

## I'm Saved ... Now What?

You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart. You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For 'all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word that was proclaimed to you. So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, if 'you have experienced the Lord's kindness.'

1 Peter 1:22–25; 2:1–3 (NET)

What should happen in the life of a believer who has truly believed and responded to the gospel?

In this passage, Peter talks about the proper results of salvation. Look what he says: "You have purified your souls by obeying the truth" (1 Pet 1:22).

When he says we have been "purified" by "obeying the truth," he is talking about our salvation through faith in Christ. Peter seems to be calling our "faith" obedience. God has called us to believe in the Son as our Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9–10), and therefore, our "faith" is obedience. It is God's will that none should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). God calls all men to "repent" so they may be saved and those who respond are obedient.

This obedience to the gospel leads to purification. When we are saved, God washes us from our sins and cleanses us with the blood of Christ. Christ told the disciples each one of them were *clean* because of the Word spoken to them (John 15:3). It was not only because they heard the Word but because they had obeyed it. They obeyed and were purified by Christ's blood (Heb 9:14).

Well, in this passage, Peter says, "Now what?" What should be the result of our salvation? Some people get saved and tend to continue to live their lives the same way they used to before accepting Christ. For them, salvation is just fire insurance to keep them out of hell. However, Scripture would say true salvation is not just mental assent without the corresponding works. True faith always leads to works which essentially prove the validity of our faith (Jas 2:17). In this passage, Peter shows us *three works* that should happen as a result of our salvation.

*Big Question:* What should be the results of a believer's salvation according to 1 Peter 1:22–25 and 1 Peter 2:1–3? How should we apply these truths?

## **As a Result of Salvation, Believers Must Love the Brethren**

You have purified your souls by obeying the truth *in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart.* You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God (emphasis mine).

1 Peter 1:22–23

Peter says a result of our salvation is "mutual love" or "sincere love for your brothers" (NIV 1984). Peter demonstrates this by the conjunctive phrase "*in order to*" in verse 22. It gives the purpose or result of

something. We should realize that loving believers is a fruit of true salvation. If a person who claims to be a Christian does not love believers, he is not truly saved. Look at what John says about this:

We know that we have crossed over from death to life because we love our fellow Christians. The one who does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his fellow Christian is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

1 John 3:14–15

John says anyone who does not love the brethren has not passed from death to life. They are not truly born again and have no life in them. Christ said the same thing, but not in reference to us knowing we are saved, but the world knowing we are. Look at what he says in John 13:35: “Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.”

What should be the believer’s response to salvation? The answer is to *love the church*. God has called you to love the church and honor him by that. In fact, he more clearly says this is a result of our salvation in the following verse. First Peter 1:23 (NIV 1984) says: “*For* you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (emphasis mine).

The addition of the conjunction “*for,*” or it can be translated “*since,*” in 1 Peter 1:23, is meant to show us the reason we love. We love because we have been born again. He saved us for this purpose, and it should identify us to the world and give assurance to our spirit that we are saved.

Here is the next question that he answers, “In what ways should we love one another?”

*Observation Question:* In what ways should we love the brethren as demonstrated in verse 22?

How should believers love? Look again at verse 22: “You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show *sincere mutual love*. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart” (emphasis mine).

1. Believers should love like a family.

The Greek word for “mutual love” is “*phileo*.” It can be translated “brotherly love” or “love for your brothers” (NIV 1984). It is the type of love you give to a family member. We see this taught about believers throughout the Scripture. Remember what Christ said of his disciples when his family was trying to stop him from preaching.

He answered them and said, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who were sitting around him in a circle, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Mark 3:33–35

When Christ said this, he began to exalt the “family of God” even over natural family to some extent. When his family was trying to pull him away, he says, “I have a responsibility to my spiritual family—those who follow the ways of God.” In fact, Paul taught Timothy this is how the church should function—like a family. Listen to what he said:

Do not address an older man harshly but appeal to him as a father. Speak to younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters—with complete purity.

