Introduction

This week our church was able to give Bibles to the Maranatha Fellowship Church in Malawi. In my weekly message to their leadership team, I taught on how the Thessalonians received the Word of God, out of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16. They believed that it was the Word of God, not the word of men, and that it performs its work in those that believe. I find myself teaching, exhorting, and encouraging believers to read their Bibles. I developed a number of daily reading plans, and they are available on our church website, https://connectionchurch.org/connection-tools/bible-reading-plans. I encourage people to learn to study the Bible, and to meditate on Scripture. I am passionate about it, so I talk about it a lot.

People like to talk about what they are passionate about, or what is important to them. In my neighborhood, most of the houses have Georgia bulldog flags or Georgia bulldog statues. There is no question about who they are passionate about following and to talk about. When passionate golfers find out that I played professional golf, all they want to talk about is golf. When people are passionate about their work, they talk business to everyone. Since I like to garden, when I find people that want to learn more about organic gardening, I am eager to talk to them. I find that I have many similar conversations, and these generally center around fundamentals. You need good loamy soil with the right pH, water, light, and protection from the deer. The deer happen to be the biggest challenge to my fruit trees, fruit bushes, and raised bed gardens.

The apostles were passionate about seeing people receive Christ and grow in their faith. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:28-29, "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." Paul was laboring and striving to present every man complete or mature in Christ. Therefore, he wrote about things that would help them grow. In most of his letters he wrote about living transformed lives. He wrote about laying aside the deeds of the flesh and renewing the mind with the word of God. He wrote about laying aside the old self and being renewed in the spirit of the mind and putting on the new self. He wrote about it because he was passionate about helping people grow and mature in their faith.

> (Col 1:28–29) "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. {29} For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

In our study of 1 Peter, the apostle Peter has just finished writing about the gospel message. Now, in chapter two, he began talking about this spiritual transformation. In our text today, he exhorted the believers to put aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander, and to long for the pure milk of the word so that they could grow in respect to their salvation. Like Paul, he was passionate about seeing people mature in their faith. Like Paul and Peter, I want to see people grow and mature in their faith, so I am excited about sharing this message with you.

Our text today is 1 Peter 2:1-3, and I have titled it, Living Transformed Lives. The first step is to put aside all sin. Peter wrote, "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander…" These are just examples of sin, not an all-inclusive list. The second point that Peter makes in living transformed lives is to "long for the pure milk of the word." Simply longing for the pure milk of the word will not cause you to grow; we must abide by the Word, so that by it we may grow in respect to salvation.

Living Transformed Lives (1 Pe 2:1-3)

1. Put aside all sin
2. Long for the pure milk of the Word
3. Abide in God's Word

1. **Put aside all sin** (1 Pe 2:1)

The first step in living a transformed life is to put aside all sin. Peter wrote, "therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander…" We must put aside all sin. Peter begins by saying, "Therefore," This ties what he is going to say to what he had been saying to these believers who are scattered throughout Asia and Europe. They have received a wonderful salvation. They have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. They have an inheritance reserved for them that is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away. They are to prepare their minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix their hope on the grace of God. They are to live holy lives. Because they are going to stand before God, who is going to impartially judge everyone, they are to conduct themselves in fear during their time of stay on earth. Finally, they have been born again by the living and enduring word of God. Therefore, in light of all of these things, they are to put aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

> (1 Pe 2:1) "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,"

These are just examples of sins , not an exhaustive list. First, Peter said to put aside malice, which is wickedness, or malice (kakia, Strong's G2549). Second, we are to put aside all deceit (dolos, Strong's G1388), which means guile, deceitfulness, or craftiness. Third, we are to put aside all hypocrisy (hypokrisis, Strong's G5272), which means dissimulation, acting under a feigned participle, or hypocrisy. Fourth, we are to put aside all envy (phthonos, Strong's G5355), which means envy, jealousy, or ill-will. Fifth, we are to put aside all slander, (katalalia, Strong's G2636), which means backbiting, evil speaking, defamation, or to speak against.

