finished from the foundation of the world," (Hebrews 4:3).

"He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the

end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," (Hebrews 9:26).

"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Revelation 13:8).

"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is," (Revelation 17:8).

Principle

God transcends His creation; He is bigger than time and space.

Application

Our pint-sized brains can neither comprehend God nor His work. If we knew everything we would be as smart as God.

We dare not reject something in the Bible simply because we do not understand it. That is also true in natural, human life. We do not understand electricity but we know it exists. We accept the fact that space vehicles can go to Mars but we may not know the technical reasons for it. We accept it without attempting to understand it. It is the same in the realm of the spiritual. We accept it because God says it and that settles it.

before the foundation of the world

The word "foundation" here implies the creation of the world. The word "world" is our ordered system of existence.

Two verses show God doing things before the creation of the world: "

In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began." God promised eternal life before time began, (Titus 1: 2).

"Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began," (2 Timothy 1: 9).

God both saved and called us according to His purpose and grace before time began.

Another phrase that does not go back before the creation of the universe is found in Revelation 13: 8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear." That verse goes back to the foundation of the world but not before it.

God foreordained Jesus before the foundation of the world.

"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death," (Acts 2: 23).

We often think it was people who put Jesus to death. This verse says that it was God who predetermined Jesus death.

Jesus death was no random act. God the Father gave the humanity of Christ the right to decide when He would die.

"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father," (John 10: 18).

Theologians speak of the decree(s) of God. Decree means God determines all that will be. God determined the death of Christ before time and space. God more than foreknew that He was going to do this, He determined it.

Ransom in Christ was God's eternal plan (cf. Romans 16:25-26). God declared that the person and work of Christ have a place in the eternal counsel of God. This eternal counsel existed before the created order. Humanity's fall did not take God by surprise. Redemption was no afterthought of God.

Principle

Salvation is no afterthought by God.

Application

No one ever put God under any pressure to redeem humanity in eternity. Salvation was no emergency measure to correct humanity's situation after sin occurred. God's purpose of redemption goes back before creation. God's compassion is as old as His creation. God's compassion antedates creation. His love is as old as His power.

God planned all eternity at one point. I Peter 1:20 is a key verse to establish divine decree. Events of the world are no surprise to God. Sin was no surprise to God. Sin is clearly in the outworking of God's purpose (Isaiah 14:24,26,27).

A universe without a plan (decree) would be as irrational as a jet without a pilot. Without an eternal plan, humanity would plunge into an abyss of meaningless trial.

Why did God decree at all? Why did He decree that man should come into existence? Why did he not just restrict his fellowship to the Trinity? We do not know the answer to those questions. Only an infinite God can answer those questions completely. However, there are some things he has revealed that point to the answer.

We know that the decree did not originate in necessity. God did not have to create anything. There was nothing apart from God to influence Him to create. He was the only being in the universe. What He decreed, He decreed freely, voluntarily.

but was manifest in these last times for you

"Manifest" means to make clear. God made Jesus very clear to the people of the New Testament. He made the Lord Jesus visible to people of Peter's generation.

Ransom through Christ was part of God's eternal plan of salvation

Romans 16:25-27

"Manifest" is not the opposite of invisible but the opposite of indistinct, therefore, this implies the preexistence of Christ before his incarnation. What God purposed in eternity, He made distinct in time.

"Times" means succession of events. These are the successive periods of human history until Christ came (Galatians 4:4). The "last times" are the times of the New Testament writing. "He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," (Hebrews 9: 26).

"For you" – Peter focuses the whole decree of redemption upon the readers of his generation. He sets them in the cutting edge of the drama of

redemption. This would encourage them in their duress.

As with everything in the physical realm, so in the spiritual realm. Before people realize their need, God meets them with provisions for that need.

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:25).

Principle

We can take courage that God has a plan for the universe and for us individually.

Application

God does not act from emotional impulse; He acts from eternity. He always acts rationally. He never exercises arbitrary will. God's bases His decree on His most wise and holy counsel. He based His plan on His omniscience.

Since He is perfectly holy and incapable of partiality or unfairness, He made His plans according to that which is absolutely right. God saves sinners only if in doing so, He can remain absolutely just (Romans 3:25-26).

Even finite people, who are but creatures, put forward a plan before they act. A person who acts without design or purpose is foolish. Before an architect draws blueprints, he makes his drawings and forms his plans even to minute details. In his brain, the building stands complete in all its parts before anyone puts a spade into the ground.

A general must have a plan or thousands of his men will be killed. Napoleon began the invasion of Russia only after devising a detailed, extensive plan. He showed the lines of march and the timing of their arrival. He planned the equipment and supplies in detail. If he were omniscient, Napoleon would have planned where he wanted to situate every soldier.

If this is true of mere humans, how much more it is true of God! If this is true of God, do you take this into account when trouble comes your way?

1 Peter 1:21

“who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

who through Him

The word "through" is crucial in this phrase because it describes the means of our salvation. Note some of the many times the Bible describes Jesus as the means of salvation:

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture," (John 10:9).

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,'" (John 14:6).

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:24).

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," (Romans 5:1).

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him," (Romans 5:9).

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them," (Hebrews 7:25).

Principle

Jesus is God's means of salvation.

Application

We cannot come to God except through Jesus. We cannot pray except through Christ. All good things come through Jesus Christ. He is the way God has arranged our relationship to Himself. We cannot relate to Him except through Jesus. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus," (1 Timothy 2:5).

What is your personal relationship to Jesus Christ? Have you come to trust him as God's way of salvation for you?

believe in God

Jesus' redemptive work is the ground of our faith (3:18). His work has caused us to place our faith in God. It is faith that makes us faithful. "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me," (John 14:1). "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men," (Titus 3:8).

Almost everyone believes in some kind of god. Some worship a tree stump. Others bow before a statue. Some simply believe in themselves. The Bible flatly states the only people who go to heaven are those who go through Jesus. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!," (James 2:19).

"In God" expresses internal trust, a cleaving to Him. This is not mere faith. It is faith in God through Christ. The issue here is not faith so much as the object of our faith.

Principle

It is not belief but the object of our belief that makes us a Christian.

Application

Faith enables us to take hold of God's provision for our salvation. God places the decision of our faith in our hands. It is our eternal death or our eternal life to decide. However, it is not ours to decide what to believe. That is God's prerogative.

It makes no difference how moral or how immoral we are. Our honesty or dishonesty is not the issue. These are issues that follow becoming a Christian. If we are not birthed into the family of God by faith, we do not have the capacity to live for God.

Ninety-nine times the gospel of John mentions the word "believe" as man's charge to become a Christian.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," (John 3:16).

John even states this as the explicit purpose of his book,

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name," (John 20:31).

Do you mutually exclusively believe, and believe alone, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient for your salvation?

who raised Him from the dead

God vindicates His power to save our soul by the resurrection: "

And you killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses," (Acts 3:15).

"Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole," (Acts 4:10).

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him," (Acts 5:30).

"Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins," (Acts 10:40).

"and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come," (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

The resurrection authenticates the payment of our sins by Jesus on the cross. His resurrection trumpets the victory over sin. "So when this corruptible has put on incorruption [resurrection], and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written:

'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?'" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

We can confidently stand before God assured that our sins are forgiven because of the resurrection.

The word "from" means out from. Jesus rose out from the state of spiritual death.

Principle

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead assures our salvation.

