

1 Peter 1:22-25

1. The Foundation for Love

The phrase here, “*obedience to the truth*,” is a reference to the gospel and to our salvation. Paul identifies “the word of truth” as the “gospel” (*Ephesians 1:13*).

The Scriptures also provide an admonishment to the non-believer as a warning for rejecting the truth of the gospel. In *2 Thessalonians 1:8* Paul warns the unbeliever who does not “*obey the gospel*” they will be “*punished with everlasting destruction*.” Even Peter, later in this letter, refers to the unbelieving world which “*does not obey the gospel of God*” that they will be judged by God (*1 Peter 4:17*).

The word for “*obedience*” used here is a compound noun which combines the words for “*listening*” and “*under*” literally, “*listening under*.” It accurately means to attentively listen to the gospel then submitted to its commands, repent, and follow Christ as His disciple.

The word translated as “*purified*” means a “*ritual cleansing*” or “*a lack of defect*” as a result of ritual cleansing which is synonymous with spiritual conversion. The tense for this participle for being “*purified*” is transaction purification in the past that has continuing results in the present. It refers to this past moment in verse 23, “*for you have been born again*.” We were purified by God’s Spirit through the blood of Christ, as the text has informed us; and now we must to act like it.

Ezekiel prophesied of what God was going to do for believers in the New Testament covenant, “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances*.” (*Ezekiel 36*).

This Scripture demonstrates the demeanor of a new heart and the Spirit of God within us – it will be the love we have for the brethren. Genuinely loving other people demands obedience to the truth; which means, if we’re going to genuinely love other people, we can’t obey ourselves; we can’t be obedient to some of our inner urges and feelings, or bound to follow the example of other people. We must obey the truth of God’s standard of what it means to live and love like a Christian.

This means to exclude:

- Pride
- Impure desires
- Self-centered grudges
- Prejudices
- Resentments
- Behaviors or thoughts that corrode the soul

Vs. 22 Summary:

Having been saved by means of the truth of the gospel and cleansed by the purifying work of the Holy Spirit, the believer actually has the potential *now* to love other people with the right kind of love.

2. The Command to Love

Three words surface in this passage that describes genuine love – sincere, fervent, and pure. The Greek word translated as “*sincere*” is the adjective “*hupokritos*” which gives us our transliterated word, hypocrisy. This Scripture literally says, this is a love without hypocrisy. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome, “*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good*.” (*Romans 12:9*)

As we pursue holiness for the glory of God, other people are part of God’s sanctifying purpose in our life. “*Instead of struggling with the thought, ‘I wonder why God is allowing that other person to bother me or upset me or hurt me’; think instead – God is using that other person to sanctify me*.” [Josemaria Escriva]

Peter uses another descriptive word here, “*fervently love one another*.” The idea here is to love the brethren even though it takes you to the limits of your capacity.

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Genuine love is not only sincere and fervent, but intentional- it is from the heart, "... *fervently love one another from the heart.*" This isn't external pressure, this is an internal principle. This is loving others not because we're commanded to do so, but making it internal and intentional, willingly of your own aspiration.

The word translated "heart" from the Greek is a word used as a designation throughout scripture for the center and core of our inner life. The place where we think and where we make up our minds.

"The reason why love can be commanded, is because "agape" isn't a matter of feeling, it is a matter of willing." [Warren W. Wiersbe]

"Agape will involve deep feelings and affection, but agape begins with a decision. Agape doesn't wait for merit earned by the one who receives love; and agape doesn't wait for inspiration." [Charles R. Swindoll]

The Greek word for "love" used here in verse 22 is defined as loyal, selfless caring for another that endures over time.

- Agape is an act of the will and the body follows through
- Agape is a decision in the heart and the hands and feet cooperate

Throughout the New Testament, agape is the love God has for us and we merited none of it. We did nothing to inspire His love or attract His devotion. In fact, while we were still sinners God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for us (**Romans 5:8**).

Jesus Christ said to His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you" (**John 13:34**). That meant loving others even if it meant they take our life. That's how Jesus loved.

3. The Incentive to Love – the believer is in a new family

The phrase "*you have been born again*" is in the perfect tense emphasizing that the new birth occurred in the past, with ongoing results in the present. And the chief result in Peter's mind is that you love one another because you belong to the same family and this family is going to last forever.

"They [Christians] love each other, even without being acquainted with each other." [Minucius Felix, a 3rd century Roman lawyer]

John's gospel states, "*that as many as received Christ, to them He gave the right to become children of God*" (**John 1:12**). We are "*children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*" (**Galatians 3:26**). We are in a new family. So love our brothers and sisters who belong to us.

We're not only in a new family, secondly you're under a new authority (verse 24). Isaiah 40 was given to Israel during their sojourning, during a discouraging time where they were resident foreigners surrounded by social hostility. And God is telling them and through Peter, the church, that God hasn't forgotten His scattered people. He hasn't overlooked their suffering.

Application:

We are commanded to love everyone that has come into our life, especially those who are in Christ. Think about people this way, not as obstacles in your way but as objects of Christ exalting love.

Pray asking God to supernaturally stretch your capacity to love others. Be watching for how He will do this.

Think of at least one person in your life that it just seems impossible to love. How are you going to obey the command to love this person in your life? It will not only be by the Spirit's enabling but think of tangible ways that you can begin obeying this command.