Peter said to put aside all of these sins, and the Greek word he used is apotithemi (Strong's G659), and it is used nine times. It means to put off, lay aside, cast off, put away. Here are some examples of its usage in the New Testament.

In Acts 7:58, when the Jews were stoning Stephen, they laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. This gives the picture of taking something off and laying it aside. In their case, it was a temporary laying aside, while our laying aside sin should be permanent.

> (Ac 7:58) "When they had driven him out of the city, they *began* stoning *him;* and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul."

In Ephesians 4:22-25, where Paul wrote, "that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." Then, he gave an example of the old self that we are to lay aside. We are to lay aside falsehood, and to speak truth each one of us with his neighbor. The laying aside of the sins of our former life was accompanied with putting on the new self. The Greek word for putting on is endyo (Strong's G1746), which literally means to sink into a garment, and it is translated as put on, array, or to be clothed with. The picture is someone changing clothes; we take off one outfit and we put on another outfit. We are not to be clothed with our old self; we are to take that off. Then, we are to put on the new self.

> (Eph 4:22–25) "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, {23} and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, {24} and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. {25} Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE *of you* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."

Paul also used it in Colossians 3, where he wrote, "put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid it aside the old self with its evil practice, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

> (Col 3:8–10) "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, {10} and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

The writer of Hebrews also used the word in chapter twelve. He wrote, "Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." These sins are described as encumbrances, weights, or burdens that hinder us from running the race. The laying aside of these sins or weights help us to run the race that is set before us, and to run with endurance.

> (Heb 12:1) "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

Finally, we see in James 1:21, that we are to put "aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness." Notice that James follows that with the same exhortation that Peter gives in our text today; we are to receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. The primary difference is the description of receiving the Word. Peter said to long for the pure milk of the word, and James said to receive it in humility.

> (Jas 1:21) "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

How do we practically lay aside the old self? The first step is to recognize our sin. The Greek word for sin is hamartia (Strong's G266), which means to miss the mark. When we realize that our word, thought, attitude, or action does not line up with God's Word, we have missed the mark, and we need to confess it to God. He promises to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

> (1 Jn 1:9) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confession of our sin is not enough. We must repent of our sins. The Greek word for repentance is metanoia (Strong's G3341), which means to do a reversal. It comes from Metanoeo (Strong's G3340), which means to think differently, to reconsider, or to repent. If you are going one direction, you do a reversal and go the other direction. If you are lying to one another, you begin to speak the truth, which is what Paul said in Ephesians 4:25.

God is not only interested in us repenting from single occurrences of sin, but more importantly, He wants us to walk in freedom. He wants us free from the sin. He wants us to lay aside these sins permanently. If we are going to stop habitual sins, we have to cut off the things that trigger and feed that sin. We have to stop filling our minds with the old thoughts. We need to be careful about the TV that we watch, the movies we go to, the books and magazines that we read, and the music that we listen to. We also have to be careful about the environment that we are in. Solomon wrote that we are to watch over our hearts with all diligence. We must be careful what we allow into our hearts.

> (Pr 4:23) "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life."

Solomon also wrote that we are not to take the path near the house of the adulterous woman. We have to avoid the places and situations where it would be easy for us to fall back into that sin that we are laying aside.

> (Pr 5:8–9) "Keep your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house, {9} or you will give your vigor to others and your years to the cruel one;"

Similarly, Paul wrote that after laying aside the deeds of darkness, we were to behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealous. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. We should not be going to the bars, where we would be tempted to drink.

> (Ro 13:12–14) "The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. {13} Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. {14} But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

When I worked in prison ministry we had a saying, "Same playground, same playmates, same results." The national rate of recidivism is 71%. That means that nearly three quarters of the people who are incarcerated end up going back to prison. Why? They have not put off the old self. They still hang out with the same crowd and do the same things they used to do.

It is not just in prison ministry. There are many people today that are imprisoned in their lifestyle. When I was one a pastor in Orlando, we ministered some of the people that worked at Disney. Many of the them were gay or lesbian. In order to help some of these people get free, we had to get them out of their current environment. Some very talented musicians became travel agents or did other types of work, just so that they were not around the same people and environment. Many of them began using their music talents in church and all of us were blessed.

