

Discussion Guide

1 Peter 2:2-3

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Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

In last week's sermon we were challenged to live consistently with our status as born-again children of God. Peter tells us specifically to put away all "malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander."

The things that we are told to put away are all things that we do not connect with the behavior of infants. Young children are typically very straightforward about how they feel. They unabashedly ask for the things they want. They don't usually place themselves in the place of another. And they don't attempt to wreck somebody else's character. Babies are completely unaware of themselves in the sense that they are worried about how they are perceived by others. They want what they want and they don't really care what you think about it.

This week we are told to be like newborn infants in another way. We are to yearn for pure spiritual milk. We should long so much for the sustenance of God that we aren't dissuaded from it by what others may think. But it's also important to remember what we are longing for- "pure spiritual milk." The way the Greek language reads in 1 Peter 2:2 points directly to the Word of God as our spiritual sustenance. This idea goes all the way back to law given to Moses in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 8:3

³And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

What does the sustenance of the Word of God do to us? Peter tells us "that by it you may grow up into salvation." This seems a bit confusing on the surface. Aren't we already born again? Doesn't that mean children of God are already saved? Why do we have to grow up into salvation?

The idea of "growing up into salvation" makes sense only through Martin Luther's formulation of Christians as *simul justus et peccator*. This means that from one perspective we are completely justified and saved before God, but from another perspective we are still sinful people who are growing into our salvation. I have included a clip from theologian R.C. Sproul explaining this concept.

<https://www.ligonier.org/posts/simul-justus-et-peccator>

1 Peter 2:3 should remind readers of Psalm 34 in the concept of “tasting to see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8) The context of Psalm 34 is that David was facing peril before Abimelech. He had an immediate trial that was severe enough the David could face death. As David teaches us time and again in the Psalms, we should praise God, exalt his name, and trust God alone for salvation. The experience of those who are right before God is that he offers salvation to those who are close to God.

Psalm 34:21-22

**21 Affliction will slay the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.**

**22 The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

Discussion Questions

- **In what sense does God expect us to be like infants in our relationship to him?**
- **How are you becoming more and more aware of your dependence on God?**
- **How do you know the Word of God?**
- **What things are crowding the Word of God out of your life?**
- **Why do you think the Bible repeatedly declares the Word of God to be spiritual food?**
- **What does it mean to grow up into salvation?**
- **How do you understand Luther’s phrase *simul justus et peccator*?**
- **How have you come to see more of the goodness of God as you have grown?**