Application

Many people today believe Jesus did not bodily rise from the dead. They preach that His ideals continue today but He Himself is dead and buried, a physical person of the past. These people are not faithful to the teaching of the passage from 1 Peter.

Where we have the death of Christ, we have the resurrection of Christ. Christ dying for our sins is inadequate, if, at the end of it all, it simply plops us into the grave. The death of Christ without the resurrection of Christ is a half gospel.

and gave Him glory

"Gave Him glory" means the Father raised and ascended Jesus to heaven (John 17:5; Hebrews 1:3). "Glory" is the essential characteristic of the risen Jesus (Acts 3:13; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Romans 6:4). "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [the God of the resurrection], the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go," (Acts 13:13).

"Glory" here is the exaltation of the Lord Jesus (Acts 5:31; Ephesians 1:18-23). God the Father seats the humanity of Christ at His right hand.

so that your faith and hope are in God

"Faith" and "hope" closely braid together so we can orient ourselves to God. "Faith" is resting on God's promises. Christians who know God's essence (what He is like) rest in His plan (decree). "Hope" is the exercise of appropriating the things of eternity into time.

"Faith" has to do with coping with life in time; "hope" deals with bringing the blessings of eternity into our experience. God manages every aspect of our lives. He demonstrates His faithfulness in time by bringing His glorious plan of redemption to us. He shows His faithfulness by providing resources for the Christian life.

"Faith" allows us to appropriate the promises to our experience. As we claim God's promises to us, He empowers us to meet whatever may challenge our faith.

"Hope" is a synonym for faith. However, there is a difference. "Hope" carries the idea of confidence in God's promises. Our English word does not nearly convey the idea of the Greek language, which brings the idea of confidence attending with something in the future. God gives us confidence in the future.

God has made good His promise to us by sending Jesus Christ to die for our sins. God is utterly faithful to those promises. He proves this through the resurrection of Christ. God's faithfulness strengthens our faith that He is totally trustworthy.

"In God" -- God is the supreme object of our faith. The Bible does not value faith in faith. The object of faith gives quality to faith. Therefore, God does not value the process as much as the objective of one's faith.

Principle

God gives resources for coping with trials.

Application

Many Christians today shipwreck their faith. They throw in the towel. They become disillusioned with God due to some crisis in their lives. Then they fall to the philosophies of the present age.

These Christians float through life like so much flotsam and jetsam. The philosophies of this age toss them back and forth by different waves of conjecture. They watch the floating debris of the shipwreck of other lives but it makes no impact upon them.

As we watch all this flotsam we may become discouraged to take the risk of sailing anymore. We lose heart.

The sea is not a safe place. Trials can discourage us or make us stronger. God's faithfulness keeps us sailing through the storms until the day when we see him on the distant shore.

1 Peter 1:22

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.”

We are in a section of 1 Peter that challenges the Christian to live as obedient children. This verse is yet another responsibility to live out the excellence of the Christian life.

Since you have purified your souls

Peter takes for granted ("since") that salvation purifies the soul. There is no question in his mind.

"Purified" refers to cleansing from defilement (the heart, James 4:8; the soul, 1 Peter 1:22; oneself, 1 John 3:3). It means to wash off, to wash away, to cause a state of moral purity.

To purify is to remove all foreign elements. Plutarch uses this word when he describes the marriage vows of the ancient world. The bride must touch both "fire" and "water" then she becomes purified. The Old Testament uses this word for the rites of the atonement.

The Greek tense in "have purified" means God purified our souls at one point in the past with the results continuing into the future. God has cleansed us positionally at the point of salvation, and the results of a changed life flow from that cleansing. This is a past purifying, our regeneration. "...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works," (Titus 2:14).

Our souls stand purified permanently because we have come to trust in the finished work of Christ for our salvation, just as the Asia Minor Christians were purified as Peter wrote to them. They stood before God in a regenerate state.

Christians who trust in Christ today have purified souls. God has purged our sins and purified our soul when we come to the cross. "...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of

His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," (Hebrews 1:3).

Principle

At salvation, God regenerates the soul of the person who believes in the finished work of Christ to forgive sins.

Application

A lost soul (Mark 8:36) is an impure soul, a dirty soul. Saved people have pure souls. We cannot go to heaven without one. We have a pure soul positionally (or legally) before God forever when we trust the work of Christ on the cross to forgive our sins.

in obeying the truth

How does Christian become purified? By obeying the truth of the gospel. God wants absolute subjection to the truth of the gospel.

This follows the principle of absolute subjection to the truth of the Bible. By obeying the Bible lasting effects will impact our daily lives. The seed of all practical obedience lies in vital faith. The faith that we to come to Christ by, we live by (Colossians 2:6). This is the origin of true Christian living.

Faith is obedience and faith produces obedience. If my faith does not produce obedience, it is not true faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also," (James 2:26).

People often turn this around--they try to become righteous from without. "If I practice righteousness, then I'll be righteous within." That is totally reverse of what the Bible pleads--we must first, accept Christ, then we will live the life of Christ. We do not live the life of Christ, and then see our nature change a more godly life.

Conduct comes from character. And character comes from Christ! If we accept Christ as our Savior, we accept truth (John 14:6). Truth which doesn't transform and mold conduct is a king dethroned. Truth is a separating power.

Instead of believing that truth produces change, people believe they can become righteous from without. "If I practice righteousness, I will be righteous from within," some say. This is the

reverse of the teaching of Scripture. This is a castle of cards. In our day we care less about truth. We value experience instead.

Many are not purified by the truth because they do not obey the truth (John 8:31, 32). Truth emancipates people from the habits of sin, the seductive spell of sin, the power of sin. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to do this (John 17:17). This is the cleansing truth of God's Word.

We do truth when we appropriate it to experience (John 8:31, 32; 17:17; 20:31; Acts 6:7,17; Galatians 3:1; 5:7; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13; James 1:22). The truth of God's Word is effective when we do something about what we know (John 13:17; Acts 6:7; Romans 6:17; Galatians 3:1, 5:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; James 1:22).

"Obey" here is the obedience that is brought about by truth. The absolute subjection to the truth of the Word of God causes it to work in our hearts.

We also met the word "obedience" in verse 2. This is an amplification of that passage. This word occurs again in 1 Peter 4:17 which says, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

Principle

Truth is a separating power.

Application

There are two errors when it comes to attitudes about the Word of God: 1. We care less about doctrine, only experience. True faith produces obedience (James 2:26). 2. We have done all that the truth asks of us when we intellectually endorse truth. The purpose of truth is to change lives. God does not tell us simply that we might know (James 1:22; John 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-13; opposite—2 Thessalonians 2:10-13).

Truth that does not mold and transform character and conduct is a king dethroned. Truth is a separating power. The reason there is so little love is that there is so little obedience to the truth.

through the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the agent who purifies our soul, motivates us and makes us effective in living the Christian life. True Christian living and love is produced by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:5; 22; Romans 5:5; Hebrews 9:14).

Both divine and human factors are important in the Christian life. The Christian milk can has two handles. God provides power to live the Christian life, giving us confidence by the Spirit. We produce action, living out of God's power. Man's part is to co-operate with God's power.

Principle

The agent of purification is the Holy Spirit.

Application

New life in Christ is not of ourselves but through the Holy Spirit. The word "Spirit" means breath or wind. Unless we set our sails, the wind will pass the boat and leave it motionless. Unless believers allow themselves to be filled with the Spirit, we will be powerless to live the Christian life.