Many years ago, there was a gifted evangelist in the church I was leading. He also moved powerfully in prophetic ministry. I really liked this brother and recognized that he had tremendous potential in ministry. He shared with me one day that he was struggling with his thought life. He was struggling with sexual imagery and violence. I asked him about what TV shows and movies he was watching. He liked action movies, and many of the movies that he was watching were rated R or X, because of the sex and violence in them. I told him to cut out these movies. Unfortunately, he thought I was being legalistic. It was not legalism; I was only trying to

help him get free. He needed to stop filling his heart with these things and start filling it with truth and righteousness. He needed to put off the old self and put on the new self.

2. **Long for the pure milk of the Word.** (1 Pe 2:2)

For us to live transformed lives, we must put aside sin in our lives; we must lay aside our old self. Second, like newborn babies, we must long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it we may grow in respect to salvation. The goal is for us to grow in respect to salvation. We are to be transformed and to become like Christ.

> (1 Pe 2:2) "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,"

In Romans 12:2, Paul wrote that we are not to be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we can prove the will of God. We need to long for the pure milk of the word so that our minds can be renewed, and our lives transformed.

> (Ro 12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

The Greek word that is translated as long is epipotheo (Strong's G1971), which means to have great desire, earnest desire, longing after, or to crave. The imagery that Peter uses is of a baby longing to be fed. Having raised ten children of our own, and two foster babies, we know the sound of a baby longing for milk; they cry. Karen had the babies on a feeding schedule so she knew when they would be hungry, and she was ready for them.

We have a pet cat named Shadow. When he was a kitten, probably a couple months old, he found us. When Karen was working in the garden, he would come sit down near her and watch her. He seemed to enjoy being around her. We were not wanting a pet, but we gradually warmed up to this cat that kept hanging around us. We started feeding him, and then it was a done deal; he was our cat. When Shadow is longing to be fed, he sits by the back door and starts meowing. He knows that when we hear him tell us that he wants to be fed, we will give him some food.

In Psalm 119:82, the psalmist wrote, "My eyes fail with longing for Your word." He had an earnest desire or longing for God's word. In verse fourteen, he wrote, I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. In verse ninety-seven, he wrote, "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." When someone longs for something, they try to satisfy that longing. They rejoice in satisfying that longing. The psalmist had great joy in God's word and sought God's word more than riches. It was his meditation all the day.

> (Ps 119:82) "My eyes fail with longing for Your word, While I say, "When will You comfort me?"
> (Ps 119:14) "I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches."
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> (Ps 119:97) "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day."

Job had that kind of longing for God's word. In Job 23:12, he wrote that he treasured the words of God more than his necessary food. In other words, eating spiritual food was a greater priority for him than eating his necessary food. I used to ask my friends what they had for breakfast, and

when they began to tell me about their eggs or oatmeal, I would say, "No, what spiritual food did you have this morning?" I wanted them to tell me what they had read that morning.

> (Job 23:12) "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

When we have a longing for God's word, we will read God's word. Without a longing or desire for God's word, it becomes a chore or an act of discipline to read and study God's word. If we have a longing for it, it will be natural and easy for us to abide in God's word. We need to have this longing. One of the things that I pray for people is that they would have a longing for God's word.

I also pray for them to delight in God's word, and for it to become a joy to them. When it becomes a joy for them, they will find time to read His word. It all begins with longing for God's word. The prophet, Jeremiah, had that kind of longing and joy in God's word. He wrote, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts." So, I pray for God's word to be a joy and a delight for people, because that increases the longing that they have for it.

> (Je 15:16) "Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts."

Peter wrote that we would long for the pure milk of the word. The ESV renders it to "long for the pure spiritual milk," which lets us know that Peter is talking about God's word. The KJV renders it to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The normal Greek word for the word is logos (Strong's G3056), but Peter used the word, logikos (Strong's G3050) here. Logikos is derived from logo. It can be translated several ways. In Romans 12:1, it is used and translated as the "reasonable" service of worship. The reasonable milk of God is found in the word of God, which is living, imperishable, abiding, enduring, and was preached to us.

