

"The Lord's Encouragement to ALL Believers"

Part 13

1 Peter 1:1-2:10

Introduction: Last week in our study of 1 Peter we looked at the eternality of the Word of God and what that means to us who are believers.

Notice 1 Peter 1:23-25

We have been born again by the Word of God that is eternal. Now, because it is eternal then so is our salvation and so are the promises and the believer's graces found in the Word of God. Peter contrasts the Word of God with human life and the glories of the human life. Peter's idea here is that we will eventually lose everything of this life. Our health will go away, everything that we have in our possession will either be handed down to someone else or it will eventually deteriorate, but the promises of the Word and the Christian graces found in the Word will last forever.

As we continue on Peter will build on this thought about the Word of God.

I. The Believer's Response to the Eternal Word
a. Receive it

Notice 1 Peter 2:1

The word "therefore" looks back to what Peter just wrote pertaining to the Word of God. Since the Word is eternal that means there is never a time in our lives when we have the right to set it aside.

In verse 1 and verse 2 we are going to see a personal test for spiritual growth in our lives. Peter gives us a list of five wrong attitudes. He tells us they are to be laid aside just as old dirty clothing would be removed and laid aside. These rotten attitudes have no place in the life of the believer. These garments should never be found on the believer. These wrong attitudes went out of style when we were born again. We are not the same person we used to be, and neither should our "garments of attitude" be the same. Each of the attitudes which Peter mentions here are relational sins. They are horizontal sins which means they are sins that are expressed when we relate to others. To put it in words we can better understand this verse deals with how we respond to difficult people whom we encounter as we pass through this life.

➤ **The Negative Test for Spiritual Growth**

Let us look closer at the five sinful attitudes that should not be in our lives:

1. Malice

This is wickedness that comes from within. It refers to any wickedness but especially to the wickedness of having the desire for revenge toward someone who has hurt you. This sin rises from the sin of unforgiveness. It is a feeling of hostility with a desire to cause harm.

Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"Malice is often irrational, usually based on the false belief that the person against whom it is directed has the same intention. It speaks of a smoldering resentment that causes you to lash out at others."

Let me show you what unforgiveness does in the life of the believer.

a. Unforgiveness causes an inward torment.

Let us notice what Jesus said at the end of the parable of the unforgiving servant.

Matthew 18:32-35

³² *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

³³ *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?*

³⁴ **And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.**

³⁵ **So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

The question here is "Who are the tormentors?"

What tormentors? The hidden tormentors of anger and bitterness that eat your insides out, the tormentors of frustration and malice that give you ulcers and high blood pressure and migraine headaches and lower back pain, the tormentors that make you lie awake at night on your bed stewing over every rotten thing that happens to you. The tormentors of an unforgiving heart who stalk your trail day and night, who never leave your side, who suck every bit of joy from your life.

Why? BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORGIVE FROM THE HEART. It is happening to you just as Jesus said because you refuse to forgive.

b. Unforgiveness hinders your prayer life.

Matthew 6:7-15

⁷ *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

⁸ *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

⁹ *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

¹⁴ *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

¹⁵ *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

2. Guile

This has the idea of being deceptive. Notice the words of MacDonald:

"Deceit (guile)—any form of dishonesty and trickery (and what a variety of forms it takes!). Deceit falsifies income tax returns, cheats on exams, lies about age, bribes officials, and pulls shady deals in business."

Pritchard says the following concerning guile:

"As a fisherman, Peter would have understood the word deceit, which really means to "bait the hook." It's what you do when you play a trick in order to get your way. You are deceitful when you tell a lie or omit the truth in order to gain a personal advantage. Guile is a clever form of deliberate dishonesty."

3. Hypocrisies

This is pretending to be someone you are not. The placement of this word is very important. If a believer practices the first two sins, then this third sin will also be in their lives for they will pretend to show forgiveness and to be honest in their dealings.

