



**Being Saved Means New Life
Jesus Has Expectations for Us
Our New Reality
1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

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So far, since we began in 1 Peter 1:13, Peter has exhorted us, commanded us, to set our hope fully on God's grace with specific reference to His returning for us soon. Then in 1 Peter 1:15 he pointed out the need of holiness. We are to be holy as exhibited for us by the character of the Father.



If you haven't picked up on it, the impact of salvation is huge, and Peter still has more to say to us about the changes we see in the life of the believer as he continues talking about the moral and ethical implications, changes we see in our lives, due to trusting and following Jesus.

He will be describing how we, as believers, should do life with one another. We now have peace with God, what about with others walking with us as brothers and sisters? How are believers supposed to relate to one another? Why do some have a serious problem with that?

He will wrap up by showing us the organic natural consequence of salvation; we begin to desire to study the word, memorize the word, and make His word a living part of us. And along the way, some practical action steps we need to take to come into alignment with what it is he is teaching us about the Christian life.

Peter begins his discussion with the assumption that those of us reading and studying this letter are fully in. We have trusted in Christ, and we are indeed walking with Him in obedience to the two points he has already covered.

1 Peter 1:22–25

“Since you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brothers and sisters, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY IS LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.” And this is the word which was preached to you.” (NASB 2020)

Peter kills, once and for all, the idea of fire insurance salvation. You know, I prayed the prayer and I'm good. Cheap grace salvation is bogus. We do not do anything to be saved, we believe what He says, and He is the one who does everything.

Yes, this is a struggle today because there is so much poor teaching on the topic out there. We do nothing to be saved. It is a free gift from God. Jesus Christ has indeed done it all for us. We cannot earn it or do anything to make God love us more or less.

But there is an expectation of obedience for those who believe.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Peter here assumes that has been done by us.

Once we are saved, justified, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and then begins the next step, sanctification; we are being saved. That process, which takes the rest of our life here in this body, leads ultimately to our being glorified, made just like Jesus, at the resurrection/rapture of the church. There is a clear expectation by Peter, and by Jesus too, that a genuine encounter with the living Lord and creator of the universe in the person of Jesus Christ, changes us forever. When we say yes to Jesus, look out because He begins a work in you and me that He intends to finish.



Coming to Christ and obeying the call of the gospel is not simply a matter of intellectual change, but of a transformation of behavior. (Davids 1990, 76)

We are, as Paul put it (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23) being renewed, made new. We begin to think differently, act differently. And some of us even begin to look and dress differently as well. We become aware of the presence of God living in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:4–10

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (ESV)

Yes, salvation is offered as a free gift from God. But based on what Peter is saying, a changed heart is not an end point, but a beginning of new life. Placing your faith in Jesus will result in a changed life. This is not cheap grace being peddled by some prosperity gospel wannabe teacher to access your best life now. This is not a what’s in it for me gospel of the 21st century western culture. Salvation through grace is costly.

In the middle of the madness of the rise of the Nazi regime, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes the following about the grace of God.

“It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly, because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner. Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God’s Son—“you were bought with a price”—and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. Above all, it is grace because the life of God’s Son was not too costly for God to give in order to make us live. God did, indeed, give him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God.” (Bonhoeffer 2001, 45)

Because we have decided to follow Jesus, He, through the Holy Spirit, places a desire inside of us to be obedient to God’s word. Yes, we can fight against that and grieve the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit never changes His mind. Our opinion of His work will not change His mind.

Obedience means turning from sin. It may also mean significant lifestyle changes and relationship changes as well. It will indeed mean rejecting certain lifestyle choices that we might have thought had been okay before being saved, but now, we learn, are forbidden for the follower of Jesus Christ and some are considered to be an abomination by the Lord. But Ken, that prohibition was back in the Old Testament, get with the times. God is love so why would He condemn someone for following their heart in love today?

What is His assessment of our ability to allow our heart to guide our choices?

Jeremiah 17:9–10

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”” (ESV)



God's assessment is this, the heart is more deceitful than anything else. We are experts at lying to ourselves and justifying anything.

Let's listen in on rationalization gone wild from Genesis 3.

Exhibit 1 – the act.