1 Timothy 5:1–2

He told Timothy to treat older men as fathers in the church, to treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters. If your mom

was in the hospital, would you call and check in on her? If your younger brother was making wrong decisions, would you not rebuke him in love? If you were trying to make a decision about the future, would you not call your parents and seek wisdom? If you got in a fight with your family, wouldn't you endeavor with all your heart to work it out? This is how we treat people who are part of our natural family.

This is what Paul teaches every believer should do to one another as a result of salvation.

*Application Question:* In what ways is God calling you to show familial love to members in the church? How can you grow in this?

2. Believers should love one another sincerely (without hypocrisy).

The English word “*sincere*” comes from the Latin word *sin cera*, meaning “without wax.” In ancient times, when people would sell clay pots that had small cracks in them, they often would put wax on the cracks in order for them to appear new. The only way a person could tell if it did not have wax was by putting the pot to the sky and allowing the sunlight to shine through it. By doing this, you could tell if it was *sin cera*, without wax. Sincere in this text means to be honest—without ulterior motives.

In the church, our love must be honest and without hypocrisy. He probably is reiterating this at the end of verse 22, when he says, “from a pure heart.” Much love in the church is not from the heart—it is hypocritical; it is two-faced. We shouldn't bless the pastors and members at church but talk bad about them at home.

Also, sincere love is never given with ulterior motives in order to receive something from others. This would define most of the world's love. It is hypocritical. The world gives love for the purpose of receiving, instead of loving simply to give. When people have served their purpose

or no longer can benefit them, they move on. It is not sincere. However, the believer's love should be sincere, without wax.

### 3. Believers should love like God.

The second *love* in verse 22 is the Greek word "*agape*." It means to love like God: unconditionally and sacrificially. This is a very difficult challenge because *agape* is a love of the will. It is not necessarily a love of the emotions. God loved us while we were still enemies of his (Rom 5:10). He loved us when we were in rebellion, when we did things to hurt his glory. He loved us because that's who he is in his being. God is love (1 John 4:8).

This love forgives our sins and separates them as far as the east is from the west. In fact, the command to *agape* is really Christ's command to his disciples. He says, "My commandment is this—to love one another just as I have loved you" (John 15:12). To *agape* someone *means to even be willing to die for them*. It's a sacrificial love.

Remember what the early church did when they first were born again? The wealthy sold all they had in order to give to the poor in the church (Acts 2:45). This is a sacrificial love of the will. It is even shown to our enemies and to those who harm us (Matt 5:44). That is what it means to *agape*. Our salvation should result in not only family love and sincere love, but *agape* love.

### 4. Believers must love earnestly.

The final way Peter describes the love of a believer is with an athletic term. The word "earnestly," which can also be translated "*fervently*" or "*deeply*," is a term that means "to stretch to the furthest limit of a muscle's capacity. Metaphorically, the word means to go all out, to reach the furthest extent of something." The believer's love for one another should be fervent. It should always be stretching itself; it should always be pushing itself to its capacity.

As a former personal trainer, I believe the word picture of a muscle stretching itself is a perfect analogy for love. In training someone with weights, it was my philosophy to always go to “failure.” This means that in each set, you lift a weight until you fail, which essentially means until the muscle says “I can’t do one more rep.” See, when you take your muscle to failure, the muscle says to itself, “I must grow, I must get stronger,” or “I must develop more perseverance in order to push this weight for an extended time period.” Because of this, the muscle adapts to the stress by growing so it can more effectively push the load in the future.

It’s the same with love. Love needs to always be stretched to its capacity in order to grow. Paul said in Galatians 6:2: “Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” God often will be stretching your love in caring for a family member, a sister, or a brother who is struggling in the church. And yes, it is hard. Yes, sometimes we want to give up under the pressure, but as we stretch that love to capacity, God will equip you to love further and deeper. He is equipping you to love more like him.

I would even say that many times, heartbreak is just a door to love more. The flesh will respond to heartbreak by loving less and withdrawing. God often uses heartbreak and heart pain to deepen the reservoir in our hearts so that God’s love can more easily flow through us.

Maybe you have been praying to be able to love God more or love your neighbor more. It is possible God is already developing this by stretching you to love someone who is difficult such as a friend or co-worker. God may be using this “hard time” as a means to enrich your love and make it deeper. “So we must not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up.” (Gal 6:9).

