

**Spiritual Growth Through Understanding Love**  
**I Peter 1:22**

Introduction

- A. In times of trial the support of loving and understanding friends is a great encouragement. The Holy Spirit led Peter to emphasize this principle in writing to believers who were in distress.
- B. Love, like other virtues, is not an automatic response. In fact it is one of the most difficult to develop. Sin has made each of us self-centered, which is the very opposite of love.

**I. The Grace of God in the Believer's Salvation, I Peter 1:3-2:10.**

A. In this chapter Peter has given a description of salvation in Vs 3-5, its joy in Vs 6-9, its greatness in Vs 10-12, and its responsibility in Vs 13-2:3. In this last section he has spoken of dedication V 13, holiness in Vs 14,15, and given 5 reasons for living in such obedience to God: divine revelation in V 16A, the content of revelation in V 16B, personal accountability in V17, redemption in Vs 18-20, and salvation in V 21. In this lesson we study his third exhortation which reveals our responsibility to God and other believers in V 22.

B. The responsibility of loving the brethren, I Peter 1:22.

*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*

1. The encouraging reminder.

a. The Biblical provision.

The word "truth" in this verse refers to the content of divine revelation. In His mercy God has established a way whereby His enablement of grace can become a part of the believer's daily experience. When we choose in our weakness to obey God by faith, as He has revealed Himself in His Word -- then we become the recipients of His enablement to obey. This is what Peter had in mind when he spoke of how his readers had "purified their souls in obeying the truth."

b. The necessary explanation.

In each new step of obedience the believer is more aware of his weakness than this provision of strength. We must learn to obey God by faith in spite of such inability. While the words "through the Spirit" may not be in the best manuscripts -- the principle is Biblical. When we obey God works. Peter's readers had experienced such help from God and he here exhorts them to continue in their obedience.

2. The evidence of their salvation and obedience.

*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren . . . .*

a. Peter describes their relationship as one of love.

The word in this statement is from "phileo" and is found in the original as "brotherly love." These believers knew what it meant to be concerned for one another. Such a relationship was an evidence of their salvation and also of their desire to obey God. While we do not know for sure how this love was manifested, in the persecutions and trials they were going through, it probably had to do with caring for those who were bereaved, for those who had lost their jobs, for those who were in jail, and for those leaders who were in special danger. Christians in every age owe to one another such practical compassion and care.

b. Their love for one another was "unfeigned" -- sincere.

The origin of this word had to do with the Greek theater. An actor played many parts by changing masks. This word thus came to mean "playing a part" -- to pretend. Too often our love for one another is found only in words -- if even that -- which indicates we are merely playing a role. The evidence of true love is proven by what we do for one another and why we do it. John reminds us to love "in deed and in truth" in I John 3:18.

3. The exhortation.

*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*

a. What they are to do: "Love one another."

This verse could be confusing if we did not know that Peter makes use two different words for love. The first is "phileo" which emphasizes companionship with affection and "agapao" which includes the above but is stronger and puts the stress on intelligent choice, planning, and sacrifice.

All believers must accept this command from God. We may not be content to merely have affection for one another. It is our disobedience to this command which has robbed us of divine grace and a Biblical relationship among ourselves.

b. How they are to love one another: "pure heart fervently."

The emphasis here is on sincerity and intensity. Too often we express something like love so we can have our own selfish way and manipulate people. Love seeks the good of the other. We also need to consider the word "fervently" because of how passive we are toward this command and therefore toward one another. We must learn to obey God in our weakness -- so we can know His strength and wisdom in our relationships with one another.

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