The agent of purification is the Holy Spirit. The moment people receive Jesus Christ as their Savior the Holy Spirit comes into their lives. We can quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) or grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30) by sin.

The supernatural life in Christ has supernatural effects. If a person is truly born again, there will be fruit of supernatural nature especially the kind of fruit produced in this verse.

The Christian has the heart to love others because of their regeneration. God has supplied the equipment to love – the Holy Spirit.

Verse 22 gives the properties of love: sincere love; a pure heart; and a passionate or fervent love. Christian love is not hypocritical,

impure and inactive. It is a new kind of love that requires a new kind of life. This new kind of life came to us when we believed

in sincere

Experiential cleansing results in un hypocritical love for the brethren. Purity precedes un hypocritical love. No one can love without the

enabling of God's Spirit. Love based on a supernatural life is not hypocritical.

Ancient Greek used the word "hypocrite" to describe the actor on the stage. He was the one who played the part of another. The word literally means to judge from under a mask. Some in Peter's day had put on a mask of hypocritical love over their usual appearances.

In the Greco-Roman world, a hypocrite was an actor who wore a mask. He had two masks, a smiling face and a frowning face. If he wore the frowning face, he depicted a tragedy. If he wore the smiling face, everything was happy. Whether he played the part of tragedy or happiness, he never showed his true feelings but the feelings of another. He was a hypocrite, a pretender.

God wants us to love others without pretense. God does not want us to be an actor when it comes to love. Love must come from genuine care about others. "Sincere" indicates real love or genuine love. True love lacks pretense (2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Peter 1:22; Romans 12:9; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:5; James 3:17).

Principle

True love does not wear a mask and cannot be counterfeited.

Application

Do you pretend to love others? We often profess more than we feel. There is a synthetic love abroad in the church. It is a counterfeit, imitation love. This love is nothing more than a sham.

This kind of love only works on nice people. It is easy to like nice people. When we run into people who are not nice, then we run out of love. Man-made love will work only on people who reciprocate. The love of God enables the child of God to love without response, without reciprocation. This is a love that only the Holy Spirit gives. "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us," (Romans 5:5).

Someone might say, "Well, I show concern for fellow Christians. I shake their hand every Sunday morning and say 'It is sure good to see you my friend.' I invite them to all the socials. I smile at

them." These things are fine but they are not necessarily love. If we do this simply because the church needs more people, it's not true love. People will sense a phony.

God wants more than an actor who plays a role of what others might think of them. He wants us to express genuine love for others. People will know this. "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another," (Romans 12: 9).

God doesn't want us to wear a mask representing ourselves as something other than what we are. He doesn't want us to pretend we are something that we are not. Genuine love does not wear a mask.

love of the brethren

The words "love of the brethren" are derived from one Greek word, which is our word, Philadelphia. This is friendship brotherly love. This love is free from bitterness, hatred, vindictiveness, implacability, fear, worry, anxiety. This love eliminates attitude sins especially the sins which have an object. The Christian who loves relationally is free from attitude sins.

Philadelphia love is the love of reciprocity. We love because someone else loves us. It is a love that likes. We like someone else because they like us. This affection or fondness results in human attachment toward someone else.

This is human love, human affection, the love of liking. The other person we love reflects our thinking. We are fond of them and thus are attracted to them. This is human attraction.

God does not want us to love men as though they were your brothers but love them because they are your brothers. This is not "brotherly love" but "brother- love."

Philadelphia love occurs only seven times in the New Testament (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1; 1 Peter 3:8; 2 Peter 1:5-7).

Principle

Love of the brethren is a horizontal relationship.

Application

Some appear to love but do not genuinely love others. This love is a love which produces pleasure from knowing them. Being with these people give us pleasure.

The result of purifying of the soul is horizontal love for Christian brothers and sisters. This has nothing to do with loving those without Christ. That is a different issue.

love one another

Why exhort Christians to love others whom they already love? The answer is found in two different words for love. In the previous phrase, love was reciprocal. Love in this phrase, however, is a different word for love.

Human fondness and affection ("love of the brethren") can degenerate into selfishness so the Holy Spirit introduces a second word for love that confronts selfishness.

The first word for love is human love. When Jesus asked Peter three times (John 21) if he loved Him Peter answered with "I like you" or "I am fond of you." The first two times Jesus used a word for sacrificial love. The third time Jesus used Peter's word for fondness, "Do you like me, Peter? Are you really fond of me?" That struck Peter to the heart. Peter said, "You know everything. You know I like you. I am fond of you. I am for you."

That is the idea of the first word for love in this verse. God wants us to like fellow Christians as well as love them. The verb for the like-kind of love is found 25 times in the New Testament. Sometimes it is translated "kiss." Judas Iscariot kissed the Savior when he betrayed him just before Jesus' capture.

This word is used of the Father in relation to the Son, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does," (John 5:20). The Father is fond of the Son.

The telegram that Mary and Martha sent to the Savior in John 11:3 contains this word, "Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'" Jesus, the one you are fond of is sick. Jesus uses this word of Christians in Revelation 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke

and chasten." God calls upon us to genuinely like fellow Christians. This involves kindness.

The second word for love (agape) in this verse is divine love. This love is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It's unilateral. It is a one-way love that can love others even if they do not return love. This love does not depend on reciprocity. It is a love that calls out of one's heart supernaturally.

This word for love occurs 137 times in the New Testament. The most famous verse that contains this word is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It was not that God was fond of the world that He gave His Son. It was not even that God liked the world that He gave His Son to die on the cross. God loved the world unilaterally to such an extent that he sacrificed His Son to die on the cross. God loves on the basis of His own character.

This word is used in John 13:34-35 as the badge of true Christianity: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Each of the four times Jesus uses love in these two verses is the word for sacrificial love. If we love each other fervently and sacrificially, it will convince the world that we are truly His disciples.

If we blend the two kinds of love then we have the balance of true biblical love.

Principle

God wants us to love unilaterally even if no one reciprocates their love to us.

Application

The thought in these two words for love is that we are to like fellow Christians, be fond of each other, and we are to see to it that we love each other sacrificially and unilaterally

God wants us to love with more than a fond love. He wants us to love sacrificially. This is a big order. I have never met a Christian who said, "I believe that I love other Christians too much." Romans 13:8 says, "Owe no one anything except

to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." How can we love those without Christ if we do not love the saints?

God also wants us to love unilaterally. He wants us to love out of character rather than whether someone else expresses love to us. He wants us to love independently of any relationship, any problem or any situation. The person who loves this way has great capacity of soul. This is a person of great character.

sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently

This is the first mention of love in 1 Peter. The second chapter challenges us to "Love the brotherhood" (v.17). In chapter 3, verse 8 Peter dares us to "love as brothers." Chapter 4, verse 8 says, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'" The phrase "above all things" means the most important thing in the Christian community is love. Peter challenges us to cover the sins of others, not our own sins. This is true biblical love.

Principle

True love protects the reputation of fellow Christians.

Application

Do you cover for your fellow Christian's failures? When was the last time you covered up for your brother or sister in Christ? When did you hide his or her sin from the public?

We get the idea that God calls upon us to expose the sins of others. We often do this in a pseudo-spiritual way: "We ought to pray for so-and-so because you wouldn't believe what he did..."

Christians have sly ways of gossiping. We sow suspicion. It may simply be a raised eyebrow. We do not have to say anything. We say, "I wonder what happened? Maybe he ran away with someone's wife. Maybe he went back to drinking." A little question mark, a little insinuation, an innuendo, a tone in the voice can cast deep suspicion on people.

