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## A BETTER RESISTANCE | LOVE FROM A PURE HEART (5)

February 14, 2021

1 Peter 1:22-2:3

*<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; <sup>24</sup> for*

*“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord remains forever.”*

*<sup>1</sup> And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

*<sup>2</sup> So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

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### BACKGROUND

In this passage, Peter continues to press deeper into the implications of the new life that comes through Jesus. Back in 1:3, he lays the foundation for this argument. He writes that for those who place their faith in Jesus, God causes them to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. To be a Christian is no less than to receive new spiritual life that comes from the “imperishable seed” of the gospel. The image of a seed is one of life and growth. A seed can be tiny, but under the right circumstances, it grows roots, and with nourishment, can grow into life that is thousands of times bigger and more beautiful than the original seed. But unlike the farmer’s seed, the gospel produces new life that is imperishable—life that continues into eternity.

Not only does the gospel create life, but it also nourishes this life. That’s the second image that Peter uses. He compares Christians to how a newborn infant longs for milk. They long for it instinctively, eagerly and incessantly. In the same way, Christians are to experience God’s goodness through the “pure spiritual milk” of the gospel. This happens in small and gradual ways as they “taste” the goodness of God through word, sacrament and prayer. As Christians set apart time to experience God, their lives become more saturated with his goodness which produces the sincere brotherly love that we see in this passage. And there is no greater witness to the gospel than a life of sincere and earnest love for others in the name of Christ.

### PURPOSE

To understand how experiencing the goodness of God produces a genuine love for others

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In verse 23, Peter uses the image of a seed to illustrate how life comes through the living and abiding word of God. Then in chapter 2, verse 2, he uses the image of a newborn infant longing for milk to illustrate how Christians are to long to experience God’s goodness. How can these images be helpful as you think about your spiritual life?

2. What are some ways that you have experienced the goodness of God firsthand? Do any of those experiences of God stand out in your mind?
3. Peter tells his readers that the gospel produces a sincere brotherly love and the ability to love earnestly from a pure heart. How might “tasting God’s goodness” change and impact the way we love others?

#### LEADER’S NOTES

**Question 1:** The purpose of this question is to reflect on Peter’s two images and understand how the gospel is both the cause and sustenance of new life. A seed is tiny, and seemingly weak and insignificant. Yet, over time, it can produce something as mighty and extraordinary as a tree, which can live hundreds if not thousands of years. A tree grows slowly, but over time, it can even break through concrete as its roots grow deeper and stronger. This helps us to think about how powerfully the “imperishable seed” of the gospel can produce new life that is imperishable and everlasting. Such life is utterly extraordinary, though we often do not realize its power to change and transform us from the inside out.

But the gospel is not only the seed, it is also the nourishment for this life. As the gospel goes deeper into a person’s heart, it produces Christ-like love for others and joy. And the more a person experiences this, the more it can displace all other lesser joys.

How can Christians experience the goodness of God? By saturating their life with God’s living and abiding word in such a way that more and more of their life is experienced through the lens of the hope and the truth of the salvation that God has given in Jesus Christ. This includes practices that engage scripture, prayer, worship, fellowship, Sabbath and service. These practices can reveal God’s grace to us in different ways that shape our hearts. One way of doing this is to make sure every aspect of your life is framed by the truth of the gospel, so that the joys we experienced grow us deeper in the life of God.

**Question 2:** The purpose of this question is to reflect on the experiences of God that have shaped your life. We can experience God in many different ways, but the most impactful often comes through experiences of beauty, community, worship and prayer. It can also come through extended time in solitude or getting away from the regular rhythm of life. You can also encourage your group to share a hymn or song that is meaningful, a passage from Scripture, a sermon illustration that has stuck out to them, or a person who has shown them the love of Christ.

**Question 3:** The purpose of this question is to see how the experience of God’s love actually produces love in our lives. 1) The gospel brings healing. It restores that which is broken in us, and enables us to reflect God more fully. 2) The gospel gives power. It drives us towards others in need as we experience Christ meeting our needs. It enables us to love God and to love others from a heart of gratitude and thankfulness. 3) The gospel produces joy. It shows us how precious, valuable and beloved we are by God. 4) The gospel produces humility. It breaks down pride and self-centered as we experience God’s gift of free grace. 5) The gospel gives us a new purpose. It sends us out on mission to those in need. It reframes our lives around God’s kingdom, which endures into eternity.