The milk of God's word is pure. The Greek word that is translated as pure or sincere is adolos (Strong's G97), which means without deceit, or sincere. God's word is pure. In Psalm 12, David wrote, "the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." When we partake of God's word, we are eating pure food. There are no contaminants in it. You don't have to wash it before eating; it is pure.

> (Ps 12:6) "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times."

How do we know if we have that longing? What do you dream of doing? What do you look forward to doing? If you have a few spare minutes, what do you want to do with that time? In Proverbs 2, Solomon exhorted us to seek her as silver and search for her as hidden treasures. There should be this longing to seek, search, and read God's word.

> (Pr 2:1–5) "My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, {2} Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; {3} For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; {4} If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; {5} Then you will discern the fear of the Lord And discover the knowledge of God."

3. **Abide in the God's word** (1 Pe 2:2-3)

It is not enough to have a longing for the pure milk of the word. A baby can cry and let the parents know that he is hungry, but until he is fed and nourished by the milk, he cannot grow. Even so, we can have a longing for the word of God, but we must feed on the word in order to receive the nutrients and to grow. Notice in verse two that Peter wrote, "so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." The word of God is necessary for our spiritual growth.

> (1 Pe 2:2–3) "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, {3} if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

A second thing is necessary for spiritual growth, that we have tasted the kindness of the Lord. We have to be born into the kingdom before we can begin growing in our salvation. Peter has been writing about our wonderful salvation, and now he refers to Psalm 34:8, where David wrote, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Peter is writing to believers, those who have tasted the kindness of the Lord and received His grace, forgiveness, kindness, and salvation.

> (Ps 34:8) "O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"

In Deuteronomy 8:3, God tells us that He wants us to understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Just as we need physical food, we need spiritual food. We need to feed and nourish our souls so that we can grow spiritually.

> (Dt 8:3) "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."

In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, he thanked God for how they received the word of God. They received it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in us who believe. We need to receive the Word of God for what it is, which is God's word to us. His word is living and active, and it performs its work in us who believe. We have a responsibility, to feed on His word and to receive it into our lives so that it can perform its work in us.

> (1 Th 2:13) "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."

> (Heb 4:12) "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Receiving God's word is not an occasional thing. We need to feed our souls every day. In John 8, Jesus told the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The Greek word for continue is meno (Strong's G3306), and it means to abide, dwell, remain, tarry, endure, or continue. When I memorized that verse, the NASB at that time rendered it, "If you abide in My word." The ESV translates it that way, "If you abide in my word." We must abide, continue,

and live in God's word. If we have been born again, then it is normal to have a hunger for the milk of the word, and if we continue in God's word, it demonstrates that we are truly disciples of the Lord.

> (Jn 8:31–32) "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

When I became a Christian, I did not have someone discipling me, and I was not part of a church. I believed that Jesus died for my sins, and was raised from the dead, and that He was real. Therefore, I wanted to follow Him. Unfortunately, my life did not change after I received Christ; I continued to live a carnal and fleshly life. In the summer of 1975, while at summer school, my dorm room was next to Jim, a student from Mineola, Texas. Jim was on fire for the Lord, and was active in Campus Crusade for Christ. He shared with me that in order to grow as a Christian I needed to read my Bible every day. As I began reading my Bible every day, my life began to change. My values and convictions changed. My attitudes changed. As I renewed my mind with the Word of God, my life was transformed.

In Romans 12:2, Paul wrote that we are not to be conformed to the world, which I was, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, which is what began to happen in my life. The Greek word for transformed is metamorphoo (Strong's G3339), which means to transform. We get our English word metamorphosis from it. Metamorphosis is the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages. We commonly think of a moth or butterfly. They change from an egg to a larva (or caterpillar). Then, the caterpillar eats and goes into a pupa stage. Finally, it turns into a beautiful butterfly. Just as there has been a transformation of the insect, our lives are to be transformed into this new creation. Our lives are transformed when we renew our minds with the Word of God. It is not just longing for the pure milk, it is the feeding of our souls with the Word of God.