A new kind of love demands a new kind of life.

fervently

"Fervently" is the same word used of prayer in Acts 12:5. The believers prayed unceasingly for Peter. Just as they prayed unceasingly for Peter we are to love unceasingly. Love that is constant is fervent love. Fervent love is love that strains with intensity to love fellow Christians.

God wants us to express this love not shallowly but "deeply" -- "at full stretch" or "in an all-out manner, with an intense strain." Earnestly comes from two words: 1) out and 2) to stretch. We get our English word "tension" from the Greek word for stretch. This word denotes stretching out or straining toward an end.

The idea expressed is not a relaxing effort. It means to constantly be eager to persevere in some state or activity. It pertains to an unceasing activity, normally involving a degree of intensity and perseverance without ceasing, continuously, constantly. God wants us to persevere in love for fellow Christians.

Secular Greek used "fervently" for the rack in torture. The rack was an instrument of torture in the ancient world. They would place a body on a rack that could stretch the body until the bones would break and muscles tear. This is the kind of love God wants. He wants us to love until our spiritual muscles tear and bones break. This love is long-suffering and sacrificial.

The word "fervently" is a disturbing word. We meet it again in 4:8, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'" God wants us to love in an active, aggressive way. He does not want a passive, indifferent love. He wants a love that is bold.

"One another" is another of the same kind. God wants us to direct fervent love toward fellow Christians.

Principle

True love takes effort and constancy.

Application

The Asian Christians already had brotherly love for one another. They had affection for one another but they were not sacrificing themselves

for each other. They were not on the rack. Their love did not stretch until it tore. This love is far more than fondness. Fondness can degenerate into attachment for another that can be selfish.

Do you go out of your way for fellow Christians? Will you sacrifice yourself or time for Christians? Most Christians do not love each other with boiling love. We fail to defend each other. If someone throws false accusations against a brother, will you stick up for him or passively let him take it?

Children in the same family may fight with each other. However, if one of them is under attack they will form a bond and stick up for each other. When there is a show down with the neighborhood kids, they will be there for each other. That is what God expects of fellow Christians.

True love for fellow Christian is no emotional surge. It is no part-time emotion. Unlock the floodgates of love. If we can relax in God's love we can relax in love toward others. Do you resent someone? Can you love with no string's attached?

God wants us to love to the extent that we sacrifice ourselves for others. How far should a person go in attempting to win someone else to Christ? A Christian may claim that "I have my self respect. I have tried to share Christ with this person and all they do is scorn my message."

The second word for love (sacrificial love) answers this question. God wants us to love to the extent of sacrificing self. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another," (1 John 4: 10-11).

with a pure heart

The word "pure" means genuine, not hypocritical, (Romans 12:9).

The word "heart" is an important biblical term, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength," (Deuteronomy 6:4).

God wants us to love with all our might. This is the biblical standard for love.

If we are not consistent in love for the brethren, our behavior will betray our profession. Neglecting to love the brethren shows we are still spiritually dead, (1 John 3:14) and that we have not come into a true relationship with God, (1 John 4:8).

"With a pure heart" can be translated "out of a pure heart." We love others because of our regeneration. We have natural love for the people of God because we have been purified (forgiven) from our sin. Pure love comes from a pure heart.

Purify means to remove foreign elements, (Acts 21:23-27). Lay aside evil, put off lust, hatred, envy and hypocrisy, (James 4:8; 1 John 3:2-3).

Principle

Personal purity produces pure love. A "pure heart" is a heart in fellowship with God.

Application

A wife wants the whole heart of her husband. God wants us to love from the heart.

1 Peter 1:23

"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."

having been born again

The idea of being born again refers to regeneration. By breaking down the word, we have "Generation" means born and "re" means again. "Born again" means to cause to give birth. These words carry the idea of experiencing radical change which impact the total person. This implies a complete change of one's way of life, an entering into a new state.

Being "born again" is the gracious act of God of conferring upon those who believe the nature and disposition of God's children. God imparts to them spiritual life (John 3:3, 5, 7; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).

This is the second time Peter uses the phrase "born again" in this chapter (1:3). Regeneration is God's act and is effected by the resurrection of Christ and the word of God.

Principle

Regeneration is an act of God whereby he gives eternal life.

Application

Unless we come to the place where we are undone, unfit, unjustified, an unbeliever, we will never recognize our need for a spiritual birth. If you let the record speak for itself you will know immediately that you do not measure up to the holiness of God. We cannot count our sins there are so many.

God declares flatly that all of us sin (Romans 3:23). That is why there is one casket per person (Romans 5:12). There is no remedy except spiritual rebirth. Otherwise you will carry your sins into eternity and then God will disqualify us from spending eternity with Himself.

Someone might say, "I am willing to renounce my behavior." All of this is to no avail unless you are born again. Learning religious language does not change lives. We cannot live the Christian life without a Christian heart.

Reformation cannot change a corruptible heart. It would simply wash a white tomb full of rottenness within though we may brighten the outside. Someone may cast away vices and conquer evil habits but no one can make himself born into God's family. It is only God that gives life through the Word of God.

If water in the well is dirty, we do not paint the pump. We purify the water. Moral renewal will not cleanse the sins we already committed. We need a new birth (regeneration) to cleanse our souls.

having been born again

Jesus Himself gave a long explanation of this subject in John 3. His theme was "You must be born again," (John 3:7). Why must this be? There is a great gulf between people and God. Jesus challenged a theological professor by the name of Nicodemus that even he stood in need of a spiritual birth.

Notice that this passage says we "have been" born again. We are not trying to be born again. This is a past experience for those born twice. This event

must take place in our lives before we die or we will not go to heaven (John 1:12,13; 3:3-7).

Principle

Man is the product of what he is – a sinner.

Application

Man cannot ignore the fact of sin. Man is the product of what he is – a sinner. The cause of the sin problem must be changed, not the effect. The effect is that man sins. Man may reform himself and eliminate a few sins but this will not satisfy the holy demands of God. Other sins will crop up in his life.

The cause of the problem is man's nature, therefore, man himself must be changed. We cannot change our disposition without changing our nature. For our nature to be changed we must be born again. Man cannot change what he is. He may switch behavior patterns but his nature remains the same. Only God can make him a new man.

If you have never been born twice, you cannot go to heaven. Even with your good record or religion, God will bar you from the gates of heaven. Heaven is a place for those born twice, once physically and the second time spiritually.

A person is born again when he believes, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him," (1 John 5:1)

This is not social, religious, moral or intellectual change. This is spiritual rebirth, a radical new beginning of the soul, mind and character. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5)

Generation is one birth, regeneration is two births. This is more than reformation. The old illustration of a clean pig returning to the mud at the first opportunity applies here. Many may clean up their lives but their basic nature will determine the tenure of their lives.

The fish and the bird have two spheres of nature. The pig and the lamb are opposites in nature. The

person who is born again has a different nature than he who is not. The person who is born again has an exalted nature, God's nature (2 Peter 1:4). The person who never accepts Christ as his Savior only occupies transient life. That life is only comprised of time or as this passage says, "corruptible." If we try to experience the love of verse 22 without spiritual birth of verse 23 we will strain ourselves.

Some say the only difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is that one attends church and the other does not. The Bible says the difference is whether one is born spiritually or not. We do not perceive spiritual birth by religious talk. Being born again is not more religion. The change is much deeper than superficial religion, it is a change of nature.

not of corruptible seed

Peter first sets forth the negative of how a person is born again, then he presents the positive, "not...but." The negative can be seen in such passages as: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John 1:12).

