

1 Peter 2:1-3

In Colossians chapter 3 the Apostle Paul identifies “*putting off the old man*” which is similar to what Peter is stating here in the 2nd chapter of First Peter. In *Romans 7 & Ephesians 4* the Apostle Paul also describes this “*putting off*” or “*laying aside*” as the conflict between the flesh and the spirit; between the old man and the new man.

1. The First Attitude to Cast Aside is Malice

In the pursuit of holiness, there is no room for sinful exceptions. “*Putting aside all . . .*” and all means all. “*All malice*” or all maliciousness.

Malice (*kakía*) is a Greek word that refers in general to “*bad behavior,*” a “*hateful spirit,*” an “*evil desire to hurt others,*” often translated “*wickedness.*” The tense used here with the word “*malice*” is referring to the believer making continual deliberate decisions to lay aside even the smallest indication of malicious behaviors.

Paul wrote nearly the same command to the believers in Ephesus with these words, “*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*” (*Ephesians 4:31*)

Willingness to cast malice aside will be something that distinguishes those believers who are growing up in their faith from believers who are simply growing older.

2. A Second Attitude to Cast off is Deceit

The word translated “*guile*” or “*deceit*” (*dolon*) means “*cunning*” or “*crafty manipulation.*” It’s a reference to any and all kinds of deception. Believers in pursuit of holiness are to give great attention to honesty. “*... [pursue] those things that are honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*” (*2 Corinthians 8:21*) In *John 8:44* Jesus said that Satan was a liar and the father of lies. What is Satan’s main goal? Satan’s main goal in all that he does is to deceive. We are most like Satan when we deceive. This word for deceit comes from the root word to “*bait*” such as in baiting a hook to catch fish; it is a reference to the actual bait. Deceit might not be as brazen as malice, but the end result is the same.

3. A Third Attitude to Cast off is Hypocrisy

The Greek word “*hypocrisy*” could be expanded to refer to someone who meets you with a face which is different from their heart. [D. Edmond Hiebert]

4. The Fourth Attitude to Cast off is Envy

Envy is the resentment of someone else’s prosperity, or giftedness, or blessings. Envy leads to grudges, bitterness, hatred, and conflict. In *James 4:1, 3* envy is identified, “*Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*”

5. A Fifth Attitude to Cast Off is Slander

Slander means gossiping, rumor-spreading, an attempt to destroy someone else’s reputation or testimony. Peter is saying that’s how the non-believing world is treating you, why would you want to treat each other or anyone else the same way?

If we, as Christians, want to be free of slander we must:

- Give each other the benefit of the doubt
- Think the best of them
- Be extremely cautious and slow to repeat anything about anyone
- Make sure you have all the facts
- Don’t repeat it unless you’re a part of the problem or a part of the solution

These five attitudes will spoil our appetite for something we ought to be craving, vs.2, “*Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.*”

1 Peter 2:1-3

A. Long for the pure milk of the word

The word “*pure*” here means “*without deceit*.” The Bible is uncontaminated; it won’t harm you. There are no imperfections or flaws, it isn’t diluted or mixed with error or deception, it doesn’t sour and it won’t lead you astray. So, *desire* or *long* for this book.

Peter doesn’t command the believer in verse 2 to read the Word, study the Word, meditate on the Word, teach the Word, search the Word, or even memorize the Word. All of those things are essential for spiritual growth. The truth is, we won’t read, let alone study God’s Word if we don’t desire it first. That is why so many professing Christians never read or even pick up the Bible except on Sunday. Some don’t even bring their Bible to church!

1 John 2:15-17, “¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” *Matthew 6:24*, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money or material things.”

B. Long for the pure milk of the word like newborn babies (vs. 2)

Peter isn’t suggesting here that all these scattered believers throughout Asia Minor were new Christians, or even immature Christians. He’s making the point that a believer should never outgrow a craving for the pure milk of the Word.

C. That by it you may grow up in respect to salvation

Peter uses a passive verb, so the point is, we’re not making ourselves grow up in the faith, the Word of God is bringing about growth in our life, under the direction of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. Literally translated, “*long for the pure milk of the word so that it may grow you*.”

“Spiritual life will not take place *externally* without the nourishing milk of the word of God *internally*.” [D. Edmond Hiebert]

Martin Luther would write 500 years ago:

The Bible is alive, it speaks to me.

It has hands, it lays hold of me.

It has feet, it runs after me.

D. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord

The word “*if*” is a first class conditional participle which is understood to mean, “*if*” or “since” this is true. Literally translated, “*Since it is so, you have tasted that the Lord is kind*.” It isn’t just the Word we’re coming to know, it is the Author of the Word. The ultimate aim of Bible study is not just to master the content but come to know the Master, and be mastered by Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Application:

We all have the sins mentioned in verse 1 “*malice, crafty manipulation, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking*” show up in our lives in different ways. Which of them do you see most often and in what specific ways are you battling against it? What is your plan to overcome? Who have you enlisted to help encourage you as you do battle daily?

Will you commit to reading God’s Word daily, so it will change your appetite and grow you spiritually?