Peter says our love should be sincere. It must be familial, it must be god-like, and it must be earnest and fervent.

*Interpretation Question:* Why does Peter talk about the Word of God as an imperishable seed right after commanding believers to love in verses 23–25?

You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable *seed*, through the living and enduring word of God. For ‘all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word that was proclaimed to you (emphasis mine).

1 Peter 1:23–25

Someone might look at the command to love and say that it is too difficult to do. “How is it possible to love that way?” Because of this, Peter reminds the believers again of their new birth and how they have been saved by the Word of God. He describes the Word of God *as a seed*.

In a seed is great power. A seed may not appear that powerful if you just look at it, but if you put it in the ground, water it and give it sunlight, it contains tremendous life. It can grow into a large tree with fruits that feed and bless many. It’s the same with the Word of God in our new birth. Peter mentions this to encourage believers with the power that is within them to love.

Jesus said in John 3 that no one can be born again except by water and the Spirit of God (John 3:5). Scripture often is pictured as water. Paul said that husbands should wash their wives with the water of the Word of God (Eph 5:26). The Word and Spirit come together in someone’s life as they hear the gospel and they are changed. They are made new by the power of the Spirit.



To be able to love as Christians are commanded is not something that comes through man's flesh. Man's flesh and glory is fading. The glory of man is like the cherry blossoms—here for today and gone tomorrow. But the glory and the power of the Word of God are eternal. This is how we have been saved and this is how we will love. It is through the power of this seed that has changed us. Let us remember what Paul says:

So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 5:5

We are a new creation in Christ. We have the Holy Spirit who has given us the power to love as God does. Look what Scripture says about the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

In the believer is a tremendous capacity to love. This love is especially cultivated as we live in the Spirit (Gal 5:16) through time in the Word, prayer and fellowship. This is one of the ways we stretch and grow our love.

*Application Question:* In what ways has God stretched your love or is stretching your love in order that it may be more familial, sincere, god-like and fervent?

## **As a Result of Our Salvation, Believers Must Take Off the Clothes of Sin**

So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, if ‘you have experienced the Lord’s kindness.’

1 Peter 2:1–3

The conjunction “So” in 1 Peter 2:1 points us back to the previous verses. Peter is saying get rid of all sin as a result of your salvation and because of the power of the Word of God, the imperishable seed that brought you the new birth.

Because of this great work, get rid of sin and “yearn” for the Word of God that changed you.

The Greek word used for “get rid of” gives us the picture of *taking off clothes* (cf. Acts 7:38). This image would have reminded them of the common practice in ancient baptisms. The new believers were instructed to wear old clothes to their baptism, and they would exchange them for white baptism robes. After their baptism, they would throw away the old clothes, representing their old life of sin. The word picture of throwing away clothes of sin is used commonly by Paul. He uses the same word in Ephesians 4:22—translated “to lay aside.”

You were taught with reference to your former way of life *to lay aside* the old man who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man who has been created in God’s image—in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth (*emphasis mine*).

Ephesians 4:22–24

One of the things we must do as believers is lay aside *our old clothes* and *put on new ones*. This is a continual process in the life of the believer. We are getting rid of old mindsets as we renew our minds (Rom 12:2).

We are changing our habitual practice of certain sins in response to our salvation.

In fact, the Apostle John says that a change in our relationship to sin is a proof of our salvation, just as loving other believers is. Look at 1 John 3:6–8:

*Everyone who resides in him does not sin; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him.* Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil.

John says that knowing God, being saved, will always change your relationship to sin. You cannot go on living the way you previously did. Therefore, a necessary step after salvation will be working to continually get rid of wrong attitudes and actions. We will never be completely free of sin while living on this earth, but it will be our labor until we get to heaven.

*Observation Question:* What characteristics does Peter tell us to get rid of in 1 Peter 2:1 and what does this mean for our lives?

So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

1 Peter 2:1

This call to get rid of sinful attitudes and actions fits with the previous call to love (1 Pet 1:22). If we are going to love our brothers, we must get rid of everything that is uncharacteristic of love. Again, this makes perfect sense in the context of the believers in Asia Minor who were being persecuted. When people are under duress, even the simplest

thing could potentially start a conflict and begin a chain of unloving actions.

