

SATISFYING AN UNQUENCHABLE THIRST

1 Peter 2:1-3

I frequently think back to my childhood, when our family vacationed in Yosemite. The deer in the meadows, always near the river—had a craving for the water.

Ps. 42 *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God"*

63 David: *"O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."*

Peter writes **saints, suffering because of their faith.**

When we're suffering in the desert of life, we need drink from the water of life!

People who are suffering need encouragement to remain faithful to God and maintain a good testimony.

=> God will be glorified and we'll participate in His victory.

Best source of encouragement in hard times comes from God's Word.

It provides HOPE in the midst of discouragement.

HOPE PRODUCES PRACTICAL RESULTS IN TIMES OF SUFFERING.

=> Proper attitudes (1:13) lead to proper conduct (1:14-2:10).

Peter describes lifestyle which ought to characterize people who have hope in the midst of suffering. That lifestyle includes:

Holiness 1:14-16 Reverence 1:17-21 **Love** 1:22-25

Source of this love:

Rebirth from an imperishable seed—based on God's word.

This isn't natural love. It isn't "doing what comes naturally!"

This love comes as a result of the work of the Word of God in our life.

Basis of this new lifestyle:

We become what we ought to be through shed blood of Jesus

1:18-21 *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect... ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God."*

We become what we ought to be

through the transforming power of God's Word

1:23-25 *"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men 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 stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you."*

This new lifestyle is the result of rebirth, through the living, abiding Word of God—the Bible—the Word of the Lord which abides forever.

It's not our idea, nor man's philosophies that do it.

It's not fanning a "spark of divinity" down inside us.

It's God's eternal Word that leads to a new life.

F.F. Bruce: "The word of human beings, however wise in substance or eloquent in expression, can't produce spiritual life; this is prerogative of the Word of God."

Life-transforming nature of God's Word leads to 4th attitude ***in time of affliction:***

DESIRE FOR GOD'S WORD 2:1-3

As babies desire milk, we develop a craving for God's Word.

The craving causes us to keep coming back for more!

2:1 [Transition] *“Therefore, [since you’ve been born anew through the living Word which endures forever] rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.”*

Rid yourself of actions that demonstrate lack of love.

These actions distract us from desire for God’s Word.

Intimate connection between the demonstration of love and God’s Word.

God’s Word motivates us to avoid loveless acts which mark natural man.

Therefore, ***WE OUGHT TO LAY ASIDE THE "OLD CLOTHES," OF OUR FORMER LIFESTYLE 2:1***

We’re told to put them aside. (lit., "to strip them off")

We ought to strip off, like spoiled or dirty clothes, our old lifestyle.

Things we learned from our old nature are to be laid aside:

Attitudes and actions that develop easily when we’re under pressure.

They all come naturally for us.

Dauids: "When a community is under pressure there’s a tendency to begin bickering and division, which makes the community more vulnerable to pressure."

In counseling, we often remind people that when the pressure rises, we have a natural tendency to revert back to what we used to be.

Be alert for that response—take off old clothes which mark the old life:

All Malice—ill will—desire to inflict pain, harm, or injury on others.

Swindoll-"general word for wickedness that characterizes unbelievers entrenched in the world system. Sins ... that hurt and injure others."

All Deceit—everything deceitful. Earliest form of word means "to catch with bait."

Craftiness—using devious means to get what we want.

Appearance of truth so unwary may be tricked—"2-faced"; trickery

Hypocrisy—Pretend to be one thing, while concealing true motives and feelings.

To act a part, put on a mask, appear to be someone you're not.

Envy—resentment over what someone else has; wanting it for yourself.

Slander—conversation that tears another person down.

Lit., "Speaking against"—it's a defamation of character

Occurs when victim isn't there to offer a defense or set the record straight... gossip that destroys confidence and weakens a person's reputation.

Dauids: "Cuts the ground from any practice other than open truth and love... Christians should be able to trust that no ulterior motives lie behind fellow-believers' actions; that nothing is said in their absence that hasn't already been said to their face."

Note the circular relationship underlying this passage:

- * Love is the result of God's Word working in our lives.
- * Lack of love obstructs learning God's Word.
- * Learning from God's Word produces love.

Learning God's Word => Love => Desire to learn God's Word

Lack of love => Obstructs learning God's Word=>Lack of love

Either direction is a continuing cycle—a spiral up, or a spiral down!

Old saying is true: **"Either this book will keep you from sin,**

Or, sin will keep you from this book!"

**Putting aside evil things is preliminary
to the desire to "drink the Word."**

When we *practice* things Peter tells us to *lay aside*,
we won't *long for* the pure milk of the Word.

It will make us uncomfortable. We'll *avoid* that exposure.

**WE OUGHT TO DEVELOP A CRAVING
FOR THE PURE MILK OF GOD'S WORD 2:2-3**

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.

Focus is on the DESIRE—As a baby wants its bottle.
(as hungry new-born desires *milk*)

We have to learn not to want our milk!—desire comes naturally to a baby!

So it is with new-born Christians—we start out thirsty for God's Word.

Then other people teach us to calm the desire down a bit.

It has too much cholesterol!

It might ask you to do something you don't want to do or that will harm you (physically). It might even shorten your life!