Genesis 3:1–7

“The two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and they did not feel shame. Now the serpent was wiser than all the wild animals that were upon the earth that the Lord God made. And the serpent said to the woman, “Why is it that God said, ‘You may not eat from every tree of the garden?’ ” (This is a simple question from a divine being she has seen before there in the garden. The answer should be straight forward, but this is a leading question given to someone not fully prepared for it.) The woman said to the serpent, “From every tree of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden God said, ‘You will not eat from it, nor may you touch it, (she added this in as it is not exactly what God said in Genesis 2:17) in order that you might not die.’ ” The serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die; (Lie number 1) for God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods who know good and evil (Lie number 2 and 3. Temptation number 1, don't you want to be like one of the divine beings too?). ” The woman saw that the tree was good for food (Rationalization or self lie act number 1 to believe and buy the lies thus far by lying to yourself and affirming what you are thinking about doing isn't really all that bad. Look at this as a food source.) and that it was pleasing to the eyes to look at (Rationalization or self lie act number 2. How can this be so bad since it looks good to me. This fruit isn't hard on the eyes you know. Yeah, I know what God said, but He really isn't looking out for my best interests as He want to stop me from being like one of the divine beings. Why would He make something look so good that I am not supposed to have?) and it was seasonable to look at (Rationalization or self lie number 3. It looks ripe for the picking right now. Why would God want to stop me from enjoying something that my heart says is right for me?), and after taking some of its fruit (Rationalization or self lie number 4. If I hold some of it and look at it how could that hurt?), she ate (Rationalization or self lie number 5. This looks good to me, and my heart tells me I should just do it and love the experience. How could this possibly be so wrong.) She also gave to her husband with her (Promotion of evil act one. Convince others that what is wrong is good because look at me, I did it, and nothing happened to me.), and they Ate (Really bad decision number 1 & 2). Then the eyes of the two were opened (Spiritual death has taken place and physical death begins), and they realized that they were naked (They had abandoned the protection of God and by listening to Lucifer, allowed themselves to be lied to. This hasn't changed as we continue to listen to his lies even today.), and they sewed together fig-tree leaves and made for themselves loincloths (Man's first attempt to cover up their sin and be somewhat acceptable to others).” (Brannan, et al. 2020, Gen 3:1-7)

Did the lying to one's self end here? It is just getting started.

Exhibit 2 – the results.

Genesis 3:8–13

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden (First attempt to hide from God). But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” (We are all still answerable to God no matter what we have done or who we are.) And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” (What sin does.) He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” (Don't blame me, you made her this way. You deal with her. It is all her fault anyway. Adam tries to make himself look good in a bad situation. The first example of spinning a lie. And the first confession of sin



mixed in as well.) Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (The second confession of sin. Simple, direct, to the point with no self-justification, no spin at all.) (ESV)

Relying on your heart rather than the Lord for decision making is an absolute non-starter. As believers, we have purified ourselves and are relying on the Holy Spirit. He has changed us forever and we know who we are in Christ. We are saved sinners. We have stood before God just as Adam and Eve did and confessed our sin to Him. We now get the purity thing, as we should be, per Peter, imaging holiness as an imager of God.

If you are embracing a sinful lifestyle, you cannot possibly be doing holiness. The flesh is incompatible with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16–17

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do." (ESV)

We are purified, walking by the Spirit in obedience to the truth.

1 Peter 1:22–23

"Since you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brothers and sisters, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." (NASB 2020)

Why is it, when I get to church, I feel like I am at home? Probably because you are. The people around you will be around you for a very long time, eternity.

Because of our relationship with Jesus, we have relationship with each other. That means for us, as we gather together as His church to worship and study His word, as well as encouraging each other, or just hanging out, we find ourselves doing something that is only possible between people who are saved. We now can relate to each other exactly as God had designed us to do in the first place. We really are brothers and sisters now.

The command to love is qualified by two participial phrases, both probably causal: (1) love one another **because your lives have been set apart by obedience to the truth**, the very purpose for which is to relate to others as God intended human beings to relate; (2) love one another **because you have been reborn with an eternal nature, and love is the essence of that nature**. (Jobes 2005, 123)

Jesus was the first to reveal this coming status change in His final briefing to His disciples. It is not optional for us either.

