

1 P E T E R

A V E R S E B Y V E R S E S T U D Y T H R O U G H P E T E R ' S E P I S T L E

SESSION OBJECTIVE: 1 PETER 2:1-3

To understand how salvation and maturity work together.

Flavortown

One of my favorite hobbies is cooking. I love to try new recipes, new techniques, and new kitchen gadgets. With the advent of technology, it has never been easier to learn from some of the industry's finest. From the top shelf talents like Gordon Ramsay (MasterChef) or Tom Colicchio (Top Chef), to the more lighthearted chefs like Guy Fieri (Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives), you can access so many tips and tricks from platforms like YouTube and other social media sites. One thing they all emphasize more than anything else is the importance of seasoning. Seasoning is *everything* in cooking. Someone once said, "You can overcook something and call it blackened, you can undercook something and call it rare, but if you underseason it? There's no getting out of that." Taste is the most important detail when it comes to cooking. It's what keeps people coming back for more.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter chapter 2:2-3 that we should, "long for the spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation - if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." In other words, we will desire more and more of the things of the Lord if we have tasted how good these things are. Like anything well seasoned, it keeps us coming back for more.

What Destroys Love?

Last week, we looked at Peter's command to us to, "love one another earnestly (or deeply) from a pure heart" (1 Pet. 1:22). Chapter 2 picks up where chapter 1 left off. It's important to remember that there were no

chapter or verses demarcations when Peter originally penned this later, but that those were added much later as an aid to easily navigate the Scripture. Therefore, chapter 2 is merely a continuation of thought. 1 Peter 2:1 contains the Greek word οὖν (oun), which translates as *so, now then, or therefore*. In other words, what Peter says in 2:1 is being said in light of what he has just said in the previous verses. The main command of this passage is to long for spiritual milk (which we will cover in a moment), but if we are going to effectively, “love one another deeply from a pure heart,” that will require us to put down a variety of negative attributes. Below is a breakdown of the ones listed here.

MALICE

The first of the sinful attributes described here is *malice*. Malice generally means *evil or depravity*, but given the context it indicates *ill-will towards others*. That our command is to love one another, malice is the thing that tears apart the fabric of unity created by love, and thus has no place within Christian fellowship. If a believer has this negative aim in mind, repentance is required.

DECEIT

The next on the list is *deceit*, and in the Greek language it means, “a bait or contrivance for entrapping.” A better way of understanding this is speaking or acting with ulterior motives. This is really more of an internal sin that motivates the way a Christian carries him/herself, and how they speak. It is used three times in 1 Peter (2:1, 22; 3:10). This is how the opponents of Jesus acted towards Him (Mk. 14:1; Matt. 26:4; Acts 13:10), as well as Paul (Acts 13:10).

HYPOCRISY

The third on the list is *hypocrisy*, and it conveys the idea of any type of pretense or deception before God or man. Hypocrisy is any inconsistency between doctrine (belief) and practice (action). When we say we believe that something is wrong or right, and act differently, it is hypocritical. Further, if we say we are Christians we are affirming our commitment to love our brothers and sisters in the faith, and thus any speech that sheds negative light on them is hypocritical as well, as it is inconsistent with the unity we are to work towards.

ENVY

The fourth one the list is *envy*, and it is well placed as it is usually the driving motivation behind the two previous attributes, *deceit* and *hypocrisy*. It often appears in other lists of vices in the New Testament that are representative of life outside of Christ (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4). Envy is usually not seen as a focal sin in the New Testament, however, a case can be made that it is among the absolute worst, as it was the sin that motivated the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10). It is antithetical to the mind of Christ which is to, “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

SLANDER

The final vice is *slander*. Slander is, to put it plainly, character assassination. While deceit includes speaking to a person with ulterior motives, slander is speaking about that person behind their backs. Slander doesn't always have to look like intentional, hurtful speech about someone to someone else. It can come cloaked in the form of “concerns” or even, “prayer requests.” Paul includes it in his list of vices in 2 Corinthians 12:20, and James speaks of its destructive capabilities in James 4:11.

The list is fairly comprehensive and should be taken with extreme seriousness. The unity of the church is one of the highest values in the Christian experience, and any attitudes, actions, or inward convictions that are

rooted in such divisive sin, both consciously or unconsciously, should be rejected, repented of, and removed from the community.

Spiritual Milk

The main thrust of this passage comes in the form of a command: “Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk.” Peter is using a real, human illustration to define the relationship between Christians and the Word of God. It might be tempting for the student of God’s Word to recall another New Testament passage where Paul regards his readers as infants in a negative manner. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Paul says, “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?” In this passage, the idea of infancy and milk are viewed as less than desirable. Paul desires the believers to grow up and eat real food. However, we cannot apply the context of this passage to Peter’s letter. Peter is speaking of infancy in neither a negative or positive manner, but simply comparing the Christian and Scripture to that of a baby that requires milk in order to not only grow and thrive, but actually *survive*.

This kind of longing for and dependency of the Scripture is not unique to this passage. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Joshua 1:8 says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Psalm 19:7 reads, “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.” The view of Scripture as a necessity is woven throughout God’s entire grand narrative.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read 1 Peter 2:1. What is malice? What is deceit? (Hint: See above notes)

2. Read 1 Peter 2:1. What is hypocrisy? What is envy? (Hint: See above notes)

Day Two

1. Read 1 Peter 2:1. What is slander? What does it mean to put those things away? (Hint: See above notes)

2. Read 1 Peter 2:2. Why does Peter compare our relationship to Scripture with a newborn and milk? What is he communicating about the role that Scripture plays in our lives?

Day Three

1. Read 1 Peter 2:2. In your own words, talk about what it means to, “grow up into salvation” through the study of God’s Word?

2. Read 1 Peter 2:3. What does it mean to, “taste that the Lord is good?”

Day Four

1. Read Psalm 34:8. How does this Psalm connect to what Peter is saying in verses 1 through 3?

2. Read Psalm 119:105. What does this Psalm connect to what Peter is saying in verses 1 through 3?

Week 8 Discussion: Put Them Down

Passages like 1 Peter 2:1-3 can be challenging because it presents to us negative character defects that everyone is guilty of. At some point, we all struggle with every single one of these. It’s only by God’s grace in the community of faith that we are able to put these things down as Peter commands us. Talk as a group about your struggles in these categories, and what you need to do see more growth in these areas.

1. Icebreaker: Which of these negative characteristics have brought the most harm to you?
2. Of the negative characteristics listed, which do you struggle with the most? Which do you struggle with the least?
3. What are different ways people can disguise slander to make it look less problematic?
4. What do you do, practically speaking, when someone is slandering another person? How do you respond?
5. How can a Christian actively work against the sin of envy? What are some practical, healthy practices that will work against feelings of envy?
6. How do you address deceit when you know it’s happening? What can you say to confront it without coming across as harsh or quarrelsome?

Takeaways:

1. Salvation compels us to put down ungodly behaviors that we previously gave in to.
2. Scripture is necessary for us, not only for growth but spiritual survival.

PRAYER REQUESTS: