

**Text:** 1 Pt 2.1-2

**Proposition:** God challenges believers to turn their hearts to the pure source of spiritual growth.

Tonight, we turn to the first sentence in 1 Pt 2, vv. 1-3.

I think we will end up with two messages on the passage. The first one centers around the next imperative that flows from Peter's outstanding statement about salvation that opened the epistle.

The statement of our glorious salvation: 1 Pt 1.3-12

The imperatives:

Fix your hope on coming grace: 1 Pt 1.13

Be holy as he is holy: 1 Pt 1.15

Conduct yourselves in fear: 1 Pt 1.17

Love one another: 1 Pt 1.22

Our passage begins with a "therefore" – the "therefore" points back to the command to love one another, but also to the ultimate motivation: our glorious salvation.

Read 1 Pt 2.1-3

Interestingly, from an English standpoint, these verses are almost in a reverse order. We could essentially reverse the three verses and make perfect English sense of what Peter is saying.

However, the passage is a Greek sentence, with all the peculiarities and emphases that come with Greek grammar. These make powerful statements to us about our spiritual life. Today's message is:

### *Constant Craving for Growth*

**Proposition:** God challenges believers to turn their hearts to the pure source of spiritual growth.

## **I. The demanding grammar**

The structure of the passage follows the structure we've already seen.

A. The preceding participle with "imperative force"

1. In this case, "putting aside"

2. The main verb governs the participle's force ("long for" – v. 2)
  - a. This is an imperative
  - b. The participle describes a necessary precondition for obedience
  - c. Thus, the participle gains the force of its main verb

In other words, the action described in verse 1 is something the believer must do, though the demand comes from verse 2.

#### B. The governing imperative verb (2)

1. "Long for the pure milk of the word" NAU
2. The word describes a craving, which we normally think of as involuntary
3. Nevertheless, as an imperative, it addresses the will
4. Further, it is accompanied by the "attendant circumstance" of the participle ("putting aside," v. 1)
  - a. Putting aside these things accompanies the response of the will: to crave
  - b. Putting aside these things are more than pre-conditions, they are part of the same response

I mention these concepts in general so that you can see the passage demands something of us.

## II. The presumptive renunciation (1)

#### A. The meaning of "putting aside"

1. The word has a literal meaning of "putting aside" your clothes

Used once like this when those about to stone Stephen set aside their outer garments to carry out their evil task.

2. Constable uses the image of "putting off" soiled garments
  - a. Fits the metaphor of NT usage
    - 1) "lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rm 13.12)

- 2) “lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph 4.22)
- 3) “laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE *of you* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR” (Eph 4.25)
- 4) “put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth” (Col 3.8)
- 5) “let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us” (Heb 12.1)
- 6) “putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness” (Jas 1.21)

b. Constable also alludes to the later custom of baptism (likely beginning in 2<sup>nd</sup> century)

- 1) Candidates would take off their old set of clothes
- 2) Receive baptism unclothed
- 3) Put on a new set of clothes on coming out of pool

This picture isn't in Peter's mind, but certainly pictures what he means.

B. The things put aside (three categories, note word “all”)

1. All malice

a. Lit. “evil”

b. Here not evil in general, but evil thoughts in particular: *i.e.* directed toward someone, or, *malice*

2. All deceit and hypocrisy and envy

a. Deceit: guile, deception, cunning

“The term originally meant ‘a bait for fish,’ and thus came to denote any cunning contrivance for deceiving and catching. It is the selfish, ‘two-faced’ attitude that deceives and hurts others for personal gain.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 122.

- b. Hypocrisy: pretense, two-facedness
- c. Envy: inner grasping focus on someone else

“the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others”<sup>2</sup>

“Envy is the running-mate of hypocrisy.”<sup>3</sup>

### 3. All slander

- a. Lit. “evil-speaking”
- b. The insinuating disparagement, not necessarily the open slander

“I’ve heard...,” or “What if so-and-so were guilty of x?”

These are all essentially sins of the mind (and then of the mouth). It is not overt deeds, but “cunning craftiness” whereby we injure others first in the mind, then within our “circle.”

### C. The things put aside contrast with the graces gained in salvation (1.22)

<sup>1</sup> 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,

## III. The insistent replacement (2)

### A. The kind of craving Peter means: the craving of infants

1. Other passages talk about “milk” vs. “meat” — elementary things vs. mature things
2. That is not the picture here: this is a constant need, no matter how mature
3. How are you to crave the milk of the word? Like a brand-new newborn, hungrily going after his mother’s milk

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996), 204.

<sup>3</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 122.

## B. The object of craving: the pure milk of the word

The terms used here engender a lot of discussion in the commentaries.

1. Pure is relatively simple to understand
  - a. The word is the opposite of “deceit” in v. 1
  - b. Nothing crafty or deceitful about the object of spiritual desire
2. The term translated “word” gets lots of discussion
  - a. The main translations
    - 1) “milk of the word” NAU, KJV
    - 2) “spiritual milk” ESV, NET, ASV, NIV
  - b. The reason for the difference
    - 1) Word is *logikos* not *logos* (usual word translated “word”)
    - 2) Combination of the same root with *ikos*, meaning “from the characteristics of” the root
    - 3) So, “a kind of milk that is characterized by its connection with ‘word.’ It is not literal milk; it is not nourishment for the physical body”<sup>4</sup>
    - 4) We get the word “logical” from it, some obscure translations work at getting to this meaning:
      - a) “the pure mental milk of the word” (Darby)
      - b) “the rational milk without guile” (Douay-Rheims)
      - c) “that reasonable mylke which is with out corrupcion” (Tyndale)
  - c. The implications:
    - 1) The things put off represent inner passions (malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander)
    - 2) The thing to crave is the food of the soul
      - a) The word of God, of course

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<sup>4</sup> Hiebert, 124.

## b) The spiritual things: sermons, hymns, worship services

Those things that stimulate the new man within, the born-again spirit.

These things have an essential rational character. It could be said that only these things have a rational character – unbridled human reason takes men into irrationality.

## C. The goal of the craving: spiritual growth

1. We are called to crave the pure milk, not just for the pure milk's sake
2. Rather, we are called for the purpose of growth: to grow up "into salvation"

If you think of the image of ancient baptism rites, it is as if the new set of clothes you put on are a little "too big for you" — the Lord expects you to grow up into them.

## 3. Compare James 1.21

Jas 1.21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

**Conclusion:**

**Proposition:** God challenges believers to turn their hearts to the pure source of spiritual growth.

"What a good thing it is to have spiritual hunger and thirst! When people are not hungry, you may set a fine meal before them but they will turn up their noses at it. But let a man come fresh from the field hungry, down he sits, no matter how rough the fare. He only wants it to be sweet, wholesome, and nutritious, and he cuts huge slices for himself, and feeds to the full. Give me a congregation of hungry hearers, with eyes that seldom turn from the preacher, and with ears that catch every word!"<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 2.2.