It is nice to be positive but the negative at times is necessary. If the battery in your car only had a positive pole but not a negative, it would not start. Both negative and positive are necessary to obtain the total truth. The positive message of heaven and the negative message of hell are both realities in God's Word. Heaven and hell are mighty contrasts. The contrast here is "corruptible" and "incorruptible."

"Seed" is the instrumental means of birth. It is the means of becoming a parent. "Seed" is the word from which we get the English word "sperm." This is the kind of seed that produces birth. Physical conception comes from the union of the male sperm with the female egg. Nine months later birth occurs.

The spiritual realm operates the same way. Spiritually, the sperm is the Word of God. When the Word of God implants into the egg of positive volition, a person becomes a child of God.

"Corruptible" signifies to bring into an inferior or worse condition, into destruction. "Corruptible" pertains to that which will disintegrate and die - "perishable, mortal," (Romans 1:23).

Principle

Law of the universe: life does not reproduce without a seed.

Application

Without spiritual birth man will perish. Jesus said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Do you believe in Jesus? He is your hope for an incorruptible, imperishable life, eternal life.

but incorruptible

This is the third time we have come to something "incorruptible" in this chapter. Our eternal inheritance is incorruptible (1:3,4). God redeemed us by the incorruptible blood of Christ (1:18,19).

"Incorruptible" means not liable to corruption or decay. Incorruptibility is deathlessness. It is that which is free from death. God is not mortal (Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17) and neither is the Word of God.

In the New Testament, however, "incorruptible" expresses more than deathlessness, it suggests quality of the life enjoyed as is clear from 2 Corinthians 5:4, "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life."

For the person who believes, this mortal life is "swallowed up of (eternal) life."

through the word of God

The sperm that launches life in the spiritual realm is the Bible. Spiritual conception does not take place without the Word of God (James 1:18, 21; 2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18,19).

"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures," (James 1:18).

which lives and abides forever

The Bible is a living book (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible is no magical book but it is a miracle book. There is no other book on Earth like the Bible. It is the most loved and the most hated book on Earth. Many attempts to destroy the Bible have failed but the Bible will live forever. The Bible "abides forever." Even in eternity the Bible will still stand. There will always be a Bible (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible lives. It lives because it gives life (Isaiah 40:10,11). The reading of the Bible transforms lives.

Principle

The Bible is an eternal book and conveys eternal truth.

Application

People neglect the Bible to their own detriment. The Christian without the Bible will impoverish his soul. There is no excuse for a Christian not to study what God has to say to him. If we do not read the Word, what message does that send to our children? If it is not important to us, it will not be important to them.

Without the Bible, there are simply multiplied years of frustration and confusion. Nothing makes sense, nothing adds up, nothing is worthwhile. Until we are born spiritually, life is meaningless. There is no rhyme or reason about anything on Earth until we come into harmony with heaven.

When we accept the work of Christ on the cross to forgive us, then all falls into place. This does not mean that we will understand everything but we will understand how God operates in the world. We will understand why heaven is hushed and the sky silent.

Today God does not stop wars or reap havoc on murderers and rapists. God does not intervene directly into the affairs of men today. God has chosen not to speak directly about the mysteries of life in this age. This is the day of the silent sky.

God has said everything He wants to say to our generation in the Bible. God's plan for the present is to reach individuals with the gospel, so they become heaven-born and heaven-bound. God's program for this age is worldwide evangelism.

Pity the poor people in North America. They do not hear the message because they are too busy. Their religious culture has sold them a bill of goods so they assume that they go to heaven because they are Americans or Canadians. This is hallucination! All people must come to grips with God for themselves before they come to the end of life's short day.

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day," (John 12: 48).

1 Peter 1:24

"Because all flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away"

because

Peter argues the eternity of the Word of God (v.23) with a quote from Isaiah 40:6-8. Isaiah 40 deals with Israel under apostasy. The nation was dead, the temple ravaged, and the people had adulterated their commitment to God. In the face of all this the Bible remains true.

All flesh is as grass

"All flesh" is everyone in their natural state. Man is finite and temporal and transient - he is "as grass." "Grass" is temporal and fragile. There is nothing permanent in grass.

Israel did not love God with all of her heart. She lurched after idols and perpetrated apostasy. Man is a fickle being without stability.

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass

"The glory of man" is man's accomplishments. All the achievements of man, his records, writings are as fragile as grass. Man's great structures, his developments in science all will wane like the fragile flower. Man's toys are temporal. Man from a global picture withers and fades. Job 14 compares man to a fragile flower,

Job 14: 1-2 "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue."

The grass withers

The word "withers" means to dry up as in a drought. The person without God is in a drought. His life is corruptible.

Even man in all his glory withers and fades away. A pro football player eventually loses his strength and is cut from the team. He was striking for a while, but after a short period of time he becomes a "has been." A celebrity dies like everyone else.

And its flower falls away

Man's fame fades away, 1 John. 2:17 says, "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." We soon forget man's achievements. Our generation has forgotten the achievements of our parents generation. The glories of the past fade away. Man's beauty, strength, wealth, honor, art, education, learning, virtue, achievement and greatness blow away like so much withered grass.

All earthly things perish in time. Things of life can be beautiful in their time. Grass is beautiful while it is here but the winter comes and turns ugly and eventually disappears.

The glory of man shines for a while then like grass it disappears.

Principle

The greatness of man is transitory.

Application

Human life is temporary. Man struts around planet earth like a peacock. He puts a satellite into orbit and thinks that the world revolves around him. He swaggers as if he were God. Pompous little man thinks he can solve the mysteries of the universe.

We occupy ourselves with our accomplishments and have no time for God. We try to eliminate God from our thinking. All of this is like grass that grows for a time and then quickly turns brown and disappears. We will eventually die. Our face first shows signs of wear, then all of our pride in face, place and grace disappear.

We buy a new car. Someone parks next to us and bangs their car door against our pride and joy. The glory of the new car fades. We need to keep

eternal values in view for the glories of this life will fade.

1 Peter 1:25

"But the word of the Lord endures forever."

But the word of the Lord

The word "word" means the spoken word. The spoken word of God endures forever. There is a slogan that says, "There will always be an England." That is not true because God says that there is going to be a new heaven and earth.

There will always be a Bible, however. Ecclesiastes 12:12 says, "And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh." Think of all the books that have been down through the corridors of time. Think again of all the books that have disappeared from history.

If our lives are going to have stability, we have to link them to something permanent, something eternal. One book towers above all other books and will outlast them, the infallible, indestructible Word of God. No book on Earth has ever been under attack like the Bible, yet it still stands.

Principle

The values of the Word of God are eternal.

Application

The only way we can enter into the benefits of the Word of God is to mediate upon it. If we do not diligently study the Word, the Word will not become a part of us.

1 Peter 2**1 Peter 2:1**

"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking."

Peter is about to discuss Christian growth (2:2). Before a person grows into a healthy Christian he may be susceptible to certain childhood diseases. The Holy Spirit lists these diseases in verse one.

Therefore

"Therefore" draws an inference from our new birth (1:23). A new life in God demands a new kind of person.

The discussion continues the idea of holiness. Peter lists sins in this verse that destroy fellowship and retard our ability to hear God speaking to us through the Word. All five sins are relationship sins. These sins destroy relationships. They prowl in all of us.

