

A Community of Love

When we believed in Jesus, the life-transforming presence of God came to dwell within us. And one of the things that the life of God in us produces is the ability to love. We are called to love. And we CAN love because of God's work in us! As we come to our passage today, Peter will focus on our relationships with our brothers and sisters in the family of God and he will make it clear that we are called to love one another. We are called to be a community of love.

Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

1. What sticks out to you in this passage?
2. What does it mean to "love one another earnestly from a pure heart" (v. 22)?
3. What spiritual truths does Peter share that enable us to love (22-23)? How do these things help us to love?

Brian said:

A lot of times when we think about biblical love we stress that it is a matter of actions not emotions, right? We should just decide to do what's loving regardless of how we feel. And this IS important because if we always wait to do what is loving until we feel like it, we'd never get there in some cases. But Peter is commanding more than acts of love. He is commanding that love should also be our desire. Our love is to be *sincere*, which means a genuine, unfeigned love. We are to love earnestly from a pure heart. God wants us to have a kind of love that wells up from genuine care and compassion. God doesn't want us to just do loving things; He wants us to be loving people.

4. Why do you think it is important that love actually be our desire?

5. How would putting away the attitudes and behaviors listed in 2:1 be related to the command to love?

6. In 2:2, Peter commands us to “long for the pure spiritual milk.” Most commentators understand this to refer to the Word, however, it is possible that it has a broader sense and refers to any grace from God that nourishes spiritual growth, which of course would include the Word. How does your current longing/desire for God’s Word compare to an infant’s longing for milk?

7. If you lack longing/desire for the Word or for anything from God that spiritually nourishes you, what can you do? How might verse 3 relate to having a longing for pure spiritual milk?

Brian said:

What does the world see when it looks at us? Does it see a community that loves one another earnestly? Or is malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy or slander in our lives hurting our community? If so, confess it. Ask God to help you put away such things and to truly love. Is there anyone in this community that you are not loving earnestly? I would ask that you would not let that continue. You may need to seek forgiveness. You may need to forgive. But do so because there is too much at stake to not be a community of love.

8. Is there any relationship in your life that God is bringing to your mind that needs addressed? What steps do you need to take to work on this relationship?