> (Ro 12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Jeremiah wrote, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts." As I began to read the Word of God, it became a joy and a delight. I could not get enough of it. I developed a love for God's word. I did not know where to begin to read, so I started in Proverbs. I read eight chapters a day, and overlapped one chapter each day. I loved Proverbs, and still love Proverbs, although I do not read eight chapters of it every day; I only read one chapter a day. Jeremiah goes on to say that he had been called by God's name. His life was transformed and he began to reflect God in his life, so he was called by His name. In the same way, my life was transformed, and my identity changed, and I was called by His name. Now, I pray for others that God's word would be found, eaten, and become a joy and delight for them. I pray that their minds would be renewed, and their lives transformed.

> (Jer 15:16) "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts."

In 1983, I played in the Las Vega Invitational, and I made a commitment to spend all extra time in God's word when I was not playing at one of the three golf courses. The Lord taught me about

meditation that week, and it was one of the richest experiences that I have had. A friend of mine commented to me the following week that I was glowing, and this was a result of the rich time in God's word. In Colossians 3:16, Paul wrote, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you…" I cannot think of a single thing that we can do that will let the word of Christ richly dwell in us than meditating on the word. If we are going to continue or abide in God's word, and if we are going to let the word of Christ richly dwell within us, we need to meditate on it.

> (Col 3:16) "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Meditating is pondering and thinking about the verse. While meditating, you think about each word in the verse. You think about parallel verses. You think about illustrations and examples in the word of God. You consider examples in your own life. You think about applications for your life, of when and how you can apply it. I have found that it is very beneficial to journal what you have been meditating on. In my week in Las Vegas, I journaled many pages for each verse that I meditated on. The result was that it was a rich time in God's word.

Peter wrote that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. In Hebrews 5, the author said that by now they should have been teachers, but instead, they still needed others to feed them. They were still spiritual babies; they had not grown in respect to salvation; they still needed milk. He wrote that solid food was for the mature, who because of their practice, have trained their senses. For us to grow in respect to salvation, we need to do more than read the word; we need to learn to study and rightly divide the word. We need to study regularly, or practice studying the word. Instead of needing others to feed us, we need to begin to teach others the word. It is said that teachers are twice taught, once when studying and secondly when teaching.

> (1 Pe 2:2) "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,"

> (Heb 5:12–14) "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. {14} But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

When James wrote about spiritual transformation, he wrote that we should put aside all filthiness and all that remains in wickedness. James used the same Greek word, apotithemi, to instruct us to put aside sin. Then, just as Peter and Paul did, he spoke about receiving God's word. He wrote, "In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." For spiritual transformation, we need to have more than a longing for the word. We need more than reading, meditating, and studying the word; we need to become effectual doers. We must apply the God's word in our lives.

> (Jas 1:21-25) "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. {22} But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. {23} For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; {24} for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. {25} But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

Peter ends this short exhortation about spiritual transformation with a clause, "if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." You cannot grow spiritually if you have not been born again. Earlier we saw in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians that they received God's word for what it really is, God's word, that performs its work in those who believe. We must believe and have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

> (Jn 14:16–17) "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {17} that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

When we receive Christ, He puts His Spirit in us. Jesus said that He was going to send us a helper, the Spirit of truth, who will guide us in the truth. Unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit, and they do not have the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit when they read.

> (Jn 14:26) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

In 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Paul wrote that when we become a Christian, the Spirit of God reveals to us the thoughts of God. He said that the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. If we have indeed tasted the kindness of the Lord, we have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will help us when we read, meditate, study, and apply God's word in our lives.

> (1 Co 2:10-15) "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God…{12} Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God… {14} But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. {15} But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man."

Conclusion and Applications

Our passage today is one of the most needed scriptures today that I can think of. God's will for us is sanctification. It is not for us to live like the world and to be conformed to the world and culture we live in. He wants our minds renewed and our lives transformed so that we can prove His will in our lives. With the statistics showing that most of the church does not have a Biblical worldview, this passage is critically important. We need to be committed to the process of transformation, and living the new life in Christ.

