



Introduction: How can we _____ UP in 2023? This is the question I want to answer today.

I. Lay aside _____ – 2:1

1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

Growing Christians must put _____ certain behavioral characteristics. They are:

II. Desire the _____ – 2:2-

2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

- As a _____ baby

What do you know about a newborn baby?

Newborn Christians need connection with a _____ and caring Church.

Therefore, it is important that every person attending SLBC gets plugged into a _____ group and connected with other believers. Scripture teaches, *Iron sharpens iron* (Proverbs 17:17).

If you want to _____, you need community. Get some good solid Christian people around you.

- Desire the _____ of the word

You will spend your _____ doing what you desire most in life.
What will you do with the 8,760 hours that God will give you in 2023? Here is the time data for your info:

That you may _____ thereby

- _____ the Lord is gracious – 2:3

You can't read the Bible for very long without acquiring a _____ for it.

God's word provides _____, reproof, correction, and instruction (2 Timothy 3:16). All of this shows us that the Lord is gracious. God wants us to GROW UP!

What is the third necessary element needed to grow up? It is to...

III. Understand your _____ – 2:4

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,

Knowing that you were _____ **by God** ought to encourage you to GROW throughout your entire life.

There are three thoughts in this verse that I want to point out. They are:

- _____ by men

Men may reject you, but really, they are rejecting Jesus Christ whom you serve.

- _____ by God

God chose us in Him before the _____ of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

- _____

IV. Finding your _____ – 2:5

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.

- _____ stones “many stones” –

In certain parts of the county and in certain parts of the world homes are built with _____. God’s house was built with stones.

We are called, “_____ stones”. Thus, I would ask, are you living for Jesus Christ? Or are you living for yourself?

- Spiritual _____ –

Together we are to be building a spiritual house.

- _____ priesthood –

Every Christian is a _____. You can talk with God. You do not need to go through a religious system that sets up men as a priest.

We can all come “boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

In theology, this is called, The _____ of the Believers.

Note: We are to be Holy Priests.

- Spiritual _____ –

What are the spiritual sacrifices that we as priests are to offer up to God? In Hebrews 13:15-17 we have at least three sacrifices mentioned. Let me point them out for us:

Give God your best, not your _____!

V. Keep Jesus _____ – 2:6-8

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.

- Precious to _____
- Rock of _____ to unbelievers

VI. Know your _____ – 2:9-10

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.

Stop making excuses for why you are not _____ UP.

VII. Live the _____ – 2:11-12

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Another word I could have used here is _____. This word means, to be made holy, or set apart unto holiness.

- We are to _____ from fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

What is the truth found in verse 12?

- Having _____ (behavior, lifestyle) honoring among the Gentiles.

Conclusion: As we enter this New Year do you want to _____ UP? Be honest with yourself. If you want to GROW UP you will need to take the following steps: