

Understanding our Need for Growth

- I. Peter's talking about believers of all levels of maturity and about an infancy that runs the entire course of our Christian life; which means he's also talking about a milk of nourishment that we never outgrow.
 - A. This also means he's talking a double task that perpetually characterizes the people of God: we're to put away all sin and drink deeply of the nourishing Word of God so that we can continue to grow.
- II. If you're a Christian, then you'll spend your whole life growing.
 - A. There will always be much farther to go in the Christian life of holiness than the distance you've already come, 2Pet 3.18
- III. And the means of your lifelong growth will always be the Word of God, 2Tim 3.16-17
 - A. The Christian life knows nothing of a maturation date any earlier than our expiration date, Rom 7.24-25

Put away all sin that hinders growth

- I. *Put away or lay aside* all the marks of the old man.
 - A. Why? Because we've been born again to a new life (1.23) and new morals ought to follow a new life.
 - B. These evils threaten us from within, in our own hearts (Mt 15.19-20), and as often as they appear, they must be put away.
 - C. Living the Christian life is a call—not to the modification of evil, but to the extinction and eradication of it. We can't mend the filthy rags of the flesh; they must be cast off for the filth they are.
 - D. There's no exception to this, 1Jn 2.1; Jn 8.11
 - E. Thus if we're to grow in our likeness to Christ then we must put away all that hinders that growth, Col 3.1-10
- II. Notice:
 - A. Peter mentions these sins in particular because they oppose the brotherly love of v.22 and if we don't have love for our brother, then we can't have love for God, 1Jn 4.20-21
 - 1. So if any sins are to be put away by those who are born again, it's surely those sins which stand in the way of the best evidence we have of being born again, 1Jn 3.14-15
 - B. Peter mentions these sins in particular because these sins will and do stand in the way of growing as a Christian.

- 1. You can't desire or drink of the pure spiritual Word of God in order to grow in grace if these sins are nurtured in your heart.
- 2. These sins are not only brother-killers (Mt 5.22), but they're also suicidal, effectively killing your ability to grow in grace.
- C. These sins are ordered from the heart to the mouth, showing us that we've got to put away the sins of the heart before we try to put away the sins of our mouth—or hand. We've got to lay the axe of grace to the root of the tree or we're just deceiving ourselves.
- D. No professing Christian can live in these sins without putting the lie to his profession, 1Jn 3.14-15

Desire the pure Word of God in order to grow

- I. Just remember what this Word of God is!
 - A. The living and abiding Word of God, the Word of the Lord that remains forever, and the good news (1.23-25; cf. Heb 4.12; Eph 1.13).
 - B. The pure, unadulterated, uncontaminated, spiritual milk by which your soul can and will grow. The satisfying, nourishing, life-sustaining, health-giving milk of God's truth for you.
- II. What can this Word not do for you!? 2Tim 3.16-17
 - A. The Word of God is the very mold into which the new creature is cast because it's the perfect portrait which the Spirit has drawn of the image of the incarnate God, Jn 5.39
- III. Which explains why we're to desire it, long for it, pant after it, and hunger and thirst for it like a newborn infant for its mother's milk, Ps 119. And we're to desire it in order that we may grow by it, Eph 4.11-16

Applications

- I. See how this fixes my task as your pastor and how I'm to handle the Word of God, 2Tim 2.15
- II. See how these verses fix your task as a congregation and how you're to sit under the ministry of the Word of God, 2Tim 3.16-17
- III. If you're sitting under a faithful ministry and not growing in holiness, then you're harboring sins in your heart, Ps 66.18; 119.11
- IV. You must receive the Word of God which is preached to you. It is the only milk of God by which He feeds His people, Jn 6.63; Isa 8.20