Imagine these believers getting mistreated by their bosses and having more work put on them because of their faith. Often, when one would come home, his patience would be already spent and it would affect his relationships with family and friends. This pressure would even affect the relationships in the church.

When Israel was in the wilderness undergoing stress, what happened? They started pointing fingers at Moses, Aaron, and God. They complained, and they divided into factions.

If we are going to love, we must get rid of any divisive attitude or action. *Evil* is a general word for anything morally wrong. It can also be translated *malice*, which then would refer to evil directed at others. *Deceit* is the desire to trick or deceive someone for gain. *Hypocrisy* is to be two-faced and not genuine. *Envy* means to desire or be jealous of what someone else has. *Slander* means to defame somebody's character or person through words. If you are going to love someone with God's love, these things are incompatible. In order to put on love and righteousness, you must take off some other things.

*Application Question:* What are necessary steps in the life of a believer in order to "rid" oneself of the sins mentioned in 1 Peter 2:1?

Here are some necessary steps we must practice to get rid of these sins.

1. Recognize these attitudes and actions are sin.
2. Confess them before God (1 John 1:9).
3. Confess them before others (Matt 5:23, 24; Jas 5:16). If we have slandered, deceived, or done evil toward someone else, then we would need to confess that to them.

#### 4. Repent by forsaking these types of actions.

It is good to remember that sometimes, confession of sin before God is not enough. We must also confess to others. Listen to what Christ said:

So then, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. *First go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your gift* (emphasis mine).

Matthew 5:23–24

To lay aside the clothes of sin means to make things right, and for some, they need to reconcile with people not just God. When we sin we have offended God and we may have offended others. If we have offended or harmed others, we must make reconciliation with them.

In this text, it should be noted Jesus is not even talking about whether it was our fault or why the person is mad at us. It simply says if “your brother has something against you,” go and be reconciled. Love is not about pointing fingers. It is about demonstrating love to someone else.

As a result of our salvation we must take off the old clothes of sin.

### **As a Result of Our Salvation, We Must Desire the Word of God**

And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, if ‘you have experienced the Lord’s kindness.’

1 Peter 2:2–3

Here Peter commands the believers to “yearn,” or desire, the milk of the Word of God like an infant. It is very interesting that Peter doesn’t say study the Word of God, read the Word of God, or even memorize it. These things are commanded in other parts of Scripture, but here he

focuses on the desire for it. If you really “yearn” the Word like a newborn baby you will read, memorize, and meditate on it.

It is the most natural thing for a believer to desire the Word of God. It is one of the results of our salvation. Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). Job said, “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread” (Job 23:12 NIV 1984). David, in Psalm 119, spends the largest chapter in the Bible primarily talking about his love for the Word of God. “For I find delight in your law” (v. 77), “Open my eyes so I can truly see the marvelous things in your law!” (v. 18), and “How can a young person maintain a pure life? By guarding it according to your instructions!” (v. 9).

This is one of the things that happens as a result of our spiritual birth. In the same way, a true believer loves other brothers (1 John 3:14) and seeks to get rid of sins (1 John 3:6), a truly born-again person desires the Word of God like a newborn craves milk. That’s why Peter puts this phrase after talking about our new birth through the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23).

We have been saved by the Word of God, and now we have to grow up into what Christ has called us to be through the Word of God. He says, “Grow up in your salvation.”

Let us hear this: there are many Christians who never grow up. The church is full of spiritual babies who never reach maturity. Why is that? Because the primary way we grow is through the Word of God. It is interesting to note that the Greek verb *grow up* in this passage is passive, literally meaning “it may grow you.” This means as you study the Word of God, it bears fruits in your life; it gets rid of sin. It helps a person walk in the righteousness God made them for.

However, the majority of the church never reaches spiritual adulthood and never bears the fruits they have been called to produce.

Why? Part of the reason is because they don't have a healthy "desire." They don't enjoy studying the Bible; they don't enjoy hearing sermons. Why do so many Christians lack this desire?