We all ought to have that new-born craving for milk!

It's the basis for growth—for developing as a follower of Christ.

Warren Wiersbe: "When I was a child, I didn't like to drink milk (and my father worked for the Borden Dairy!), so my mother used to add syrups and powders to make my milk tastier. None of them really worked. It's sad when Christians have no appetite for God's Word and must be "fed" entertainment instead."

We're to have a strong desire for God's Word (a craving for the real thing!)

This isn't legalism or forced-feeding—it's a delight, a thirst.

Because we're new-born babes

Proclamation of the Word is means God uses to start the process.

It's the agent that leads to the new birth.

As new-borns, we must begin feeding process.

Because the Word is pure milk Pure ="unadulterated"

Not watered down or weakened by anything less mixed in with it.

Central American custom: "adulterated" milk or gasoline.

"Pure" (adolon) is contrasted with "guile" (dolon) which is to be put off.

Because the Word makes us grow.

"Drink your milk so you'll grow up big and strong!" => maturity

Because we've already tasted the Lord's kindness.

Ps. 34:8 *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."*

Tasting precedes craving

We don't desire it like that until we've experienced it.

"Don't knock it 'til you've tried it!"

If you've tried it and it tastes good, you want more!

One of the problems: many of us have tried it.

We've tasted and learned that it's good.

Then we decide *we can get along without it*.

Some drift away; forget what it's like.

We try to make it on our own; we stop growing!!!

We've taken a taste and found that God's kindness is good.

Therefore we should be determined to get more.

God's kindness shouldn't become an excuse for laziness.

God's kindness should motivate us to know Him better.

God's kindness should motivate us to eat more to grow more.

HOW SHOULD THIS EXHORTATION AFFECT OUR LIVES?

In recent years we've seen a significant increase in information on nutrition.

We read dietary facts on labels of everything we eat.

Restaurants supply lists of ingredients and calories for food served.

The more we learn about foods, the more we realize the truth of the axiom, "We are what we eat."

This fact has been supported by studies of certain birds.

Seagulls, which normally feed on fish, were confined and given only grain.

Their stomachs gradually changed until they resembled pigeons, which are grain-feeders.

Spiritually, **we're changed by what we feed on**—what we take into our minds. If we fill our minds with garbage it affects our lifestyle.

Some youngsters look gaunt because they don't eat enough to meet their needs.

Doctors can't find a physical cause.

Mothers can't be blamed; they provide tasty and nourishing meals.

The food's there, they just refuse to eat it.

They're half-starved, though abundance of good food is available every day.

If you've been to a national park, you were probably given a warning in big letters: "Do Not Feed the Bears."

You drive into the park, and see people feeding bears.

Howard Hendricks once asked a ranger about it.

"Sir," he answered, "you have only a small part of the picture."

In fall and winter rangers carry away the bodies of dead bears ... bears who've lost ability to fend for food.

Hendricks warns: "That's what's happening to us."

Do we have to force a baby to want its bottle?
Every great man of God shares this characteristic
– a thirst to spend time with God, in His Word. Ps.
42:1-2; 63:1

This should never deteriorate to a legalistic obligation.

Purpose: to fulfill end God had in mind when He saved us: => maturity.

Barna Research Group: 93% of Americans own a Bible,
 70% of non-Christians never read it.

Christians: 1/4 don't read Bible at all; only 18% claim to read it daily.

What should our response be when we're faced with pressure?

Vance Havner: "If you see a Bible that is falling apart,
 it probably belongs to someone who isn't!"

Circle: Strip off the malice, guile, etc. => for desire for God's Word to develop.

Feeding on God's Word will make us **peacemakers**, rather than **trouble makers**.

Some years ago, a woman wanted to impress pastor when he came to visit. She said to her little girl, "Honey, go get the book Mommy loves so much." Little girl came back carrying a *Sears catalog!*

J. I. Packer: "Certainty about great issues of Christian faith and conduct is lacking all along the line. The outside observer sees us staggering from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all where we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes action...Unlike the first Christians who in three centuries won the Roman world, and those later Christians who pioneered the Reformation, and the Puritan awakening and the Evangelical revival, and the great missionary movement of the last century,

we lack certainty. Why? We blame external pressures of modern secularism, but this is like Eve blaming the serpent. The truth is that we have grieved the Spirit...we stand under divine judgment. For two generations our churches have suffered from a famine of hearing the words of the Lord."

M.R. DeHaan: Young man came to know Christ; immediately developed love for the Scriptures; he began to read the Bible every spare moment.

"I just read, 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,' and sure it's a newborn babe I am; I'm hungry for the milk of the Word."

"I have a cow out in my barn. Sometime ago I was sick; I hired a man to milk the cow, but found out he was stealing half the milk and fillin' the bucket with water. It sure was weak milk I was gettin'. But now I'm milking my own cow; it's cream I'm getting, and not water."

WHAT ARE WE GETTING?

**ARE WE GETTING THE PURE MILK OF THE WORD,
DRINKING IT DAILY, FOR OURSELVES?**

Or, are we depending on someone else to get it for us and feed us weekly?

We'll never grow strong on one meal a week!

**WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE GOD WANTS YOU TO DO
ABOUT IT?**