John 13:34–35

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (NRSVue)

This is His intent. He wants us to have the same kind of relationship with each other that He has modeled for us in His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

This is relationship based on God's character which we, as His imagers, are to reflect to the world here while we await evacuation.



We have purified ourselves, we are obedient to the truth of His word, and loving one another in true Christian relationship which is simply reflecting His holiness, His character and His love to the world. We are obedient and when the world sees us truly act like the church, it is something they know they cannot get anywhere else on this planet, and it does indeed attract people. And that is why the enemy wants to do everything possible to destroy that love.

When we fight and bite and argue with each other, we look like the world and why would anyone want to be part of that?

Because we have peace with God, we have the peace of God in our hearts. We are freed up, because self should be out of the picture, to truly love one another. This is a lot more than simply liking one another. Notice the command from Peter.

1 Peter 1:22b

“...ferverly love one another from the heart,” (NASB 2020)

The word translated fervent is the Greek word ἐκτενῶς (ektenōs). “Pertaining to being persevering, eagerly, fervently, constantly. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 310)

We are being told to continuously, eagerly and fervently to love, agape one another. And then Peter adds to this, from the heart.

Are we all in with our brothers and sister in Christ? “These expressions convey the extent and the seriousness of love. When such love is present, it erases tension, abolishes enmity, and banishes hatred.” (Kistemaker and Hendricksen 1953-2001, 72)

Okay, we get it. Loving one another is not an option for us as believers, it is the outward expression of the inward reality we have in Jesus Christ. We are to be all in in all areas at all times. We are to love, without hypocrisy, yep, that is what sincere means. Peter, this is going to be hard to do. I am supposed to love my brothers and sisters, those who are easy to love on as well as those who are difficult or impossible and to do so sincerely without hypocrisy and with all my heart. Help!

The help is already there in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who makes this all eminently doable. But, again, the reason?

1 Peter 1:23

“for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.” (NASB 2020)

Being born again, participating in this extreme supernatural event, is what makes it possible to obey the truth purifying ourselves and loving our brothers and sisters without hypocrisy but fully onboard agape love no matter what. The good news, this change in us, this supernatural reaction to the love of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit on us, it is permanent.

The change in us is based on God’s word, which is imperishable, living and enduring.

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (ESV)



The word for sword here is machaira. This is anything from a six-inch dagger to an 18 to 20-inch sword, the gladius, used by the Roman legions. This was a sword used for precision, personal in close, eye to eye work.

This type sword was typically used for in close personal offensive actions. God's word in action is compared to this type of sword.

God's word is what has cut and trimmed away the sin in our lives. He uses His word up close and personal in precision with us to purify us and make us more like Jesus, and we use His word in offensive actions to take ground and souls for the Kingdom. The intent, up close and personal.

It is that word that has resulted in us being born again. It is His word that tells us to love one another, and we know this about His word.

Isaiah 40:8

"The grass withers, the flower fades, **but the word of our God will stand forever.**" (ESV)

His word is imperishable, living, enduring and will stand forever. That means every single word in the scriptures, stands forever. As a result, we are obligated by it and empowered by it. To live out life as Peter is calling for us to do.

How enduring is His word? Peter turns to Isaiah as well.

1 Peter 1:24–25

"For, **ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY IS LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.**" And this is the word which was preached to you." (NASB 2020)

Reading this reminds me of all the things the flesh tells us has lasting value. I remember looking for prestige in my work, to be honored by my peers and rewarded financially seemed to be what everyone was working towards. But God says it is all going to burn. That is why you feel so empty once you get there.

Getting ready to plant this church, I was counseled by others on those things that were leading measures of success by church planters. All based on community surveys of felt needs. Done in order to fine tune where and what to minister. In other words, man's methods to do God's work. But our calling, per Jesus, is to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (CSB)

And Paul outlined what that would look like.

2 Timothy 4:1–4

"I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom: **Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching.** For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths." (CSB)



Once again, doing anything other than God's way, fuel for the fire.

Peter reminds us of that. Anytime we find ourselves chasing after what the world has to offer, or using the world's definitions of what constitutes success in anything, just remember, all flesh is grass. It is all going to burn.

