

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

-Have you ever been in a situation where you found out that others were talking about you behind your back? Was what they were saying true? How did it make you feel, and what did you do about it?

-Have you ever talked about others behind their backs? If so, why? How do you think the person about whom you were talking would have felt if s/he had known?

Read 1 Peter 1:13 - 2:3

1. **For review:** In our previous study, we considered 1 Peter 1:13-21. Summarize Peter's main thoughts in these verses (1:13-21).

- In light of who God is and all He has done for us – and who we are as a result – we ought to live holy lives
- from v. 1-12, He is the one who chose and foreknew us; who gave us new birth into a living hope and an eternal inheritance
- He has given us an inheritance into which the OT prophets, and even the angels, long to look (v.12)
- He is our Father, and we are His children; He is also an impartial judge (v.14-17)
- He is holy, therefore we ought to be holy (v.15-16)
- He has redeemed us at the infinite cost – through the blood of Christ (v.18-19)
- He has redeemed us from the ignorant/futile/empty way of life in which we used to live (v.14, 18)

Take a few moments to re-read 1:22-2:3.

2. What kind of love does Peter call believers to in v.22, and why should we demonstrate this kind of love? (1:22-25; you might also consider 1 John 3:23, 4:7-8 and 4:19-5:2)

- calls believers to love one another deeply/earnestly/fervently, flowing from a love that is genuine/sincere
- Greek work for deeply/earnestly has the meaning 'stretched' or 'strained' – i.e. love each other with an intense, 'strenuous' love
- why demonstrate this kind of love?
- because of our redemption and of who we are in Christ
- we have been purified through obedience to the truth (v.22) i.e. obedience to the Gospel message/belief in the truth of Jesus Christ (1:20-21) → results in a genuine/sincere love for the brothers – “for a sincere brotherly love” (1:22, ESV)
- related to this, we have been born again of imperishable seed, through the Word of God
- this new birth results in the love of God being poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5)
- as a result, we love one another; whoever does not love, does not know God or love Him (1 John 4:8, 20)
- this is in contrast to the empty/futile ways of the world in which we now live as strangers (1:17-18)
- furthermore, our brothers and sisters in Christ have also been born again of imperishable seed and are children of God
- in this new birth we share an enduring bond that is stronger and goes deeper even than earthly family ties
- if we truly love God, we will also love His children (1 John 5:1-2)
- they are brothers & sisters for whom Christ also died, and with whom we will enjoy eternal fellowship
- since we have the love of God in us as a result of our new birth, we should live it out, loving one another earnestly
- love should be the natural outworking of a life of holiness
- 1:22 (“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth...”) might also refer to the life of holiness spoken of in 1:13-21 – in this case, 'truth' is not just the truth of the Gospel, but the wider truth of the Word of God
- obedience to this truth works itself out in holiness (1:13-21), and in love (1:22)
- similar progression to that seen in 2 Peter 1:3-8
- whoever loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:21)
- Jesus links the command to love God with the command to love your neighbor (Matt. 22:34-40)

3. What do you think this kind of love looks like practically, on a day-to-day level? What are some ways you can express this kind of love to other believers?

- love involves both attitudes/affections and action
- putting off improper attitudes/actions (2:1) – malice, deceit, envy, hypocrisy, slander
- putting on proper (loving) attitudes/affection towards others – e.g. 1 Cor. 13
- proper actions – love must not just be with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18), for example,
- 1 Peter 2:17 – showing proper respect
- 1 Peter 3:8-12 – being sympathetic, compassionate, humble; not repaying evil with evil, but with good
- 1 Peter 4:7-11 – covering over one another's sins; offering hospitality and serving one another
- 1 John 3:16-18 – laying our lives down for others; taking care of others' needs
- Romans 12:9-21 – summarizes much of the above

4. According to these verses, what attitudes & activities are we as believers to rid ourselves of, and why? What happens if we don't? Are there any in particular that you need to rid yourself of?

- malice – Greek word (*kakia*) refers more broadly to evil or wickedness; intentions & actions that are harmful to others
 - deceit – trickery or falsehood that harms others
 - hypocrisy – insincerity; outward show of righteousness or affection that masks inward evil or malice
 - envy – negative emotion stemming from desiring/coveting what others have; opposite of thankfulness for good which comes to others
 - slander – speech which harms or intends to harm another's status, reputation, etc.
- we need to put these off because
- they are opposed to the love we are to live by – these all aim to harm, whereas love seeks the good of others
 - we cannot love as we ought if these things fill our lives
 - they are out of keeping with the imperishable seed of which we have been born – are rather part of the ignorant/futile way of life from which we have been redeemed (1:14-18) & purified (1:22)
 - they inhibit our ability to grow spiritually
 - inhibits our appetite for the pure spiritual milk that we are to crave and that helps us grow up in our salvation (2:2-3)

5. What do these verses say about the Word of God and its importance in the believer's life? In light of this, what should be our attitude towards the Word?

- the Word of God is living and enduring (1:23)
 - in contrast to the lives and the ways/glory of Man, it endures forever (1:24-25)
 - through this living and enduring Word, we to have received new life – born again of imperishable seed through the Word (1:23)
 - an imperishable Word gives rise to an imperishable life
 - occurs when this Word is preached to us, and through it we believe in God (1:20-21, 25)
 - through the Word, we have tasted that the Lord is good (2:3; quoted from Psalm 34:8)
- the same Word through which we have new birth also is our nourishment – pure spiritual milk (2:2)
 - enables us to grow up in our salvation (2:2), i.e. to mature in the faith
 - i.e. enables us to live the lives of holiness (1:13-21) and love (1:22-25) we are called to, as we are nourished by the Word, taking it in and incorporating it into our lives through obedience
- we should therefore desire/crave the word as newborn infants crave milk (2:2) – i.e. intensely & often
 - take it in and incorporate it into our lives; as we do, we grow up in our salvation
 - also, we continue to taste the goodness of the Lord through His Word

Toward the Goal...

When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matt. 22:37-40). In 1 Peter 1:13-2:3, Peter echoes and expands on Christ's teaching, calling us first to the love of God through lives of holiness and obedience to Him (1:13-21), then to a genuine and earnest love for one another (1:22-2:3). We are able to live such lives because of the new birth we have received in Christ, having been born again of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring Word of God. This same Word is the spiritual milk that sustains and nourishes us as we crave it and feed on it, so that we grow in holiness and love, being conformed more and more to the Lord whose goodness we have tasted.

Consider this evening your walk with the Lord. Are you growing in holiness and in love, or is your growth somehow being stunted? If you are not growing, what is inhibiting your growth? Is it sinful desires (1:14)? Is it unloving attitudes and actions towards others (2:1)? Is it a lack of spiritual nourishment through the Word (2:2)? Whatever the cause, repent and return to the Lord, seeking Him in His Word, and asking Him to help you walk in holiness and love.

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Peter 2:2-3)