

Desire the Word and Offer Spiritual Sacrifices

1 Peter 2:1-10

1 Peter 2:1: “*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking...*”

Background Notes

Notice: 1 Peter 2 begins with the word “*Therefore.*” Did you know that every time you read the word “*therefore*” in the Bible, you’re supposed to find out what that “*therefore*” is “there for”? Well, it’s easy to see that this “*therefore*” points back to the end of chapter 1. There we read that believers have been born again and have new life in Christ – spiritual life and divine life. This new divine life that we possess is not sinful and does not desire to sin. So then why do we still sin? And why does the Bible say that we will sin? We still sin because we still have the human sinful nature - and we’ll have that until we get to Heaven.

But as believers we now have new life – right now, at the present time. We’ve been born again! And this new divine life, that is empowered by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, does not sin – and it does not desire to sin. **Therefore** - because of that new, Spirit-empowered life - we **can** lay aside **all** “*malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.*”

Notice, once again, that “laying sin aside” is not automatic. It doesn’t automatically happen just because we have become Christians. We have to **do** it! We have to **work** at it! We have to lay aside **all** these sinful activities mentioned in verse 1. And **we can do it**, because we are born again, and we have new life that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. *Therefore* we should do it!

How are we doing? Have we laid aside **all** malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and **all** evil speaking? Notice that this is in the context of living with fellow believers (chapter 1).

- **Malice** is the harboring of evil thoughts against another person - perhaps even hoping that something negative or bad will happen to them.

- **Deceit** is any form of dishonesty or cheating or shading/slanting the truth your way.

- **Hypocrisy** is pretending to be someone or something that you’re not: such as pretending to be spiritual when you’re really worldly, or pretending to be generous when you’re really selfish.

- **Envy** is jealousy of someone else's looks, or possessions, or even their spiritual gift.

- **Evil speaking** includes more than just open slander. It includes all gossip or back biting or talking down fellow believers.

Doctrinal Points

1. Growing Christians should desire the milk of the Word.

Verses 2-3: *"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious."*

How many of you have *"tasted that the Lord is gracious"*? Think of our great salvation! Think of the Lord's care for us! Think of the eternal inheritance that is prepared for us! Psalm 34:8 says, *"O taste and see that the Lord is good."* If we have tasted that the Lord is good and gracious, then we should want to feed on His Word. We should desire the unique nourishment we can get from the Word, because we know that this is the way we'll grow in faith and godliness.

We all need basic nourishment, day by day. Did you ever watch a newborn baby go after milk? A baby eagerly desires milk, and there's no rest until that baby gets his or her milk! Well, that's the way we believers should desire the Word of God! Milk has many valuable nutrients. Growing Christians should desire the pure milk of the Word.

Notice, however, that this verse is not just addressed to babies in the faith. It's addressed to **all** Christians. Just like newborn babies, all Christians should eagerly desire the pure milk of the Word.

As an adult, I enjoy a steak dinner - but I still love milk! We all should desire the meat of the Word - but we should never lose our desire for the milk of the Word.

Growing Christians should eagerly desire the pure milk of the Word!

2. Growing Christians should offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Verses 4-10: *"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." ⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,"*

⁸ and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

These verses reveal that God is in the process of building a Temple. It's not a physical, material Temple, as was the Old Testament Temple. It's a **spiritual Temple**, and it's being constructed of **living stones**.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone in this living Temple. In verses 6-8 the apostle Peter quoted several Old Testament verses to show that the Messiah as the Cornerstone was prophesied, including the rejection of Christ as the Messiah and King. As a result, Jesus was - and is - a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to the Jewish people and to anyone who rejects the claims of Christ.

What about the last part of verse 8? “They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” The phrase “to which they also were appointed” does not mean that God chose some people to reject and disobey. I don't believe that “reprobation” is being taught here. No, the idea here is that those people who disobey the Word and who reject Christ are destined to stumble. Unwillingness to obey and receive Christ makes stumbling a foregone conclusion. It's a natural progression. I trust that unwillingness to obey and refusal to trust in the Jesus as Savior is not true of anyone listening to this Talk from 1 Peter 2.

Those of us who have received Christ are forgiven for our sins! We have been brought out of darkness into His marvelous light! We are the people of God - Jew and Gentile together in the Church! We are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people”! “His own special people” - it doesn't get any better than that, does it?

In view of these great truths, what then is our responsibility? As the Old Testament priests were responsible to offer up various material sacrifices, so believers, as a holy and royal priesthood, are responsible to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

What are spiritual sacrifices?

- Praise

Verse 9: “That you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Offering **praise** to the Lord is our spiritual sacrifice – a spiritual offering to God! Hebrews 13:15 says, “Therefore, by Him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

- **Doing good and sharing**

Hebrews 13:16: *“But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”* **Good works** and **sharing material possessions** in the name of Christ are also spiritual sacrifices. Did you realize that when you are kind and helpful, and you do good to and for others, and you give cheerfully to help grow the work of the Lord, God sees you as a priest bringing a spiritual offering to Him? That’s what the Bible is teaching here!

- **Serving the Lord**

Romans 15:16: *“a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God...”* In this verse Paul said that his *“priestly service of the gospel”* – his **service for the Lord** - was a spiritual sacrifice or offering.

So there are many ways that you as a priest can offer up spiritual sacrifices. Thanksgiving and praise to the Lord, doing good, sharing with others, and Christian service - these are some of the ways we can offer spiritual sacrifices.

Growing Christians should offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Practical Application

Be a living sacrifice as well as a living stone.

There’s one more form of spiritual sacrifice that we can offer to God. We can offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice. Romans 12:1 says, *“I beseege you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [or, your spiritual worship (ESV)].”*

1 Peter 2:5 says that we are **living stones** in the spiritual Temple that the Lord is building. Romans 12:1 says that we can also be **living sacrifices**. Every true believer is a living stone – but some believers are not a living sacrifice. What about you? If you’re a believer, you are a living stone. But are you a living sacrifice?

Living sacrifices are totally committed believers. Living sacrifices have offered their lives to the Lord, for whatever service He requires of them. Living sacrifices have submitted their wills to God’s will - not just in salvation, but also in their lives, day by day. Living sacrifices say, “Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done.”

Are you a living sacrifice - or have you crawled off the altar? If you’re a believer, you are a living stone. But are you a living sacrifice? The Lord wants us to be both a living stone and a living sacrifice!