

I Peter 2:1-3
February 19, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Do you have a food that you crave? If yes, what is it? [Chocolate? Let people engage]

Q: How do we develop cravings? Surely that doesn't just happen.

Food is not the only thing we tend to crave. We feed on content. Perhaps there is a TV program you watch without fail. Perhaps you have a favorite website that you always read. Perhaps there is a newspaper you read every day. *Whatever we feed ourselves has a direct impact on who we are becoming.* So some of the things we feed on are very good for us. If you watch your food intake, then there is a physical payoff for that. You feel good and hopefully look as good as you feel. If you watch a certain news media station that fosters polarized thinking, then there is a consequence for that. Perhaps you become less tolerant of those who don't agree with your thinking.

Transition: Peter is aware that his readers have fed on negative attitudes, so he spends the next section of his letter exhorting them to grow spiritually. I am inviting you to pay attention to his writing because **each of us CAN facilitate our spiritual growth BY observing the action STEPS Peter suggests in his letter.** Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.1:

- Therefore, **rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.**

V.2:

- Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk,** so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

V.3:

- now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.1: What is the first action step Peter offers to his readers? [Rid yourself of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, and slander of all kinds]

Q: For Peter to write this suggests that what he was seeing sinful attitudes and speech from these believers, instead of more godly traits. Does it concern anyone that these believers got to this place? Clearly, they had been going through "trials of many kinds," but does that really lead to these sinful attitudes? [Let people engage]

But let's explore these in more detail:

Q: What do you think Peter means when he tells his readers to "rid yourself of malice?" [Get rid of "wicked ill-will"]

Q: What do you think Peter means when he tells his readers to “rid yourself of deceit?” [Get rid of “deliberate dishonesty”]

Q: What do you think Peter means when he tells his readers to “rid yourself of hypocrisy?” [Get rid of “false piety”]

Q: What do you think Peter means when he tells his readers to “rid yourself of envy?” [Get rid of “resentful discontent”]

Q: What do you think Peter means when he tells his readers to “rid yourself of slander?” [Get rid of “backbiting lies”]

Transition: So an important step we can take to facilitate our own spiritual growth is to make sure we cleanse our hearts such that malice, envy, hypocrisy, slander and deceit are gone!

Q V.2: Peter presents another action step for these struggling Christians. What is it? [Crave spiritual milk so that you can GROW!]

Q: What is Peter alluding to when he says “crave spiritual milk?” [Crave the Word of God! It’s pure and true]

Q: What is the difference between “liking” something vs “craving” something? [If you crave something, you can hardly live without it.]

Q: So if you just “like” milk, but don’t crave it, how do you transition to “craving” it? [Let people engage this.]

Q: Even worse, how do we help the Christian who has no appetite for God’s Word? [Identify what they have been eating instead that may be the wrong things. Peter warned his readers to “lay aside” certain wrong attitudes of heart that would hinder their appetite and spiritual growth. Could this be a form of spiritual warfare?]

Observation V.3: Quoting Psalm 34:8, Peter continued the milk analogy used in 1 Peter 2:2 and likened their present knowledge of Christ to tasting. They had taken a sample, having experienced God’s grace in their new birth, and had found that indeed **the Lord is good.**

LOOK:

What steps do you need to take that will facilitate your spiritual growth? Do we need to rid ourselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander? Do we need to crave His Word more? Do we need to come to Him more often? Do we need to offer spiritual sacrifices? Do we need to trust Him more? Do we need to declare His praises? These are all significant spiritual steps Peter suggested to his discouraged Christians scattered in northern Asia Minor. Let’s listen to what the Spirit tells each of us and obey His direction. He wants to see us grow spiritually!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 400). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

We enjoy the same nourishment (vv. 1–3). God's Word *has* life, *gives* life, and *nourishes* life. We should have appetites for the Word just like hungry newborn babes! We should want the *pure* Word, unadulterated, because this alone can help us grow. When I was a child, I did not like to drink milk (and my father worked for the Borden Dairy!), so my mother used to add various syrups and powders to make my milk tastier. None of them really ever worked. It is sad when Christians have no appetite for God's Word, but must be "fed" religious entertainment instead. As we grow, we discover that the Word is milk for babes, but also strong meat for the mature (1 Cor. 3:1–4; Heb. 5:11–14). It is also bread (Matt. 4:4) and honey (Ps. 119:103).

Sometimes children have no appetite because they have been eating the wrong things. Peter warned his readers to "lay aside" certain wrong attitudes of heart that would hinder their appetite and spiritual growth. "Malice" means wickedness in general. "Guile" is craftiness, using devious words and actions to get what we want. Of course, if we are guilty of malice and guile, we will try to hide it; and this produces "hypocrisies." Often the cause of ill will is *envy*, and one result of envy is *evil speaking*, conversation that tears the other person down. If these attitudes and actions are in our lives, we will lose our appetite for the pure word of God. If we stop feeding on the Word, we stop growing, and we stop enjoying ("tasting") the grace that we find in the Lord. When Christians are growing in the Word, they are peacemakers, not troublemakers, and they promote the unity of the church.

Raymer, R. M. (1985). 1 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 844). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2:1. Repentance was called for: **Therefore, rid yourselves.** Peter then listed five sins of attitude and speech, which if harbored would drive wedges between believers. **Malice** (*kakian*) is wicked ill-will; **deceit** (*dolon*) is deliberate dishonesty; **hypocrisy** (*hypokriseis*), pretended piety and love; **envy** (*phthonous*), resentful discontent; and **slander** (*katalalias*), backbiting lies. None of these should have any place in those who are born again. Rather, in obedience to the Word, believers are to make decisive breaks with the past.

2:2. Peter wanted his readers to be as eager for the nourishment of the Word as babies are for **milk**. After believers cast out impure desires and motives (v. 1), they then need to feed on wholesome **spiritual** food that produces growth. (**Pure** [*adolon*] is deliberately contrasted with "deceit" [*dolon*] in v. 1. God's Word does not deceive; neither should God's children.) Christians should approach the Word with clean hearts and minds (v. 1) in eager anticipation, with a desire to **grow** spiritually. The words **in your salvation** (lit., "unto salvation") recall the ultimate fulfillment of salvation spoken of in 1:5, 7, 9, 13.

2:3. Quoting Psalm 34:8, Peter continued the milk analogy used in 1 Peter 2:2 and likened their present knowledge of Christ to tasting. They had taken a sample, having experienced God's grace in their new birth, and had found that indeed **the Lord is good**.