4. Envy

We sometimes want to see jealousy and envy as being the same but that is not the case. To be jealous of someone is to desire what they have been blessed with. But to envy them is to not only be jealous but to resent them for their blessings and to have an evil desire to see them to lose what they have. This sin can lead to division, strife, and even murder.

Someone has said it is a moral cancer that plagues "all voluntary organizations, not least religious organizations." It reared its ugly head even among the twelve, while Jesus was yet with them. It is "almost the only vice which is practicable at all times and in every place".

We see the opposite of this in the Apostle Paul's life.

Philippians 4:10-12

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

One writer called envy the last sin Christians will confess because it is so ugly. Envy is jealousy at the success of others or happiness at another's misfortune. It is the poison of the soul that turns you into a resentful, angry, grouchy, miserable, critical person.

5. Evil speaking

This is a reference to slander. It would take in also GOSSIP and BACKBITING. It has the idea of using our words to destroy someone's reputation. This sin mostly happens when the party being destroyed is not present to defend themselves.

Notice how the Believer's Bible Commentary explains this sin:

"It may take very subtle forms such as: "Yes, she is a lovely person, but she has this one failing ..." and then the knife is deftly thrust into her back. Or it may even have a religious

pose: "I mention this only for your prayer fellowship, but did you know that he ..." and then the character is assassinated."

Now, let us get back to Peter's point. These five attitudes are NOT to be found in the life of the believer. If they are then there is no progress. In other words, there is no spiritual growth. This was the spiritual state of the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 3:2-4

² *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

³ *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

⁴ *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

These people were saved long enough they should have been feeding on spiritual meat but the sin in their lives had stunted their growth.

Notice the words of A C Gaebelein:

"Those who are born again of incorruptible seed, in possession of a new nature, are still in the world, though they are no longer of it. Evil is on all sides and there is still the old nature, the flesh, in every child of God though believers are reckoned as being no longer in the flesh. The old things of the flesh must be put off, completely laid aside. This is the necessary thing for spiritual growth; if there is no putting off of these there can be no progress."

➤ **The Positive Test for Spiritual Growth**

Notice 1 Peter 2:2

Instead of possessing the five sinful attitudes of verse 1 we are to have an appetite for the Word of God just as a newborn baby longs for milk. Just as a newborn baby must have milk in order to grow so the believer **MUST** feed upon the Word of God in order to grow spiritually stronger in order to put off the previous mentioned sins.

If a person who professes to be a believer does not have a desire for the pure Truth of the Word of God something is seriously wrong. If a newborn baby would continue to reject milk and not want to drink it, you would know that there was a health problem. The same is true when people who profess to be believers have no appetite for the pure Word of God. We can determine that they are spiritually ill.

The word "desire" here in verse 2 is a very strong word. We see it used in Psalm 42.

Psalm 42:1-2

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

² *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*

As the thirsty hart PANTS for water, we should PANT for the Word of God in this dry and barren world we live in.

Let us notice the Words of Jesus.

Matthew 4:1-4

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

² *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

³ *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

⁴ *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

The failure to either desire or to receive this Pure milk of the Word is the reason for so many problems in both individual Christian lives and in congregations.

All of this makes me ask a question, "What is the cause of a believer NOT desiring the Pure milk of God's Word?" It can be the evidence of several things:

1. They are feeding on something of the world that takes away the appetite.

If a young child feeds on candy or some other junk food before it is time to sit down to a meal, they will not eat of the healthy food because they are filled up on junk food.

If a believer is feeding on some kind of junk food from the world you can be sure their appetite for God's Word will be greatly affected.

2. They are spiritually ill.

If a baby does not want to eat you can be sure they are not feeling well. They have picked up some kind of illness that has taken away their appetite.

In the same way if a believe has picked up some sin in their life the sin will certainly keep them from desiring the Word of God.

Conclusion:

The test of spiritual growth is twofold here:

- a. When we are growing spiritually our attitude toward our fellow man will be one of love. These are our horizontal relationships.
- b. The second part is our vertical relationship, that is our relationship with God. Do we really desire to feed upon the Word of God?