

## As Newborn Babies

1 Peter 1:22-2:3

### Introduction

1. The value of the Word of God cannot be overstated. It is our source of life.
2. Peter has just reminded his readers that they have been born again—not through something temporary or perishable, but through the living and enduring Word of God. Human life is like grass: it withers and fades. But the Word of the Lord endures forever (1 Peter 1:22–25).
3. The Word is therefore more than information. It is life-giving. It is the means by which God has brought about our new birth, and it continues to nourish the life He has given us. Peter then gives three related commands in 1 Peter 2:1–2:
  - a. Put aside - certain attitudes and behaviors
  - b. Long for - the pure milk of the word
  - c. Grow - as a result of receiving that nourishment
4. This raises important questions: What are these things we are to put away? Why does Peter compare Christians to newborn babies? And what does healthy spiritual growth look like?

### I. Things to Be Put Aside — 1 Peter 2:1

A. God has given us new life; therefore, we should live accordingly.

1. “Put aside” means to take something off and lay it down. The word translated “**put aside**” (*apotithēmi*) was often used of taking off and laying aside clothing - Ax.7:58
2. The picture is powerful: something that no longer belongs on us must be removed. The same idea appears elsewhere in Scripture:
  - a. We are to lay aside the deeds of darkness (Romans 13:12).
  - b. We are to lay aside the old self (Ephesians 4:22).
  - c. We are to lay aside falsehood (Ephesians 4:25).
  - d. We are to put aside anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech (Colossians 3:8).
  - e. We are to lay aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1).
  - f. We are to put aside filthiness and wickedness (James 1:21).
3. Peter now identifies five particular attitudes that must be removed.

B. Peter says, “Put aside...”

1. Malice (*kakia*) refers to evil, ill-will, spitefulness, or meanness.
  - a. This person is out to get you.
  - b. If there is a bad construction they can put a situation that’s the way they will interpret it.
  - c. Frequently joined with grumbling, bitterness and envy (1 Cor.5:8; Eph.4:31; Col.3:8)
2. Deceit (*dolos*) carries the idea of baiting or trapping.
  - a. Things are not the way they seem.
  - b. It is acting with ulterior motives. It is insincerity - cp. Matt.26:4
  - c. God calls His people to be genuine rather than manipulative.
3. Hypocrisy (*hypokrisis*) involves pretending.
  - a. A hypocrite presents himself as something he is not.
  - b. Here is one who pretends to be your friend to take advantage of you
  - c. The Christian life demands genuineness. We are not called to pretend to be righteous while secretly pursuing something else

4. Envy (*phthonos*) is the pain or resentment felt at another person's happiness, success, or blessing.
    - a. Instead of rejoicing with someone, envy asks, "Why should they have that?"
    - b. It is possible to see someone else's blessing and allow it to diminish our own gratitude.
    - c. God's people should learn to rejoice when others rejoice.
  5. Slander (*katalalia*) means speaking evil against another person.
    - a. To speak evil of, synonymous with blasphemy, backbiting,
    - b. It is cutting someone down rather than speaking well of them.
    - c. Rather than building relationships, slander tears them apart.
- C. Notice what kind of sins Peter emphasizes.
1. Note that it is not paganism, gross immorality and idolatry that are specific here.
  2. Instead, he focuses on relationship sins—the attitudes and behaviors that destroy Christian unity.
  3. These are sins that can exist among people who otherwise appear religious.
  4. Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander can quietly destroy a congregation, a family, a friendship, or a Christian's influence.
  5. Of course, Peter's list is not exhaustive. Scripture repeatedly calls Christians to put away the old ways of life (Romans 1:28ff; Galatians 5:16ff; Ephesians 4:22ff; Colossians 3:5ff).
- D. But Peter's point is clear: If we have been given new life, we must take off the attitudes that belong to the old life.

## II. Desire the Pure Milk of the Word — 1 Peter 2:2

### A. Newborn babies intensely desire nourishment.

1. We are familiar with how newborn babies desire their milk.
2. When the baby is hungry, the baby lets everyone know. There is intensity in that desire. Food is demanded.
3. Peter says that our desire for God's Word should have a similar quality.

### B. A newborn baby actively seeks to be fed.

1. The baby does not passively receive nourishment. The baby, seeks, and demands to be fed.
2. Parents do not have to convince a healthy newborn that food is important.
3. Do we have that kind of desire for the Word of God? Do we seek opportunities to learn it, read it, understand it, and apply it?

### C. Milk is an appropriate picture for spiritual nourishment.

1. Paul uses the picture of milk in 1 Corinthians 3:1–2, and Hebrews 5:13 also speaks of milk in connection with spiritual instruction.
2. In those passages, the emphasis is on Christians who should have progressed beyond spiritual infancy.
3. Here, there is no negative tone. Milk is appropriate.

### D. Milk is Necessary

1. It must be **pure** milk. It must not be adulterated or corrupted.
2. Just as a newborn needs wholesome physical nourishment, Christians need wholesome spiritual nourishment.
3. The Word must not be twisted to fit our desires. We do not change God's Word to accommodate our lives.
4. We allow God's Word to change our lives.

### III. “That You May Grow” — 1 Peter 2:2b

#### A. Growth is natural and normal.

1. Birth is only the beginning. Nobody expects a newborn baby to remain a newborn forever. Healthy life involves growth.
2. The same is true spiritually. New birth is the beginning of the Christian life, not the conclusion of it.

#### B. Baptism is a beginning, not the finish line.

1. Baptism is essential and precious, but baptism is not “goal accomplished.”
2. A person may be baptized and then fail to grow. That is spiritually unhealthy.
3. Christianity is not a static circumstance in which we simply say, “I was baptized, so I am finished.”
4. Baptism marks the beginning of a new life—a life intended to continue developing toward spiritual maturity.

#### C. The Christian life is designed to move toward maturity.

1. Scripture repeatedly describes Christianity as a life of growth and progress.
2. We are to mature, develop, and become increasingly conformed to God's will.
3. The Christian life is a journey from spiritual infancy toward spiritual maturity.
4. The question is therefore not simply: “Have you been born?” The question is: “Are you growing?”

#### D. We must continue to receive God's nourishment.

1. Peter says that we should desire the Word “if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Peter 2:3; cf. Psalm 34:8).
2. God's kindness is something we have experienced. But experiencing God's goodness should create an appetite for more of Him—not a reason to neglect Him.
3. A child who refuses nourishment will become weak. The same principle applies spiritually.
4. If we have tasted God's goodness but refuse the nourishment He provides, we should not be surprised when spiritual weakness follows.
5. God has given us what we need for spiritual life and growth. We must have the desire to receive it.

### Conclusion

1. Are you like a newborn baby in your desire for the Word?
2. Have you put aside the destructive vices?
3. Are you growing as a healthy Christian should?