What are we doing for Him? Are we doing it His way? Is He the one that led to do the survey? There are those things which must be done to lay down a foundation to be able to minister, but once they are done, do we keep following the world's methods or do we look to the Lord?

These verses institute a comparison and bring out a contrast between the natural life and the spiritual. Every son of man is born into one life, and every son of God is born again into another. There is a mystery in every man, but a greater mystery in every Christian. Nature is deep, but grace is deeper. The two lives brought into contrast here are the natural life of man in the body which soon fades away, and the new life of the regenerated which will for ever flourish. (Exell n.d., 119)

We have purified ourselves, we are obedient to the truth of His word, and diligently loving one another in true Christian relationship which is simply reflecting His holiness, His character and His love to the world. We are doing this because of His word, and we trust in that word for everything. This is exactly, per Peter, what was preached to them. Consistency is the key.

But there are some things that get in the way from time to time in the body. Doing life with others can be messy as not everyone is in the Spirit all the time. Sin gets in the way, and we all do sin from time to time.

Peter personally knows this.

Galatians 2:11–14

“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party. Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, “If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?”” (CSB)

Peter learned all about this the hard way when he was publicly rebuked by Paul. Yep, even Peter still had it in him to veer off the reservation every now and then. We all do. So, Peter, from experience, let's us know what it is we need to be aware of to avoid and prepared to deal with.

1 Peter 2:1

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,” (NASB 2020)

Peter lists for us, those things which have and continue to cause churches to split even today. These are things which damage relationships.

The intent of Satan is to take those who love each other in Christ, to reach the point where they can no longer believe each other or talk civilly to each other because someone decided that the path to success means to malign or misuse others. The problem is, when someone does that to you, there is a desire to respond and get our pound of flesh. Here is the thing, to grow up in love, to become more like Jesus, means putting away, getting rid of certain behaviors and thought patterns. We must have a love for others that is willing to put away those things which undo someone else. We must be in the Spirit, not in the flesh.



Malice – κακίαν (kakion) “malice, malignity, wickedness, depravity, evil, trouble, calamity, misfortune.” (Mounce 2006, 1178) A force that breaks fellowship.

What does this look like? It looks like “the endeavor to do evil to others, emanates from being inherently evil.” (Zodhiates 2000)

I’ve talked about the church I was saved in before, how it was an example of a lot of the warnings in the Bible of how not to do church. Malice was alive and well. It was exhibited in the elders of the church, after they had decided that the Pastor was not doing what they wanted him to do. The attitude turns and all actions are intended to embarrass and cast evil upon the Pastor. The intent is to harm him and his reputation and what better way to do so than to begin spreading lies about his teaching. One pastor was evangelistically oriented, we aren’t being fed was the lie.

Another was a great teacher and the lie they used was even worse. I even heard about at Bible school. He is too intellectual and simply does not connect with the kids, which is why they are leaving. Reality check, they were leaving because they saw through the hypocrisy of the elders. That is what malice looks like in the body. Yes, it is of the flesh, yes, it is Satan in control.

Deceit – δόλον (dolon) “taking advantage through craft and underhanded methods, deceit, cunning, treachery.” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 256)

Yes, this also is a popular tactic these days in the business world for getting ahead. I learned years ago, to keep silent about my ideas in business meetings about any ideas I may have. They were usually stolen by someone else and then promoted as if it was their own personal idea. You can even go as far as putting together a detailed business plan and a formal proposal, and that too is subject to someone else grabbing ahold of and taking the credit for it.

But Peter is saying this is something we should not be doing in the church and yes, it has been and is still being done in the church today.

Back to the church I was saved in. A couple of us had an idea of how to reach other kids in the area through music. We put together an outline of what that would look like and how to energize kids to get on board. We shared it with the youth pastor who said it would probably not work, but he presented it as is to the Pastor as his own idea and then we did it, but of those of us who put the plan together, one left the church over it. I didn’t learn from that as I should have and yes, I have continued to be victimized, lied to and deceived by “loving” staff in other churches since then. Peter says this is of the flesh, we are not to do it.

