

FOUNDATION TO LOVE

If you were to read this letter of 1 Peter looking intently for the meaning behind the Apostle's words to the "diaspora," you would find he's laying a foundation on which to build from. This foundation is one based on God's grace, and as he expresses several times, the depth, the width and the cost of the sacrifice made by the One that they had placed their faith in. A reminder that their salvation was bought with the precious, unblemished and spotless blood of Christ. It was in God's plan of grace that the Word became flesh in order to redeem sinful mankind, for our need was foreknown, and planned for, before we were even created.

Peter's words were chosen to stir within us a response to the knowledge of Christ's great love, a love that would give Himself to redeem us to be a people for His own possession, as we read in Titus 2:14. Today we continue to build on the foundation of the gracious love of our Redeemer as we move on to verses 22-25 of chapter 1.

Read 1 Peter 1:22-25

There's so much to look at in these few verses and I don't want us to miss out on any little morsel, so let's take a look at the different phrases Peter uses.

In verse 22, fill in the blank, "Since you have in _____ to the _____ purified your souls..."

The Koine` Greek specifies by the "active voice" used here, that the subject produces the action to obey. Here's the principle - the believer hears the truth of the gospel, and does the

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action of responding to the truth in obedience (accepting the gift of salvation) which results in the purifying of the soul as we place our faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

It's important to note that the active voice rules out the idea that man was predestinated apart from his own choice. Each one of us must participate in the action to believe in the plan God foreknew before the foundations of the world - that is, Christ as our Redeemer.

This "truth" is multifaceted. Look up the following scriptures that make this point:

❖ Truth is a Person - John 14:6 What person is truth?

❖ Truth is a Place - John 16:13 Who was coming?

Where will He guide us?

❖ Truth is a Thing - John 17:17 What is the object of truth?

While God's truth is multifaceted, we find that it's Singular here in the text, meaning that, *"There is only one Truth and He is manifested in person, place and thing - even Jesus Christ."* - Dr. Welch.

Read Ephesians 1:7-9 What are the beginning two words and the last two words of this text (NASB)? _____

In Psalm 33:21, where does our heart rejoice? _____ Why?

"The Believer has once and for all, completely purified his or her soul by means being in the sphere of the obedience to the truth. This is a completed action at the point of faith in Christ and this purification continues forever." - Dr. Welch

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The same is true for every one who has trusted in Christ as their Savior. Peter goes on to tell us what believers are purified for -

Look at verse 22 and fill in the blank

"...purified our souls for a _____ of the brethren..."

The love mentioned here is "phileo" love, it's a brotherly love, based on a response to another being, in this case, they are loving other believers. And there's emphasis put on it, which means, they are loving them sincerely, the King James says, with "unfeigning love" - it's not fake. Have you ever tried to feign love? How'd that go?

I'm pretty sure that we know we are to love one another. We've seen it in the Law given to Moses, and reiterated by Jesus, hopefully taught by our parents, that we are to love one another. As believers in Christ Jesus, it's just the right thing to do. The interesting aspect of this "phileo" love is that it's a kind of love we can produce out of our own human souls. It comes naturally *when* we have an affection for someone. Anyone can "phileo" love, believer and unbeliever alike. Brotherly love is just the right thing to do, for everyone.

But Peter isn't satisfied, and neither is God, with any of us just doing the right thing.

What does he say at the end of verse 22 -

"..._____ one another from the heart..."

This is where it really gets interesting, because he doesn't just want us to "phileo" other believers, the word here for "fervently love" is "agape." Relationships can be messy, yet the definition of agape is to *love with a self-sacrificial love that keeps on giving regardless of*

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the response. That type of love is really hard to do in our own humanness, especially since it's not just a one-time event. God commands us to keep on loving this way, always, regardless of the response or feedback we get from the one we are loving.

The Lord will call us to do things that we will have to choose to do. That means, the brother or sister in Christ that just rubs you the wrong way, the one you have a hard time even "phileo" loving, Peter says, you need to not only brotherly love them, but you are to keep on loving self-sacrificially, doing what is in their best interest.

I'm quite convinced that God knows we are completely and utterly incapable to produce that kind of love on our own toward others, and He knows that for us to attain and maintain that type of love that it will require us to be in constant fellowship with His Spirit. The result of that is we will then constantly be in His perfect plan and will. Because He loves us and is always seeking our best, it's natural that He would want us to be in the best place for us.

Another interesting thing about this love is that it's not based on emotion. In fact, the word for heart in the text is "kardias" and means, "functioning mind." It's an act of our mind, specifically, the part of our mind that dictates our behavior. Agape love is a choice that effects our behavior toward others.