"Laying aside" is negative. The positive is in verse 2, "desire the pure milk of the Word." Babies thrive on milk. The implication is that we will not thrive on the Word of God if we have these five spiritual childhood diseases in our lives. We will not have an appetite for the unadulterated Word of God if we handicap ourselves with these five sins of attitude.

Before we partake of the nutritious food of the Word of God we must put aside poisonous foods of the soul. A person poisoned by toxic foods should empty his stomach. Before a Christian can absorb protein, minerals and vitamins, he should vomit out the poisons of malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and evil speakings from his life.

We cannot have a right relation to God if we do not have a right relationship with man, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (I John 4:20). Jesus bids his hearers to step into right relationship with man before they try to get into a right relationship with God (Matthew 5:23f).

Principle

The vices that God wants us to lay away are those that concern our relationship with people.

Application

When we commit sin against people we commit sin against God. Sin committed against people is evidence that our relationship with God is convoluted.

The five relationship sins of this verse will cripple our Christian life. We need spiritual intelligence to identify and confess them. If we are dull

spiritually and if we call these sins something other than sins, we will wonder why God by passes us and uses someone less educated or not as intelligent as we are.

These five viruses will put us out of spiritual commission. We are still on God's squad but we are not on God's playing field. It is nice to make the squad and be issued a uniform, but who wants to play right end on the bench! Your aim is to be in the game. We are Christians; now we need to get into the game. We are now born again (1:23) so we are now to live the Christian life and serve our Lord. Most Christians sit on the bench while 11 or so others play the entire game.

laying aside

Peter singles out five sins that deal with right relation to man. We cannot have right relation to God if we do not have right relation to men.

The word means to put off from oneself, to lay aside. This is a call for change in attitude in five areas. God wants us to put away the following five sins like a useless garment. God wants us to lay aside anything that serves to hinder or prevent us from doing his will.

The New Testament uses "laying aside" for the idea of divesting clothes. It means to put off from oneself. "Laying aside" means here to renounce attitudinal sin from the ultimate source of yourself. Take the five following sins from the inner resources of your life. Your inner resource should be the Word of God (2:2).

Acts 7:58 uses the words "laying aside" for taking off one's robes. The context is the stoning of Stephen. The people refused to hear his message so they stoned him, "and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul." They took off their outer garments and laid them down. God wants us to take off sin like a garment.

Romans 13:12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

Ephesians 4:22, "That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another."

Colossians 3:8, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth."

Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

God wants us to lay aside not only sins but weights or handicaps that get in the way of our Christian life. A thing may not be dirty or coarse. It may not be vulgar but it is a handicap to living the Christian life. It is a spiritual defect. Some Christians handicap themselves all their Christian experience because they never outgrow their defects.

James 1:21, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

"Lay aside" means to make a clean-cut break with sin. God wants us to make a clean-cut break with not only the more gross immoral sins such as stealing and murder but he wants us to make a clean-cut break with the more sophisticated sins of our verse.

Without a decisive break with the past, it would be useless for Peter to urge his readers to nourish themselves with the Word.

Principle

God wants us to make a decisive break with sin so we can take in the Word of God with effectiveness.

Application

It is useless to nourish ourselves with the Word of God (v.2) if we have not dealt with relationship sins in our lives. God wants us to strip sin off like a suit of clothes. He wants us to clear all clothes of relational sin out of our closet. This is self-judgment.

all

Note this comprehensive word. "All" is a disconcerting thought. "God, how about 75

percent of these attitudinal sins?" "No, 'all.'" "Will you accept 95 percent, God?" "No, 'all.'" "

In 1 Peter 2:1 there are three categories of sin. The word "all" distinguishes each category.

Note that of the five ugly things mentioned in verse one only three of them are prefaced by the word "all" (note Ephesians 4:31). There are some things that God hates more than others in his people. We find this in our children. Some things bother us more than others. They may be stubborn. You remember when you were stubborn as a child, only worse. Their rebellion reminds you of yourself as a child. Now you see the same thing coming out of the heart of your children.

"All" is a word we love to discount by rationalization. We read "almost all" into "all."

Principle

God does not want us to reserve any sins for ourselves.

Application

Do we attempt to have fellowship with God while reserving certain sins for ourselves? If we do, we delude ourselves. God will not bless dishonesty even if it is dishonesty toward self. God wants us to deal with "all" attitudinal sins.

malice

We come to spiritual virus number one and the first category of sin - "malice."

"Malice" is an evil disposition, a malignant spirit, a desire to injure another. This person desires to injure, to hurt. He gets a certain pleasure from the misfortune of others. In the Roadrunner cartoon, when the coyote takes a beating. We, as viewers, derive a certain amount of pleasure at the his misfortune. This is an example of feeling ill-will toward someone.

"Malice" represents whatever is evil in character. This is in distinction from another Greek word which means evil in influence and effect, malignant. The word in our verse has a wider meaning which encompasses the meaning of the other word.

This word stands for anger resting in the bosom of a resentful person. It is overgrown anger that has

settled in the soul. A person with malice retains anger till it inflames him to design mischief against someone else and do them harm. Malice delights in any hurt that befalls someone we do not like. Malice further propels our relationships into deeper trouble.

Malice is the opposite to that which is fair, advisable, kind, gracious or good in character. It is that which is destructive or injurious. Malice is the outworking of the principle of evil mostly in an ethical sphere. Malice destroys fellowship.

In Acts 8, Simon saw the apostles giving the gift of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands. He offered Peter money so that he would possess this gift. Peter rebuked him in 8:22 - "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." Simon loved fame. He wanted to be a celebrity in the kingdom. He thought he could buy this celebrityship.

Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

Colossians 3:8, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth."

Titus 3:3, "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another."

Malice is ill-will. Malice and maliciousness are the same thing. It is the desire to harm someone else, to someone you do not care about. You might not harm them yourself but you rejoice when someone else does us. This is a malicious spirit.

James 1:21 "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." God calls upon us to lay aside malice in any form.

Principle

Malice is the desire to hurt someone you do not like.

Application

Malice is a sin of the character that hurts and injures other people. This sin is full of malignity which is the opposite of excellence.

Do you recognize ill-will in your soul? Do you wish to do someone else harm? Do you have a malicious spirit? Do you rejoice when someone you do not like fails? Or, do you desire excellence in your soul?

We do not have to like the way someone fixes their hair, wear their clothes or gestures with their hands but we need to be sure that we do not allow malice in our hearts.

all deceit

The second category of sins has three sins: deceit, hypocrisy, envy.

"Deceit" means bait, snare; hence, craft, deceit, guile. It is used of deceptive actions: deceit, cunning, treachery. It means to deceive by using trickery and falsehood -- to deceive, to trick into, treachery, any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching.

The Greek uses this word for a bait for fish. This individual will lure others into a trap. He damages others with maliciousness. He is two-faced and conscious of his deception to achieve his own goals. He adulterates his motives, which are rarely pure. He misleads others to his own advantage. He does not tell the whole truth. He is like a spiritual Trojan horse.

Genesis uses this word for Jacob's deceit. Jacob engaged in trickery to get his brother's birthright, "But he said, 'Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing,'" (Genesis 27:35). This drove a wedge between Jacob and his brother for 20 years.

The new reality of life in Christ means that we be guileless as to what is evil (Romans 16:19). In love we may now overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21) for love neither thinks evil (1 Corinthians 13:5) nor does evil (Romans 13:10). If evil is a force that disrupts fellowship, the love that derives from Christ makes true fellowship possible again.

Guile has to do with what you say as well as what you do. This person uses deceit in words so he uses flattery, falsehood, and delusion. He craftily preys upon the ignorance or weakness of other people to their damage. He intends to deceive and mislead others to their hurt and to his own

advantage. The speech of Christians should be guileless. See Matthew 26:4; Mark 7:22; 14:1. John 1:47 uses "guile" negatively of Nathaniel. This means that Nathaniel was not two-faced. What you saw was what you got. He was honest.

This is not the dishonesty of stealing something from work. This is honesty in our estimation of ourselves and others. We do not acknowledge that we just do not like someone. Why do we not face this problem? Why do we pretend? If we get right with that person, we will get right with God and then personal revival will come. We love to use guile. We use it on ourselves. We use it on others. There are times when we even try using it on God!

I Thessalonians 2:3 uses this word negatively of the teaching of Paul and his fellow-missionaries, "For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit."

It is significant that this word is used in this chapter in reference to the guileless speech of Christ, "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth," (2:22). Jesus Christ would have no part of guile.

Deceit is the opposite of sincerity.

Principle

God wants us to be true blue.

Application

A person who operates in deceit is like the used car salesman who plays up many features of the car. He tries to give the impression that the car has everything a person needs. He points that the car has a radio, power-locks, power-brakes and power-seats. However, he does not mention the car does not have a heater. He steers the customer away from what might jeopardize the sale.

Are you two-faced? Do you consciously try to deceive to attain your own ends? Do you adulterate your motives in your relationship with others?

hypocrisy

We come to the third ugly word - "hypocrisy." The word "hypocrisy" comes from two words: "to answer" and "under." The Greek and Roman world used this word for answering from under a mask.

This is a person who makes judgment from behind a cover. He hides his true identity. This word came to mean the acting of a stage-actor; hence the meaning dissembling or pretence. This person acts behind a mask.

It was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of a dissembler, a hypocrite. A hypocrite is one who plays a part on the stage. He is a player, actor, pretender, dissembler, hypocrite, one who pretends to be other than he really is. He plays a part of someone he is not.

"Hypocrisy" is translated "dissimulation" in Galatians 2:13. The author of this book played the hypocrite himself. Peter played the part of a legalist. He did not have the courage to put the principle of grace in practice. He betrayed the principle of freedom so Paul called him a hypocrite.

Hypocrites pretend piety. They are two-faced carrying a sweet front. This is an outward show, a phony front, a facade. This person is more interested in the public practices of a church than the heart of Christianity. His interest is to present a front to everyone else in the congregation. This person simply complies with overt standards and totally disregards character. He is more interested in taboos set up by an organization, a system of morality or a series of mores.

"Hypocrisies" is plural and comprehends all sorts of hypocrisies. In matters of religion, hypocrisy is counterfeit piety. In regular conversation, hypocrisy can counterfeit true friendship. Often those who are free with compliments that they do not mean fit this category. They pretend friendship when a scheme lies in their hearts.

The hypocrite is afraid of himself. He does not dare show himself as he is. His fear of criticism compels him to wear a mask. He is the opposite of a courageous person. He is afraid to reveal who he is. He is a double person, natural and artificial. The Lord Jesus was the opposite. He was open and above-board. God wants us to be ourselves and not hide behind the mask of another personality.

One of the outstanding examples of hypocrisy in the Bible is the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. They pretended to be generous but they were putting on an act; their last one! They held out on God. They pretended generosity. This was not real and God killed them for it. They sinned unto physical death (1 John 5:16). Some of us are good actors. We can put on a mask and no one knows who is behind the mask. "Did he really mean that?" "Are they for real?"

Principle

God wants us to be an open book.

Application

Do you pretend to have a devotion you do not possess? Hypocrisy will put a crimp in your work for the Lord.

Sooner or later our pretence will be exposed. God will unmask the hypocrite and what a sight it will be!

Are you genuine? Are you confident enough to show yourself for who you are? Christianity requires that we are open and aboveboard with others. God wants us to be ourselves and not hide behind a mask of another personality.

Are you an open book? Are you open and above board? Are you for real?

Envy

The fourth virus afflicting spiritual health is envy. Envy means to be resentful or discontent. Jealousy simply seeks what others have. Envy goes beyond that. This person seeks to deprive others of what they have.

There is therefore a distinction between jealousy and envy in the Bible. Jealousy simply desires to have the same sort of thing for itself. Envy desires to deprive another of what he has. He carries a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person.

So these two words are not synonymous. Jealousy makes us fear to lose what we possess; envy creates sorrow that others have what we have not. An evil sense always attaches to envy but not jealousy.

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will" (Philippians 1:15).

Envy is also in the plural dealing with many types of envy. There are envies directed toward people, toward status symbols, about material things, etc.

Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10; Romans 1:29; Galatians 5:21; Philippians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:3; 1 Peter 2:1; James 4:5).

Envy grieves over the good welfare of another, at their abilities, prosperity, fame or successful labors. An envious person has feelings of ill-will at hearing of the good fortune of others.

There are always those who, after a man has made his mark on the world, come with erasers. Envy is the enemy of happiness. Time spent in worry about the superior status or accomplishments of others is time wasted and encourages dissatisfaction. But you may say, "He gets all the breaks. Why do I not have what he has?" The Bible proclaims that God is faithful. If he is, why worry about what others have?

Principle

A mature Christian can rejoice at the success of others.

Application

We think we need to elbow our way past our peers to get ahead. Do you turn green when someone else is praised? Does it give you a sick feeling in your stomach? It does not seem right to you that they should be praised. "Why were they elected and not me?" "Why should they receive that honor and not me?" "Why should people make such a fuss over them?"

Song of Solomon 8:6 says, "Jealousy as cruel as the grave." We all know how cruel the grave can be. It does not care whether you are a baby or a mother. Envy grows to a point where cruelty is the name of the game.

Lawyers rarely envy doctors. Doctors rarely envy politicians. A preacher rarely envies an engineer. We envy those within our brotherhood or fraternity. Businessmen envy businessmen. Doctors envy doctors. Preachers envy preachers.

It is difficult to admit that we envy others. A dimension of spirituality is the ability to identify subjective sins that are more difficult to recognize. We need to say to the Lord, "I confess this envy. It is wrong. I have violated you, Lord. I have no right to feel like this. I confess it violates your person." We will hardly find a day without these sins attempting to stick their ugly heads into our lives. We need to recognize and root them out quickly.

and all evil speaking

The third and last category of sin is "evil speaking." The fifth and final sin of this verse is "all evil speaking." "Evil speaking" comes from two words: "to speak" and "against." This means to speak against and often involves slander. It is evil speech, slander, defamation, detraction in lists of vices of a backbiter.

"Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge" (James 4:11).

This is slander, gossip, an undisciplined tongue. This is a person who hurts the reputation of others by words. This is a person who loves to run down other people. He defames someone else. He runs them down to other people. This person is resentful and discontent.

The evil speaker detracts from others. This involves speaking against another, or defaming him. It is rendered backbiting in 2 Corinthians 12:20 and Romans 1:30.

This word is in the plural again. There are many different kinds of slander and gossip. Evil speaking may take the form of blasphemy, profanity, slander or gossip.

Principle

God does not want us to defame other people.

Application

Speaking against others may also consist in passing on something that is untrue or would be better left unsaid. Are you able to keep to yourself something miserable you heard about another

Christian? Can you cover for another Christian (1 Peter 4:8).

