

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

VII. Loving And Maturing Opposite The World's Emptiness

(1 Peter 1:22-2:3)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 1:22-2:3 calls us to love and mature opposite the world's emptiness, so we view the passage for insight:

II. Loving And Maturing Opposite The World's Emptiness, 1 Peter 1:22-2:3.

- A. Peter wrote that his readers had been saved unto a spiritual position that equipped them to express a spiritual love for each other that was unique to believers opposite what the unsaved experienced, 1 Peter 1:22a,b:
 - 1. He claimed that they had [positionally] **permanently** purified (*hagnikotes*, **perfect** participle from *hagnizo*, "purify," The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 185; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 11) their souls by obeying the truth of the Gospel, 1 Peter 1:22a. This use of the perfect tense implies unconditional salvation security for the believer!
 - 2. This purification through faith in the Gospel was unto an unhypocritical (*anupokriton*, accusative case of *anupokritos*, "genuine, sincere, without hypocrisy," *Ibid.*, p. 76) or sincere brotherly love of fellow true believers in Christ, 1 Peter 1:22b. The world has a "love" for its own (cf. John 15:19a), but Peter here implied that a true godly love for one another is unique to believers and not experienced by the unsaved!
- B. Accordingly, since we believers have permanently purified our souls through faith in Christ to the end that we can experience a genuine godly love for one another that is not experienced by the world, Peter urged us to love one another "eagerly, fervently, constantly" (*ektenos*, *Ibid.*, p. 245) from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22c.
- C. This equipping of the believer to express such a unique, genuine love rises from the miraculous working of the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation, as explained in 1 Peter 1:23-25:
 - 1. Peter's readers had been **permanently, passively** "born again" (*anagegennemenoi*, **perfect passive** participle of *anagennaō*, "to bring forth again; to regenerate," *Ibid.*, The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 20), another allusion to the believer's unconditional salvation security (*perfect* tense) and the grace of God's salvation in revealing the believer did not contribute anything to get saved (*passive* voice), 1 Peter 1:23a; Eph. 2:8-9.
 - 2. This salvation did not occur through instrumentality of perishable mortal seed, but by imperishable seed, by the living and abiding word of God that remains forever in contrast to perishable mortal man who like grass or its flower withers and falls, 1 Peter 1:23b-25a, citing Isaiah 40:6,8.
 - 3. Peter explained that this word in the form of the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), was the word that was preached unto his hearers and led to their salvation, 1 Peter 1:25b.
- D. Accordingly, Peter called his readers to put away all the loveless sins of the world -- all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander -- and like newborn babes long for the pure spiritual milk that by it they might mature in the Lord, if indeed they had tasted that the Lord was good, 1 Peter 2:1-2, 3 ESV. The noun "word" does not appear in 1 Peter 2:1-2, but the article *to* exists in 1 Peter 2:2, referring to the word of God that is highlighted extensively in 1 Peter 1:23-25, so Peter directed his readers to "feed" on the pure spiritual milk of **God's Word** for their spiritual nurture. (Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, 1861, vol. IV, p. 344)

Lesson: *In contrast to the world that does not truly love, but expresses malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander in emptiness, believers in Christ by faith in God's Word in the Gospel of Christ have been graciously, permanently born again by believing the incorruptible, powerful, wholesome Word of God unto the capacity to love one another without hypocrisy. They thus should love one another eagerly, fervently and constantly from the heart and desire God's Word that led to their salvation as newborn babes strongly desire milk that they might mature in Christ.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that God miraculously saved us by belief in His powerful, pure Gospel message that we might truly love one another unlike the lost world's sinful, futile existence, that we then fervently, eagerly and constantly love one another in Christ. (2) May we then realize the great power and edifying goodness of God's Word so that we believers continue to long for its intake like newborn babes desire milk that we might absorb it and grow up in the Lord's salvation and spiritual nurture!*