Hypocrisy - ὑποκρίσεις (hupokriseis) “to create a public impression that is at odds with one’s real purposes or motivations, play-acting, pretense, outward show, dissembling.” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 1038)

If you see the previous two behaviors taking place with someone in the body, you will also see this involving the same person as well. Part of the lies being told about others, part of the deceit of lying to you and the theft of others’ ideas usually involves someone who has provided serious self-promotion about their veracity and honesty.

Hypocrites are play actors. In Greek drama performance, that was what an actor was called. Today, they play at being godly when they aren’t. They play at being interested in ministry and your ideas when all they want to do is cancel you and take your ideas for themselves. Be on the lookout for the first two terms we have already discussed connected with this person.



Every church has a few of these. So yes, the church is full of hypocrites because all of us put on a mask now and then. Peter though says we are to be completely transparent and honest about who we are.

If you find yourself dealing with someone who meets the meaning found in these words in the body, first of all, pray for them. There is still more to do but back to the word list from Peter.

Envy – φθόνους (phtōnous) ill-will or malice, esp. envy or jealousy of the good fortune of others. (Liddell, et al. 1996, 1930)

Literally, spite and resentment toward the success or possessions of another.

I was teaching a college level apologetics class to around 300 or so students. It was the largest class, by far, in the church. Interest was high and the questions be asked and addressed were great as they were using this back on Campus during the week. But up pops those who are wanting what we were seeing the Lord bless us with. In came the stories, the innuendos, anything to draw students away and increase their classes. The problem, staff also played into the same game. Everything Peter has warned about not happening in the body, was. Once the class was completed, I was never asked to teach again.

Why? Envy, jealousy and ill will. If you are teaching a class, or the Lord happens to be using you to reach a group others had trouble reaching, even though Peter says this should not be taking place, it does indeed do so.

When Peter says to rid ourselves of these things, he uses the word Αποθέμενοι (apothemenoi) take off literally of clothes, lay aside, rid oneself of...to put aside for a special purpose, lay aside...to remove from a locality and place elsewhere, put away, lay down. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 123-124)

We are to actively stop ourselves from being in the state or condition of what we are to take off. You have divested yourself of it. When we are confronted by others doing this, again, pray for them. But is there more we can do? Yes, but one more term.

Slander – καταλαλιás (katalalias) the act of speaking ill of another, evil speech, slander, defamation, detraction. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 519)

So, all of those other terms could also be this, slander.

We sometimes do this and Christianize it by telling the one we are talking to that this is so they can pray for the person. Hey, I don't know if you have heard but (insert name here) needs prayer. They just don't seem to be connecting with anyone in their ministry, or they have this sin problem they told me about, or on and on and on. This is a popular sport in most churches today.

We Christianize our slander, do the damage, and then move on while that person who was told to keep this information confidential, doesn't. And soon the lie takes on a life of its own.

Colossians 3:8–10

“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” (ESV)

Peter has been very clear about what the impact of being a believer is and how that should also impact our interpersonal relationships in the body. That does not mean you have a license to do any of this to only pagans as elsewhere in the scriptures we learn these actions are all characteristics of the flesh, not the Spirit.



Each one of us has a personal responsibility to renounce these actions and permanently divest ourselves of having anything to do with them. Then there is that sin nature problem that pops up from time to time and a brother or sister, operating in the flesh, does this and we want to retaliate.

Peter was into retaliation. He asked Jesus about it because he really wanted a license to engage in it.

Matthew 18:21–22

“Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (ESV)

In other words, no you do not get to be the designated retaliator after a certain volume of offenses has been reached.

The writer of Hebrews puts it all into perspective for us.

Hebrews 10:28–31

“Anyone who disobeys the Law of Moses is put to death without any mercy when judged guilty on the evidence of two or more witnesses. What, then, of those who despise the Son of God? who treat as a cheap thing the blood of God’s covenant which purified them from sin? who insult the Spirit of grace? Just think how much worse is the punishment they will deserve! For we know who said, “I will take revenge, I will repay”; and who also said, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!” (GNB)

At the end of the day, you are responsible for you. It is all about your relationship with Jesus and if someone is taking advantage of us or misusing us or lying about us, leave that with the Lord when you pray for that person and warn others, if possible, without slandering that person. Paul provided an example.

