

Review

Peter has just told us how important it is to be holy, God-fearing people (1Pet. 1:17). The prophets had written of Christ in the Scriptures, - of the gospel He would bring, and how He would accomplish it through His brutal death. And so, because our lives have been bought by the priceless blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, we are to be walking in purity of life. Peter then continues in verse 22, saying,

1Pet. 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls...

Peter makes the assumption that we are now walking in that purity because of our love for God (1Pet. 1:8).

1:22-25 The Brethren

Peter tells us that the natural outcome of this purity will be to have love of the brethren.

Who are the brethren? They are our brothers and sisters in Christ - fellow Christian believers. Ever since the birth of the church, we have been called "the brethren." As a matter of fact, the book of Acts describes Christians as "the brethren" almost thirty times!

Love One Another

Love of the brethren isn't just a suggestion. It's even more than a command. It's an assumption that anyone who is really saved will love the brethren. The apostle John wrote,

1John 3:14-19 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We

will know by this that we are of the truth...

Wow. That's really heavy stuff. You know you're saved by your love for all Christians. No wonder the writer of Hebrews said,

Heb. 13:1 Let love of the brethren continue.

The Word Endures Forever

Jesus said,

Luke 21:33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

The Word of God will never become obsolete. It will last longer than the earth itself.

A lot of us look for excuses not to obey the commands written in the Word. When I was a child, I knew that if I could delay obedience, the command would become obsolete. Just put off cleaning your room until bedtime, and then it's too late. Put off brushing your teeth until you had to leave, and you didn't have to.

There was one occasion when I thought that if I didn't get dressed in time for school, that I wouldn't have to go. Unfortunately for me, delaying obedience to the commandment didn't work that time! I just got in trouble.

But because the Word of God is eternal, we have to realize that when it tells us that love of the brethren is mandatory, we can't wait for an expiration date to apply! We will all one day be old and withered, but the Word will still be alive and well. And it will still require that we love the brethren.

2:1-3 Putting Aside Malice

When we talk about love, we often think about all of its positive requirements. We quote 1Corinthians 13 a lot: "Love is patient, love is kind, love rejoices with the truth, love never fails," etc.

But Peter points out that having true and fervent love for the brethren in reality is more likely to consist of what it DOESN'T look like. It probably means having to put aside things like malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

- "Malice" is ill-will, wanting to see someone hurt.

- "Deceit" is to be crafty and deceptive. It goes hand-in-hand with "hy-

pocrisy," which means to be an actor - pretending to be someone you're not.

- "Envy" is to be aware of other people's advantages and desire them for yourself. James said that envy is what causes the majority of fights and arguments (James 4:2).

- The Greek word translated "slander" here is any kind of evilspeak - whether its true or not. Being a back-biter, speaking evil of someone.

Want to know if you're truly loving the brethren? The first step is probably just to make sure that none of these things are present in your life.

Long For the Pure Milk Of The Word

Friday night, I had the privilege of babysitting my three-and-a-half-month-old granddaughter for the first time by myself. We had a great time, because she loves to smile at grampa's face. But about 8:00, she stopped smiling. She was getting fidgety and fussy. She started to make some unhappy noise, and then began to cry. Nothing was working - picking her up, walking her around, patting her on the back, showing her interesting things... Then I realized - "She wants her bottle of milk!"

That milk is making her grow. "It does a body good" as the commercials say. It's udderly fantastic! Babies receive essential building blocks of nutrients like Calcium, Vitamin D, Potassium, Magnesium, and Vitamin A from it.

Peter is saying that the Word of God is like that for our spirits. It's the Word that provides the nutrients. Not Pentecostal experiences and emotional highs. Not learning a catechism or memorizing church doctrines. It's the Word, it's the Word, it's the Word.

The Word is how we grow in respect to salvation. It has the necessary nutrients, the foundational building blocks for our spiritual lives.

2Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.