**LOVE ONE ANOTHER DEEPLY**

1 Peter 1:22-2:3

Key Verse 1:22

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart*

Introduction: Believers are commanded to love God and love one another. They have been given all they need to obey this command through the word of God and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but they still need to engage in a spiritual struggle. They needed to develop a taste for the goodness of God’s word; like newborn babies craving the pure spiritual milk of God’s word. Through obeying God’s word, they could purify themselves and repent of selfish sins that block God’s love, and could become a conduit of God’s love. When their hearts were sincere and full of God’s love, then they could love others deeply from the heart. Obeying to love one another would be a joyful experience for all.

1. Read verse 22. How did the believers purify themselves? (22) What was the result of purifying themselves? What kind of love should they strive to have?

***22*** *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

1. The believers purified themselves by obeying the truth. They did not rely on themselves or any human philosophy to purify themselves, but on the words of God. They put faith in God’s words, so that they obeyed God’s words by faith. The result was that they were purified by the truth of God in Jesus Christ. One Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **32** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:31-32).
2. The result of the believers purifying themselves was that they were able to have sincere love for each other. God is the one that supplies the love for believers to love one another. For this reason, believers ought to purify their hearts; where God’s love pours in and through them toward others. Paul also spoke of love coming from a pure heart, saying, “‘The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim 1:5).
3. The believers should strive to have sincere love and to love others deeply, from the heart.
	1. First, the believers should strive to have sincere love. Sincere love is the love that comes from a pure heart that is devoted to God. Love cannot be faked, but must be sincere in order to be real love. Paul described the sincere love that comes from a pure heart when he said, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Rom 12:9)
	2. Second, believers should strive to love others deeply, from the heart. Once one has the sincere love of God in their heart, they should also strive to put that love to use by loving others deeply. Even though we have God’s love in us, it still requires a decision and effort to love others with God’s love; let alone to love others deeply. To love others deeply, we need to put aside our own self interests and consider the interests of others. Especially, they needed to be filled with the deep love of God, so that they could become a conduit or channel of God’s love to others.
4. Read verses 23-25. How were the believers born again? (23, 25b) What did Peter say about God’s word? In what respect are all people like grass or like the flowers of the field? (24) What hope can people find in God’s word? (25a)

**23** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. **24** For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, **25** but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

1. The believers were born again through the word of God that was preached to them. When a person is born into this world, they are born of perishable seed. They are alive physically, but spiritually dead because of sin. However, when that person hears God’s word and believes, they are born again through the word of God. They are born, not of perishable, but of imperishable seed; so that God’s seed in them gives them spiritual life, including eternal and everlasting life. Just as a seed planted in a garden carries the genetic information to produce a particular type of plant, so also, God’s seed in a believer contains all the spiritual components necessary for spiritual life; for them to grow and be fully transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. The apostle John also spoke of God’s seed in a believer, when he said “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God” (1 John 3:9). Since the believers had been born of God through the word of God, they should purify themselves by obeying God’s word and love one another deeply from the heart with the love that God’s supplies. Furthermore, there is an absolute priority on preaching the word of God, since believers are born again through God's word. As the apostle Paul also said, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom 10:14).
2. God’s word is living and enduring. Since believers are born, not of perishable, but imperishable seed, it makes sense that the word of God though which they are born is also imperishable. God’s word is more than words on a page. It is the living and lifegiving. it is eternal and everlasting, just as God himself is eternal and everlasting. As Jesus said, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life” (John 6:62). Paul also said, “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb 4:12). Since the word of God we received endures forever, we that are born again through God’s word will also live forever.
3. All people are like grace and the flowers of the field in that their glory is fading. Green grass and flowers are the glory of a field or garden. They add visible beauty and value, but their glory is fleeting. Eventually, they die and their glory will die with them. It is the same for people. No matter how one looks or what one achieves in this world, it is all fading glory. They grow old and die and eventually even the memory of them dies. When believers accept this truth, they can humble themselves before God.
4. God’s word (the word of the Lord) endures forever. Here there is a contrast between people and God’s word. People perish and all their glories perish, but God’s word endures forever. This means believers should not put their hope in human or worldly glory, but in the word of God. The word of God gives believers lasting hope for eternity. When we put our hope in the word of God, we can also have eternal hope for ourselves and others.

1. Read verses 2:1-3. What kinds of things should the believers rid themselves of? (1) What does pure spiritual milk refer to? (2a, 23b, 25) Why should the believers crave it like newborn babies? (2b) What was their experience with the Lord? (3) How could this experience help them to crave pure spiritual milk?

**1** Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, **3** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1. Believers should rid themselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. In the context of the passage, these are all sins that can be a direct barrier to loving one another. Malice is bad will or the desire to do evil things to another person; for example seeking revenge or wanting to see another person suffer. Hypocrisy is to claim certain moral standards or beliefs without practicing them; for example demanding another person to do or not to do something when we don’t do or do the same things. Envy is longing to possess something awarded to or achieved by another; for example wanting to take another’s place, position or belongings. Slander is to make false statements about another in order to harm them: for example claiming someone did or said something they did not.
2. Pure spiritual milk refers to the word of God. Especially, it may refer to spiritual basics; such as the pure (uncorrupted) gospel teaching or words of Jesus. In this way, spiritual milk contrasts with spiritual solid food, as mentioned by Apostle Paul, “I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready” (1 Cor 3:2). Both spiritual milk and solid food characterizes God’s word as spiritual food or drink that believers can consume.
3. Believers should crave pure spiritual milk like newborn babies because it provides the believer with the basic spiritual nutrients for healthy spiritual development. Just as newborn babies need their mother’s milk every 3-4 hours, so you Christians need God’s word regularly; at least daily, if not multiple times a day. They may need God’s word even more often depending on the person or life circumstances; for example when they face the stress of suffering through which God is testing their faith.
4. The believers had experienced (they had tasted) that the Lord is good through eating God’s word. God is good, but it is not always easy to see that God is good. However, believers need to remember that God reveals his goodness primarily through the word of God.
5. When they remember how through eating God’s word they tasted that the Lord is good, they could develop a healthy craving for God’s word. Eating the word of God regularly doesn’t necessarily come naturally. It takes time to build up a taste for the word of God. Sometimes, the word of God tastes sweet, but goes down bitter. It is easy to enjoy God’s words but can be hard to or painful to obey. Therefore, it was important for them to build a good habit of coming to the word of God; such as through daily bread, nightly Bible reading and consistent Bible studies. In this way they could build up more of a taste for the goodness of God’s word and have a healthy craving for God’s word. As we build a habit of eating pure spiritual milk, we can also begin to take some solid food, which is harder to accept and obey.

**One word: Love one another deeply from the heart**