Dr. Welch writes, *"This self-sacrificial love is an expression of the heart (functioning mind) and operates from the Believer's frame of reference that has been programmed by the Word of God and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The way we accomplish this is by accepting the*

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Word of God as the means of conduct for our lives and living in the sphere of the Spirit.

When we are controlled by the Holy Spirit the natural production of the Spirit is evident."

In the paragraph above, what does Dr. Welch say we must do to accomplish this?

"Accepting the _____ as the means of _____ for our lives and _____ in the sphere of the _____."

Brotherly love is the right thing to do, but agape love is the Godly thing to do, and as we mature in Christ, He expects us to agape as we allow His Spirit and the instruction of His word to work in us. We have a foundation of love from which to build on with loving others. Tall order, but Big God! He doesn't leave us alone to accomplish it, nor does He expect us to do it on our own. His Spirit is our helper who will lead us into all truth.

Remember back on Day 3 of Week 1, we talked about our sanctification? Who does the work of sanctifying us (1:2)?

Positionally, in Christ, we have all we need to accomplish loving in a self sacrificial way that keeps on loving regardless of the response, because we have His Spirit, our power source, to produce it in us, but we must cooperate with His Spirit in the sanctification process and continue to conform our life to His. Peter challenges these believers, and us, to not just do the right thing in our relationships but to do the God thing - Agape others.

There are those we may find it hard to brotherly love, let alone Godly love. If someone just came to mind, stop now, asking the Father to help you, through His Spirit, to love as He loves, and keep praying for that because He has commanded us to keep loving that way.

Hint: As Peter is pointing out, the more mindful we are of God's grace and love He has extended to us, the easier it will be to treat others in grace and love them as He does.

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However, it's probably important to address those of you who are saying, "all I do is love others by giving and giving and giving, only to be taken advantage of over and over. I extend grace but get trampled on." This may be a case of enabling those in your life to take and take and take. Friend, that is not agape love. Since it is not in their best interest it cannot be agape, for agape always does what is best for the one being loved. Sometimes love looks harsh. God gives us plenty of examples of that. I can testify of it in my own life. Tough love is still love when it's doing what is best for the other person. The key, always, is to be in fellowship with the Holy Spirit so that your actions of love are directed by Him, not our human viewpoint of what we think is loving. If you are struggling with "loving" too much, don't get out ahead of Him. Study His word, and let Him lead you to love as He would love, so you don't hinder what He's doing in their life, or in yours, for that matter.

Read verses 23-25 again.

What type of seed have we been born of?

Our new birth was a spiritual birth. It wasn't a human seed that is corruptible, praise God, we have been born again by something, Someone, who is incorruptible.

The term here tells us that when God set this plan of redemption in motion it was *a completed action with the results continuing forever*. Our salvation is secure where nothing else in life is, "for the grass withers and the flowers fade" BUT, and that is a large word of contrast, "BUT the word of the Lord endures forever." Since it is enduring forever, should we not pay close attention to it?

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In v. 23 when it refers to the fact we have been born again with the imperishable seed **"through the living and enduring word of God." (v. 23)** The "word" is, *logou* - and refers to the Lord, spoken of in John 1:1-18, that we looked at earlier in our lessons.

Then we read in v. 25 - **"And this was the word which was preached to you."** Now here Peter uses the word, "rhema," and this refers to *the word which has been comprehended and is usable*. So, Peter is using a play on words - We have heard the word (rhema) of The Word (*logou*) that became flesh and dwelt among us. This word of The Word, we comprehend and use to lead us to salvation. The word (rhema) of God will endure forever!

His word is true, it will stand forever, so let's continue to be diligent students and learn all He would have us glean from it. As we do, layer upon layer we will see the process of sanctification going on in us by His Spirit. "From glory to glory." A process that will move us past loving with a brotherly love, into loving as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. As Peter reminds, **"Since you have in obedience to the truth, purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart."**

The Lord will call us to things we must choose to do. Since we have heard the word (rhema) of The Word (*logou*), and been given a foundation of love to build upon, what will we choose today?

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Review:

- Text - 1 Peter 1:22-25
- Obedience to the truth (v 22)
 - ❖ Truth is a Person - John 14:6 - Christ is the truth
 - ❖ Truth is a Place - John 16:13 - The Spirit of Truth leads us into truth
 - ❖ Truth is a Thing - John 17:17 - The word is truth
- Ephesians 1:7-9 - In Him we have redemption, forgiveness, riches of His grace, & wisdom
- Psalms 33:21 - Our heart rejoices in Him because we trust in His Holy name
- Our purification is once and for all
- We are to not only brotherly love sincerely, but make the choice to fervently love as God loves (v 22)
- We've been born again by an incorruptible seed - Christ Jesus (v 23)
- The word (rhema) of The Word (logou) leads to salvation (vs 23, 25)