2 Timothy 4:14–15

“Alexander the metalworker did me much harm; the Lord will reward him according to what he has done. Be on your guard against him yourself, because he was violently opposed to our message.” (GNB)

There is a thing called church discipline we need to be aware of. Unfortunately, this is misused a lot these days too.

Matthew 18:15–17

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.” (NLT)

While Scripture makes a connection between congregational holiness and church discipline (1 Cor 5:1–13), it also teaches that there are other motives that ought to take precedence. These are (1) calling the offender back to true Christian discipleship and (2) restoring personal relationships that have been violated by sin (Mt 18:15–18). If our goal in church discipline is first to restore the offender’s relationship to Christ and the church, we will of necessity treat him or her with care and respect. (Blue 1993, 156-157)

Church discipline is not a means of controlling others. That is abuse and that falls right into what Peter is talking about. We are all sinners saved by grace, when we sin and someone lovingly holds us



accountable, they have just done a loving but hard work. It is tough to lay yourself on the line like that and confront someone who is in sin.

It is not done without a lot of prayer first and it is not to be done as an exercise in “gotcha.” I have seen folks immediately go to witnesses and then sneak the witness in while they are asking the question regarding the alleged sin. I say alleged because in most cases where I have seen this, there is no sin. This is all a ploy to control others.

Per Jesus, church discipline is not just for leaders, but for all of us. This is a brother or sister holding another brother or sister accountable. Please, please, please, brother to brother or sister to sister and not brother to sister. That too is a formula for disaster.

It is not to confront, correct and punish. It is not, let’s take care of this deviant and let him know how it is supposed to be. No rather, it is done to restore someone back into fellowship. Trust me, it is possible to offend someone and not know you have done so.

It is a loving conversation with various steps to be involved and if it does not go well, there should be no surprises. Abuse is when you are chewed out, punished and ministry impacted and you have no clue what you did, if anything, wrong.

I was serving with others in a ministry in Texas and one Sunday morning, we were summarily chewed up and spit out by the Assistant Pastor who never told us why. To this day I still have no idea what was behind it. But looking back now, I see it was a Senior Pastor who had deviated away from what Peter is talking about.

The ministry I was serving in was shut down. I never did serve again in that church, nor did I want to. I prayed for them but did not want to serve again in that atmosphere.

That Assistant Pastor would later resign, but it was due to other issues involving the Senior Pastor.

Eventually the Senior Pastor was fired, because he had become abusive, among other things.

The church, twenty years later, is still helping to heal the hurts caused by the former Senior Pastor. Part of the healing has been that Assistant Pastor, coming back on staff and being part of the healing.

1 Peter 2:2–3

“and like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.” (NASB 2020)

We have purified ourselves, we are obedient to the truth of His word, and loving one another in true Christian relationship which is simply reflecting His holiness, His character and His love to the world. We are obedient and are actively loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. We do so because we are told to do so in the word and we are obedient to the word. We are also living in the Spirit and allowing Him to help us rid our lives of those things which damage our brothers and sisters.

And because of that, we will naturally and organically want to study the Bible. Those Peter is writing to are new in the faith. Or they have not grown as they should and still are acting like they are new in the faith. The thought though, is those who are reading this have not fully matured in the faith yet. They truly need the guidance from Peter.

Peter lays on them another command, crave the word of God, just like a newborn baby craves milk.



Peter is not describing the recent conversion of his readers, for he has already described all believers as reborn children of God, regardless of how long ago their conversion has occurred. He uses the metaphor to instruct them to crave the things of God even as newborn babies crave milk—instinctively, eagerly, incessantly...Peter sees milk as that which all Christians need in order to nurture their new life in Christ, so that they will “grow up” into salvation, deliverance from God’s judgment when the Lord returns. (Jobes 2005, 131-132)

Putting away, divesting oneself of bad behavior opens us up to truly understand that we need God’s word all of the time. It is the only way we can live the way we are being asked to. Life in the Spirit requires liberal applications of God’s word. And we are to crave it as THE source of our life.

As we delight ourselves in the Lord and His word, then we indeed are tasting and seeing that the Lord is good. He is the source of life for us, He is the source of Spiritual delight, and He is the one we delight in.

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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