

**Text:** 1 Pt 1.22

Tonight, we will move forward one more verse in 1 Peter. The imperatives we saw so far, following the glorious celebration of salvation, were all directed to the disciple's relationship to God.

1. Set your hope on the coming grace (provided by God)
2. Be holy in imitation of the holiness of God
3. Walk in fear of God who loved you and saved you

Our imperative tonight takes the "horizontal" perspective: "love one another"

Constable:

"Peter next turned his attention from the believer's duty to God to the believer's duty to his or her Christian brethren. ... he continued to reflect on the theological basis of our ethical responsibilities."<sup>1</sup>

If we think about this vertical (God-ward) and horizontal (others-ward) perspective, we realize that this is simply the two great commandments playing out again.

The Great Commandment: love God with whole heart, soul, mind, strength

That's the three imperatives we've been talking about. You have salvation, now, orient yourselves this way towards God.

The Second Commandment: love your neighbour as yourself

So here we have that stated directly as the imperative (command) of our verse.

These two commandments are really at play in any obligation that God gives you.

Now let's work through the logic of the passage:

1 Pt 1.22 ¶ Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

Now for a literal rendering:

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 1.20.

The souls of you having been purified in [by] the obedience of the truth unto brotherly love unhyprocritical, of the heart one another love fervently.

## I. The purification that is salvation

### A. The statement assumes purification

1. “purified” = a Perfect Participle
2. It states a condition, beginning with a purifying event in the past that continues to manifest itself in the present

If you are married, you could say, “having been married,” to describe your present and ongoing condition.

Past event, present consequences.

3. So, this purification occurred in the past, it made permanent changes in your life

### B. The question: is purification *salvation* or *sanctification*?

#### 1. The ways the Bible looks at purification

a. LXX almost always sees purification as ceremonial (a ritual cleansing) enabling participation in a sacrifice [constantly repeated each new sacrifice]

1) So, the many Jews going to Jerus. for Passover “to purify themselves” (Jn 11.55)

2) Paul, going along with Jewish rituals, had to purify himself (Ac 21.24, 26; 24.18)

b. However, the NT also has these views of purification

1) Jas 4.8, drawing near to God cleanses your hands

2) 1 Jn 3.3, everyone who has the hope in Christ is purifying himself

c. The purpose here isn’t ritual – purification is of the inner man, not the outer (“for a sincere love of the brethren”)

“The purification in view is distinctly moral rather than ritual.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Since the purification already occurred, with ongoing inner [moral] effects, this isn't sanctification

a. Sanctification is either positional or transitional.

1) I am sanctified (by salvation)

2) I am being sanctified (by growth and discipleship)

b. Here, “having been purified” = salvation

C. How purified? By obedience to the truth

1. Now, we are not talking about “obeying a set of commandments or rituals”

2. Rather, we are talking about obedience to truth: *i.e.* believing the gospel

Example:

Rm 1.5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

Rm 15.18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

3. The way Peter states it looks at salvation from the human perspective

a. We heard the gospel

b. We purified ourselves when we obeyed the gospel [believed]

c. Nevertheless, it is God working in us, to produce all these effects:  
we believe, God saves ... God cleanses ... God leads along

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<sup>2</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 111.

#### 4. The moral change comes from the truth

“Souls are not purified when one submits to false teaching or deceitful doctrines.”<sup>3</sup>

## II. One sincere objective of salvation

A. There are other objectives as well, but one is in view here “for a sincere love of the brethren”

You purified your soul ... *for* ...

B. The expression suggests this is a change

1. Consider the situation in Corinth described in 1Cor 1-3

a. Party spirit

b. One group says, “I am of Paul,” another “of Peter,” another “of Apollos,” and still another “of Christ”

c. Each group looks down on the other as inferior in some way (not the mind of Christ!)

2. Consider the world these people came from

a. You have definite social stratas

1) Aristocrats

2) Freemen

3) Slaves

Probably a few others in between, but a definite pecking order in the Roman empire

b. You also have ethnic jealousies, Jews vs. Gentiles, Bythinians vs. Galatians (say), and so on

3. Did you purify yourself by obedience to the truth to *keep up* the old jealousies?

a. No, God forbid!

b. You obeyed the gospel “for a sincere love of the brethren”

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Oberst, Letters from Peter, p. 4, cited in Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 112.

- c. A sincere love of the brethren is really a genuine point of salvation: you are born again *for* this new way
4. One last point: Sincere = unhyprocritical, *i.e.* no play-acting
- a. You don't come to church and just pretend to like those Jews
  - b. You don't come to church and just pretend to like those slaves (or those rich men)
  - c. You really do love one another: the Church is the great leveler

Or, *should be...* which brings us to the commandment

### III. The definite response demanded by salvation

A. From the innermost part of your being: "from the heart"

B. Towards your fellow-Christians: "the brethren"

C. Love *fervently*

- 1. Speaks to genuine love: the love should be real
- 2. Speaks to intense love: "not cold and formal, but ardent and strong"<sup>4</sup>
- 3. The word's roots have the idea of "stretching out the hand for something" — the call is to "reach out and touch someone"

"The command is an appeal to the will; Peter believed that Christian love can be commanded. The believer should deliberately act to assure its operation. Peter was anxious for his readers to unlock the floodgates, so that the full stream of love might gush forth."<sup>5</sup>

### Conclusion:

This is the body love that we try to inculcate among ourselves here. Because this is what we came to Christ *for*. We couldn't do it ourselves, we needed regeneration, but we came so we could have purification and the Spirit and be able to love as He loved.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 1884, 130.

<sup>5</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 113.