God calls upon us to make a clean-cut break with these sins of disposition. Just because your parents were malicious or evil-speaking, does not mean it is proper for you to be the same way. When we bring this over into the Christian life we dislocate ourselves from the will of God. Prejudice and bigotry should drop like a shirt on the floor from the Christian.

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn babes

"As" brings up an analogy between physical and spiritual growth. Since physical growth begins with physical birth, spiritual growth should begin with spiritual birth. This does not necessarily follow in the spiritual realm. It depends on our attitude toward the Word of God.

"Newborn" means born recently. Peter refers to new spiritual babies who have just begun to live. New babies are totally helpless. This is the condition of a new Christian. He is totally helpless to live the Christian life.

Peter reminds the Asia Minor Christians of the newness of their spiritual life. These are Christians at the most basic level of the Christian life. They are spiritually on mother's breast.

In chapter one, verse 23, Peter writes that Christians are "born again." From conception to birth there are nine months. The great concern of the parents is that the baby will be born healthy. Their hope is that the child will be normal and without defects, physical or mental.

This verse takes for granted this new birth. The main activity after the baby is born is growth. The spiritual babe has come into existence. Now the order of business is spiritual development. God builds spiritual growth upon the same lines as physical growth. From conception to birth are but nine months, but from birth to maturity are approximately twenty-one years. Once God soundly saves someone, the main concern is spiritual development.

Principle

New Christians need nourishment from God's Word in order to develop spiritually.

Application

Mothers know their babies need feeding eight times a day! New Christians need to feed regularly on God's Word to gain stability in the Christian life.

Are you passing from spiritual infancy with a minimum of spiritual illness? Every new Christian is in danger of exposure to infant diseases. Spiritual babies need exposure to the milk of God's Word for protection from the scars of these diseases. There are many dangers that lurk along the way of spiritual growth.

A baby is naive about the dangers that hide along the way. A person who does not recognize danger has no fear. A tot may wonder why her parents are so concerned about her crossing the street by herself. She wonders why her parents are so worked up about her playing with matches. A tot has not experienced life like her parents have. The parent knows the dangers of drinking poison. The same is true in the spiritual realm. New converts are not aware of the spiritual dangers that lurk on every side. Many things can happen to ruin their Christian lives.

desire the pure milk of the word

Spiritual life requires food suitable to that life. The milk of the Word suits the new spiritual life. Physical babies desire milk often and intensely. Spiritual babies should have an avid sense of hunger for the Word.

The word "pure" is in contrast to "deceit" of verse one. God's Word does not deceive. It is unadulterated and guileless. The Word is unmixed, without dishonest intent, without fraud. The Word is genuine, the real thing.

"Pure" means entirely free from dust or corrupt matter. There is no contamination by alien matter. There is no mixture with anything useless or harmful. The pure milk of the Word will not do harm to new Christians. It will never impose legalism or distortions. Unless a new believer has the basic truth of the milk of the Bible he will never grow up.

Many Christians are weak and emaciated because they are deficient in vitamin B – the Bible. They neglect the Word because the toxic impurities of malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and evil-speaking steal their appetite for the Word.

The word "word" means spiritual, rational. Romans 12:1 renders this word "spiritual service." It implies genuineness, or being true to the real and essential nature of something. God wants true worship. He wants an intelligent, rational service (or worship). The nourishment here is of a spiritually rational nature. When this nature acts through the regenerate mind, spiritual growth results.

In our verse, "word" means rudimentary spiritual teaching (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-13). God did not give his Word so that it is impossible to understand it, or that it requires a special class of men to interpret it. Its character is such that the Holy Spirit who gave it can unfold its truths even to the young convert. Cp. 1 John 2:27.

Principle

God wants us to absorb the unadulterated Bible, not some substitute.

Application

We need to read the unadulterated Bible itself. We live in a day where Christians substitute many things for the unadulterated Word of God. We read commentaries, devotional books, magazines, etc. How much time do we spend in the Bible itself?

If we do not start with milk we will never eat steak. Babies are born without teeth because they do not need to eat steak. They need milk.

Food is the life-giving material that builds our bodies. Food gives us energy. The Word of God gives us energy for daily living. It is the fuel of spiritual living.

If the Christian does not cultivate his new life in Christ, he will never grow. If we turn to New Age philosophy or positive thinking, we will find these things are not "pure." Unlike these, the Word of God carries no impurity. The Bible is pure and unadulterated.

desire the pure milk of the word

The word "desire" means to desire earnestly, to fix the desire upon. This word stresses the inward impulse rather than the object desired. It comes from two words: "upon" (used intensively) and "passion." The New Testament uses "desire" for things good or bad. Desire carries two ideas: to long for, to lust after (Acts 20:33; Romans 7:7; 13:9).

Longing for the Word is a sure manifestation of spiritual life. The Word strengthens the believer so that he can improve and grow strong in the Christian life. The condition for growth is desire. This is an intense and recurring desire (Psalm 42:1; Psalm 119:174).

It is not enough to desire the Word. We need to desire the unadulterated Word of God. God does not want us to desire just anything about the Word. He wants us to desire the unadulterated Word of God. Make sure it is the pure Word of God, not some convoluted distortion by a wild-eyed Christian.

Desire is to long, yearn. This is a strong word for intense yearning. God wants us to intensely long for God's Word. The Christian's thirst for life in God should be as strong and instinctive and health-giving as a baby's appetite for mother's milk. This is a sure sign you have fallen in love with the Lord. Loss of appetite for the Word is a sign of spiritual sickness.

Principle

The condition for growth is desire.

Application

Having a hunger for the Word of God is evidence that a person has been born again. We live in a day when people put little priority on the Word of God. They do not long for it; they do not hunger for it. A little knowledge of the Word goes a long way for many. One of the characteristics of a child of God is that he has not only fallen in love with the Son of God but with the Word of God as well. Has the Word become your soul food?

A new Christian must begin on the milk of the Word because he cannot digest the solid food of the Word. All he can understand at the beginning of his Christian life are the simple things of the

Bible. As he grows, he understand things that will move him into maturity.

that you may grow thereby

"Grow" means to increase in size, enlarge, foster, strengthen, to cause something to increase. This is a growth of that which lives, naturally or spiritually (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:6,10; 2 Peter 3:18). "Grow" here means to be nourished. God wants us to grow up. Spiritual growth occurs only in proportion to our growth in the Word.

God wants us to grow in our knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10). We may render this phrase as "you will know God more and more."

The Greek has a prepositional phrase at the end of this phrase translated by one word here -- "thereby." The Greek of the word "thereby" means "on account of salvation." That is, because God saved our soul we should have a hunger for God's Word.

Once we pass into spiritual life, we need to grow. Many Christians do not know what they are missing in the Christian life. Only Christians can grow because only Christians have eternal, spiritual life.

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?" (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (Hebrews 5:12).

Principle

The Word of God causes a Christian to mature in his Christian life.

Application

Many Christians never develop in the Christian life. They suffer from malnutrition. Their new life in Christ becomes a drag because of lack of

nourishment. It is the Word of God that nourishes the Christian life.

When a person first becomes a Christian everything looks rosy. A little knowledge makes us dangerous. New Christians are vulnerable to all sorts of distortions within the Christian community. If they get into some of these mutilations they will deform their new life in Christ. They will become a spiritual pygmy for the rest of their spiritual lives. There are many spiritual dwarfs in evangelicalism.

The Bible exposes us to our sin. It reveals our motives. It keeps us aware of the presence of God.
