

1 PETER  
**EXILED**  
STANDING FIRM IN GOD'S GRACE



## Loving, Eliminating, Pursuing

1 Peter 1.22-2:3

### Main Idea

As Christians we should love each other earnestly, eliminate sin fervently, and pursue maturity consistently.

### Overview

#### I. Two Encouragements

- Peter's readers should be encouraged:
  - (1) They have really been born again
  - (2) God's promise is a secure and reliable foundation
- They have already seen results in their lives – evidence of God's Spirit working
  - The freedom to obey and the power to love each other
- Love is the single most essential characteristic required of God's children
  - Indispensable, and a witness (John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:20-21; John 17:20-23)

#### II. First Exhortation - "Love one another earnestly, from a pure heart" (1:22)

- Our 'love' is based on shared interests, personal liking and compatibility; grows over time; is mutual; is reserved for a few
- Peter is talking about something different
  - The self sacrificing love that God showed to us in Christ
  - Unchanging and unstoppable 1 Corinthians 13 "24 carat love"
- This love says: "you and I are both part of God's family"
  - "Therefore I will love you unconditionally as a brother/sister in Christ; I will pray, encourage, care for you, listen patiently, bear your burdens, help meet your needs, and I will let you do the same for me."
- This love isn't how well we know or like our church members
  - It is the extent of our commitment to care for any one and all of them
- Not easy: personality conflicts: we choose your friends; not who joins our church
  - Resolve to see them as Christ sees us

#### • Second Exhortation – Eliminate Obstacles (2:1)

- We can't love until we eliminate obstacles
  - Malice, slander, deceit, hypocrisy, envy
- Self-analysis is frustrating and possibly deceptive (Psalm 19:12, Jeremiah 19:9)
  - A broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17)
- Envy is particularly damaging, robbing us of peace (Proverbs 14:30)
  - Each envious thought is a complaint that God's sovereignty isn't good enough for us
- Cast these harmful habits aside: takes active resolve; don't feed or indulge them

- It is our responsibility how we respond, when harmful thoughts arise (2 Cor 10:5; Phil 4:8)
- Be vigilant about pride and envy causing divisions within the church (Col 4:2)
- **Third Exhortation – Since you’ve tasted what God offers, get as much as you can (2:2-3)**
  - Third exhortation 1Pet 2:2-3: since you’ve tasted what God offers, get as much as you can
  - Go for maturity
  - The ‘pure spiritual milk’ is God’s truth, direction, teaching
  - It is accessed principally through his written word, prayer and meditation, and fellowship in community
  - Go both broad and deep
    - Move on from the kids’ menu – take in the whole counsel of God
    - Ponder God’s word, pray over it, meditate on it (Psalm 119:11, 97; John 15:7; Col 3:16)
  - Spiritual nourishment comes through the Spirit of God using the Word of God to mature and grow your character, leading to understanding, praise and obedience
    - Meditation will help disrupt harmful thought patterns
    - Forming well-worn paths to communion with God

### Questions

Discussion Starter: *How much should we be concerned by how the church is viewed by society at large? In light of your answer, how should we respond?*

1. Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3. What are the connections between this passage and the first part of chapter 1?
2. What is the connection between the “living and abiding word of God” and Peter’s exhortations?
3. How can we have confidence that God’s word is trustworthy? How does this help us heed Peter’s exhortations? (cf. Proverbs 30:5, Isaiah 55:10-11, Malachi 3:1)
4. Distinguish the various types of love we encounter – how are they different/connected?
5. What do we learn about love from John 13:34-35, John 15:13, 1 John 4:20-21?
6. In your experience, what hinders our obedience to the command to ‘love one another’? What can be done to counter these hindrances?
7. Does our approach to loving one another need to change as our congregation expands in size? If so, how?
8. Why does Peter exhort us to put away malice, hypocrisy, deceit, envy and slander? What do each of these mean? Which one are you more prone to and how does it manifest itself in your life?
9. What strategies do you find useful in ‘putting away’ malice, hypocrisy, deceit, envy and slander?
10. Why is it important to take every thought captive for Christ and how do we go about doing that? (2 Corinthians 10:5-6)
11. What does Peter mean when he says, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation?” How does this cause us to grow up to salvation?
12. What can you do this week to arouse a longing for ‘pure spiritual milk’, and how could you fulfill it?

Accountability Question: *Which one of these behaviors/attitudes – malice, hypocrisy, deceit, envy, slander – do you need to put away?*