(1 Th 4:3–5) "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is,* that you abstain from sexual immorality; {4} that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, {5} not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;"

We must put aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, immorality, and other sins in our life. We must confess these sins, and repent of them, putting them aside. As the Holy Spirit reveals sin in our lives, we need to confess those sins and ask Him to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Second, we must long for the pure milk of the word. We should ask God to give us a longing and a desire for His word. We should ask God to give us a joy and love for His word. When the Word of God is a joy in our lives, we will want to read the Word. It will be a joy and delight, and we will make it a priority in our lives.

Longing for the word is a good, but the real benefit comes from nourishing our body with the word of God. For us to grow spiritually, we must feed on God's word every day. We need to read, meditate, and study God's word. When we take in the word of God, it will perform its work in us who believe. The Holy Spirit will teach us and guide us into truth.

Our first application is about the kindness of God. Have you tasted the kindness of God? Have you received Christ into your life? If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for our sins, and was raised on the third day, you simply need to receive Him into your life and confess Him as Lord or Master. I encourage you to do that right now. Pray something like this, "Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You came and died for our sins, and were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and to forgive me of my sins. I confess You as Lord, and I yield my life to You today. Help me to follow You. I ask You to transform my life and help me to become like You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our second application is for those who are currently living a sinful lifestyle. You know that you are living in sin. God's word to you is to repent. God wants you to put aside all sin. He wants to free you of your sins, and help you walk in truth. I encourage you to get before God and confess your sins to Him. Ask Him for help. If you need someone to bear your load with you, let me know so we can help you. God wants you to be free, so repent of your sins. Second, I exhort you to commit to reading the Bible every day. Find a reading plan and begin to renew your mind with the word of God. Don't just read the word; look for applications and become a doer of the word, not merely a hearer who deludes himself.

Our third application is for those who want to grow more spiritually. You are not a baby Christian, but you are also not a mature believer. You may be mature in age, but not spiritually. You don't know how to study the Bible; you still need others to teach you. I encourage you to begin studying the Bible. There are plenty of study guides of books of the Bible, and some of these can be very helpful as you begin to study and go deeper into God's word. I encourage you to let the word of God richly dwell in you. I encourage you to meditate on God's word. I also encourage you to begin sharing what you are learning with others. Your life will be transformed, and you will become more complete and mature in Christ.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for Your word, which performs its work in us. Thank You for Peter, Paul, James, and others that wrote about living the new life and leaving our former manner of life.

Help us to grow and mature. Help us to lay aside all sin in our lives and to long for the pure milk of the word. Increase our appetite and desire. Give us a joy and a love for Your word. Help us to abide and continue in Your word. Help us not to be just hearers who delude themselves, but help us to be doers of Your word. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- Why is this passage in 1 Peter critically important to us today?
- What implication is there by referring to the Word of God as milk?
- Why is there a problem with Biblical worldview in the church? What has led to this problem?
- Give an example of something that you had to lay aside in order to live a new life in Christ.
- How do you know if you have a longing for God's word?
- If you do not have a longing for God's word, what are some things that quench that longing?
- What are some ways to increase your longing for God's word?
- What did James mean when he wrote that we need to look intently at the word of God?
- Give an example of a recent meditation on God's word, and what you learned?

Living Transformed Lives

Introduction (Col 1:28–29, 1 Pe 2:1-3)

1. **Put aside all sin** (1 Pe 2:1, Ac 7:58, Eph 4:22-25, Col 3:8–10, Heb 12:1, Jas 1:21, 1 Jn 1:9, Pr 4:23, 5:8-9, Ro 13:12-14)

2. **Long for the pure milk of the word.** (1 Pe 2:2, Ro 12:1-2, Ps 119:82, 119:97, Job 23:12, Jer 15:16, Ps 12:6, Pr 2:1-5)

3. **Abide in God's word** (1 Pe 2:2-3, Ps 34:8, Dt 8:3, 1 Th 2:13, Heb 4:12, Jn 8:31–32, Ro 12:2, Jer 15:16, Col 3:16, Heb 5:12–14, Jas 1:21-25, Jn 14:16–17, 14:26, 1 Co 2:10-15)

Conclusion and Applications (1 Th 4:3–5)

1.

2.

3.