

Summary

This sermon explores 1 Peter 2:1-3, addressing the tension Christians face between following Christ and conforming to worldly norms. The pastor emphasizes that attachment to Christ requires detachment from the world, making believers "strange" by society's standards—just as early Christians had to abandon practices like pagan festivals, sexual immorality, and infanticide. The passage calls believers to rid themselves of five destructive behaviors: malice (ill-will toward others), deceit (misleading others), hypocrisy (wearing masks of insincerity), envy (wanting what others have), and slander (destructive speech). These worldly practices must be replaced by Christlike alternatives: charity, truthfulness, integrity, gratitude, and edifying speech. Using the metaphor of a newborn's singular diet of milk, the sermon emphasizes that spiritual growth comes from consistently feeding on God's Word. The key principle is that practice creates craving—we don't wait to feel spiritually hungry before pursuing God, but rather our appetite grows as we taste that the Lord is good.

Discussion Questions

1. The sermon suggests that fear of being "strange" may be the #1 thing keeping people from wholeheartedly following Christ. Do you agree? What specific areas of your life feel most challenging when following Christ sets you apart from cultural norms?
2. Which of the five practices—malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, or slander—do you find most difficult to root out of your own life? Why do you think that particular one is challenging for you?
3. The pastor states, "The practice creates the craving" and if we wait for the craving before we engage the practice, the craving will never come. How have you experienced this principle in your own spiritual life? What practices could you commit to even before feeling a strong desire?
4. Early Christians had to leave behind practices normal in pagan society. What contemporary cultural practices might Christians today need to reconsider or abandon to fully follow Christ?
5. How can we cultivate gratitude and generosity as antidotes to envy in a culture that constantly encourages comparison through social media and advertising?
6. The sermon connects our words to the state of our hearts, quoting Jesus: "Out of the overflow of our hearts, the mouth speaks." What does your speech—especially what you say behind others' backs—reveal about your heart's condition?
7. The pastor said that we live in an age of distrust. How have you experienced this? Why is it so important that we be truthful?
8. The sermon emphasizes that spiritual growth is a lifelong process—we never graduate, retire, or age out. What does this mean practically for someone in their 20s versus someone in their 70s? How should discipleship look different across life stages while remaining a constant priority?