*Application Question:* Why are so many Christians lacking a desire for the Word of God?

1. For some, it is because they never have been born again.

Some Christians who have been raised in the church their whole lives have never truly desired the Word of God at all. They have attended Bible studies and read the Bible out of necessity or because they were made to, but never really yearned for it. Some in the church do not love the Word of God because they are not saved.

Listen to what Paul said about the nonbeliever:

*The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (emphasis mine).*

1 Corinthians 2:14

Because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so.

Romans 8:7

The outlook of the flesh—the mind of a person without the Spirit of God, a person who is an unbeliever—does not desire the Word of God. He cannot truly understand it; it is foolishness to him and he doesn't have the capacity to obey God's Word. But the believer does, because he has been born again.

What about those who are saved? Why do they sometimes lose a desire for the Word of God?

2. A believer can lose a desire for the Word of God because of sin.

This is why in 1 Peter 2:1 they are commanded *to get rid of all evil*, so they can “yearn for the word of God.”

Did your mom ever tell you to not eat sweets before dinner because it would ruin your appetite? It’s the same thing with sin. It has been said, “Sin will keep you out of the Word of God, or the Word of God will keep you out of sin.” It’s one or the other. James says the same thing. “So put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the message implanted within you, which is able to save your souls” (Jas 1:21).

We must get rid of sin so we can accept the Word of God. If you are not in the Word and you don’t desire it, you can be sure wrong attitudes have crept into your mind and heart. Malice has shown up. Wrong attitudes toward God or others have developed, but when the Word of God is there, you will find that you have peace and a right relationship with God and others.

Some have lost desire for the Word of God because of sin. Sin will ruin your appetite. Do you still desire the Word of God? This is the proper response to one who has been saved by the imperishable seed of the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23).

*Application Question:* How do we develop a healthy desire for the Word of God?

1. Get rid of sin. Sin will quench your desire for the Word, so you must get rid of it.
2. Begin to force feed yourself the Word of God. This is what the doctors would do to any sick baby that hadn’t eaten all day. Because they need to eat to live, the doctor will force feed a baby through an IV.

Again consider what Job said: “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread” (Job 23:12 NIV 1984). Job desired the Word more than food. I read a story about a famous pastor named Derek



Prince. During a tumultuous season of his life, he began to eat the Word of God day and night just like he would his meals.

This would only make sense for a person who desired it more than their daily meals. A normal diet is about three meals a day. Daniel used to pray and meet with God three times a day (Daniel 6). David said: “Seven times a day I praise you because of your just regulations” (Ps 119:164).

When I used to body build, I would eat six to eight meals a day, which was about every two to three hours. *Since the Word of God is more important than food, reading the Word of God multiple times a day is a valid spiritual discipline.* I personally am not into the “Read the Bible one-time-a-day thing,” we often tell young Christians. I don’t see support for it anywhere in the Scriptures. A better challenge might be, “How can I practice meditating on the Word of God all throughout the day?”

David talked about the blessing of the one who meditated on the Word of God day and night in Psalm 1. Joshua was called to meditate on the Word of God day and night as well in Joshua 1. Many theologians believe that “day and night” is not referring to the actual morning and night times. It probably was a literary device meaning “all day.” This would be like Christ saying, “Forgive seventy times seven,” which really meant all the time.

These are disciplines that will reap tremendous fruit in the believer’s life. I always challenge people to do the least quotient, meaning practicing “day and night” as a literal “twice a day.” Sometimes, it is good to practice what Daniel did three times a day, especially when life is really hard. Or even try seven times a day, like David, through listening to worship music, sermons, etc., strategically at work or during breaks.

The Bible declares there are tremendous blessings for people who develop a lifestyle of this. God said that those who do, in the books of Psalms and Joshua, prosper in everything.

*Application Question:* What are some good disciplinary routines in order to eat the Word of God more faithfully, so we can grow? What is your personal practice?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Brown, [\*First Peter: How to Live as Pilgrims in a Hostile World\*](#), 2nd Edition., The Bible Teacher's Guide (BTG Publishing, 2018), 119–131.