

Simply Healthy Christianity

Text: 1 Peter 2:1-3 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious...”

Purpose: The purpose of these verses is to emphasize that Christians must have a longing for God’s word so that they will have a healthy growing Christian walk.

Proposition: God wants me to have a longing for His word.

Interrogative: How can I have a longing for God’s word?

Truth 1: Command: I must realize that I am commanded to have this appetite: 3:2 “Desire the sincere milk of the word...”

- **The sense of the statements: You absolutely must desire the word of God.**
- **The context of the statement: The word used for desire (ἐπιποθέω) is used 9 times in the NT and in all 9 examples; the word is used in the context of a longing for or yearning to be close to someone that we love.**
- **The nature of object of the statement:**
 - **The word is sincere/without any mixture of error**
 - **The word is logically order: The word used for “word” is not the typical word used (λόγος) but is a word used only one other time in the NT. (λογικός) Romans 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is **your reasonable service.**

Application: I am being disobedient to God’s clear command if I refuse to cultivate this healthy appetite for God’s word.

Truth 2: Rivals: I must remove hindrances to this appetite: 3:1 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking...”

- **The Prominence of this command in the NT:**
 - **Romans 13:12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light...
 - **Ephesians 4:22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...
 - **James 1:21** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls...
- **Our hunger for God’s word is directly related to our willingness to put away the specific sins that are mentioned in this list:**
 - **Observation 1:** We cannot afford to go half way on this command “All”
 - **Observation 2:** The dehumanizing lusts that we harbor in our hearts will so dominate our thinking that they replace a healthy hunger for God’s word and shade the way we interpret it:
 - **Malice:** Ill will toward others
 - **Guile:** Deception
 - **Hypocrisy:** Two-facedness

- **Envy:** Becoming discontented because another has experienced God's good hand
- **Evil Speaking:** Slandering others

Application: I am acting in self-deception if I think I am able to entertain sinful passions while continuing to cultivate a hunger for God's word.

Truth 3: Picture: I must understand this practical illustration: 3:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby..."

- **The illustration:** "As newborn babes..."
 - Newborns have a relentless hunger for their mother's milk.
 - Newborns need this constant feeding to support rapid growth and good health.
 - Newborn establish a powerful bond with their mother while feeding.
 - Newborn babies develop a sense of security as they feed.
- **The stated purpose of the command:** "That ye may grow thereby..."
 - **We cannot grow apart from the means that God has provided**
 - **Cleansing: Psalm 119:9** "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word..."
 - **Renewal of the mind: Romans 12:2** "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."
 - **Faith: Romans 10:17** "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God..."
 - **Victory in Spiritual Battle: Ephesians 6:17** "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..."
 - **Salvation at the Judgment Seat: 1 Timothy 4:16** "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee..."

Application: I need to realize that this illustration is as much about **relationship** and **health** as it is about **growth**.

Truth 4: Experience: I must to get back to basic Christianity: 2:3 "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious..."

- **"If:"** This word means that there is a condition for all this working together
 - Growth into Christ-likeness is contingent on new life in Christ!
 - Hunger after God's Word is contingent on new life in Christ!
 - The power to put off these lusts that hinder our love for God's Word is contingent on new life in Christ!
- **"Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:"** He could have stated their position in Christ as a matter of fact, but instead he states it as a matter of experience
 - **God wants us to have a real, healthy communion with Him, not just a cold academic understanding of Him.**

Another example of this Philippians 2:1 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy..."

- **Consolation in Christ:** Comforter/ *παράκλησις*
- **Comfort of love:** Internal sense that you belong to God

- **Fellowship of the Spirit:** Communion/ **κοινωνία**
- **Bowels and mercies:** Deep seated affection for God and other believers

Conclusion: God wants me to have a longing for His word. If I will see this as a serious matter of obedience, so that I am motivated to remove all rivals as I consider the illustration of a hungry newborn, then I will be able to get back to the basics of a healthy growing Christian experience.