

“Grow Up” // 1 Peter 1:22–2:10 // *I Am An Alien*

Scripture Reading:

[1 Peter 1:22] Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, [23] since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; [24] for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

[2:1] So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2] Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—[3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

[4] As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[6] For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

[7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” [8] and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

3 things in this passage that was read earlier: the need to grow up; what growing looks like; how to grow up.

I. You need to grow up

- Peter is concerned that they grow up, spiritually speaking. There are a lot of people who never get past the baby stage in Jesus.
- This is a problem for anybody, but Peter is especially concerned about it for these people, because they are going through a lot of persecution and hardship, and if they are spiritual infants they’re not going to survive.

Parents, children are not able to really face life yet. Kids are:

...Unstable in their emotions:

- Ever notice that when kids are young, they can go from the depths of despair to the heights of exaltation in a matter of seconds. My son Adon, who is just a little less than two: crying one moment—because we took back a toy he stole from my daughter; or because mom just left the room—and he is the travail of soul. But then I’ll go poke him in the tummy or fly an airplane at him with my hands and he’ll start giggling. Sometimes they are mixed together (laugh cry). Extreme emotions.

- Many Christians are like that. Slightest thing upsets them. You go from being on top of the world one minute; overflowing with love for God; a little financial trouble; spiritual setback, and you go into the depths of despair.

...Insecure:

- I already mentioned when mommy leaves the room for my 2 year old son it's like she's never coming back.
- One day mom went out shopping and Adon started bawling and my 5 year old says, "Why is Adon crying?" and I say sarcastically, "Because mom just left forever." My 5 year old says, "What...? Mommy is gone forever?"
 - I'll tell my daughters that we're going to stop at Chick-Fil-A on the way home and they'll ask me 100 times.
- Baby Christians are like that. Insecure about the goodness and promises of God; unstable; Something bad happens they're like, 'Why God! Where are you?'
- They have short attention spans... new Christians need constant affirmations; miracles; things can't go wrong or they are in despair.

...Possessive:

- They need things in their hands. You hear that one word argument happening with kids: "Mine." "Stop it. Share." They look at me like, "Dad, the quality of my life from this point on depends on whether I have this particular Lego piece."
- This past week I was flying back from Dallas, sitting next to Andrew Hopper, one of our CP's, and the two guys in front of me get in an elbow wrestling match for the armrest. Andrew and I led both those guys to Jesus...
- Baby Christians are like that. They are possessive. Got have stuff in their hands now. They don't grasp the greater promises that are theirs.

...Gullible:

- Kids will believe anything. Any of you ever look at the old "Calvin and Hobbes" cartoons? There's a great one one where Calvin asks his dad, 'Dad, Where does the sun go at night?' Dad: "It's sets in the west." Calvin: "Where in the west?" Dad: "Somewhere near Phoenix. That's why it's so hot over there." Calvin: "Well how does it get back in the morning?" Dad: "A truck hauls it back here overnight." Calvin to mom: "I can't wait to be as smart as dad..."
- The Apostle Paul says that a lot of Christians are gullible. Ephesians 4:14, "You're like children, blown about by every wind of doctrine."
- A lot of Christians are suckers for a powerful speaker; a miracle story; the latest bestseller. If it builds a crowd and has good music with it, it's got to be true.
- Every once in a while, not often, but every once in a while, I get depressed when I hear where people who were a part of our church and then move to a new city and start going to a church with a very different emphasis: one run by an egomaniac, or one that doesn't really preach the gospel. What's really depressing is when they tell me (and I've had this happen), "Oh, I found a church just like the Summit." And what they mean is I found a church with good music; young, good looking people and a preacher who tells funny stories... because that is about as deep as they go.
- They are gullible! To drive this point home I had our media team paint the word gullible right there on the ceiling... if any of you at other campuses looked, we have problems beyond gullibility.

So, you need to grow up!

- 1 Cor. 3:1 Paul says to the Corinthians, “You’re jealous; you’re stingy; you’re selfish and demanding; if anything goes wrong you’re screaming about where God is in your life; you demand miracles for proof of your faith; I can’t talk to you like mature people, because you guys are infants in Christ.”
- This is right where some of you are. You need special effects in your life. But the moment God seems distant or things are not going right or they’re difficult, you’re gone! You can’t survive temptation; peer pressure; the slightest opposition; or the slightest silence from heaven. And you’re not going to make it if you don’t grow up!
- If you don’t constantly pay attention to a baby, it dies! That’s the way some of you are.

II. What is growing up?

Here it is described **1:22**, as “sincere brotherly love.” See vs. 22, it says, “Love one another earnestly from a pure heart?”

- Sincere comes from the Latin “sin” without and “cere” cracks. Love without hidden agendas; false motives.

“...without malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander” (2:1)

- “malice”: anger and wrath toward people where they really let you down. We all get angry and irritated, but some of you have deep hatred toward a father, a co-worker, a husband... because they attacked you at your core. They damaged you down deep.
- “all deceit”: why do you lie? (1) To cheat the system (not satisfied with what you have); (2) bending truth to make yourself look better
- “hypocrisy”
 - two masks
 - bending metal
- “envy”: not satisfied with what you have, always longing for what someone else has
- “slander”: tearing down other people; delighting in their struggle and their pain

Knowing God should cure all these things. When these things start disappearing from your life, you are growing up! Their presence is a sign you are a spiritual infant!

- Don’t want to get too far ahead of myself, but see down in 2:4 where it says that Jesus is to be your cornerstone? Martin Luther said that your cornerstone is whatever you build your life on. It’s your anchor. It’s what tells you life is going to be ok. Some of you when things are not going well you say, “Well, I’m rich.” Or, “I’m a good person.” Or you find comfort in your marriage or what people think about you.
- That leads to malice: hatred; deceit—lying to make yourself look better; hypocrisy; envy; co-dependency; slander.

I know. I’ve explained to you before that for many years my cornerstone was being set apart from the crowd and the admiration that came from that. It led to all those things:

- Malice and envy and slander: I had this deep bitterness toward those who competed with me for the attention I wanted.
- Deceit: exaggerating truth...
- Hypocrisy: put on a show for people.
- Came from not having the right cornerstone!

(Great little passage in 1 John, I'd never understood until this week in my study:

1 John 2:12 *I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. [13] I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. [14] I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

John Newton (who wrote Pilgrim's Progress) says that this gives you 3 distinct growth stages, and a clue as to what you need to master to move to the next one:¹

- **Stage 1:** Vs. 12: Little Children. What you need to know is that your sins are forgiven
 - This sounds like Christianity 101: we struggle to really believe this.
 - **John Newton** says that the baby Christian is someone who still hasn't grasped this yet. *"You know that you are still a baby in Christ because he or she is sensitive to criticism (finds admission of weakness difficult and humiliating), is still fairly insecure in how he or she is being perceived. Why? Because they do not know that they're forgiven and loved. They do not know that they're forgiven and accepted. And there is still a lot of works righteousness clinging to them."*
 - The gospel is that Christ traded places... gift righteousness and that in having His approval we have everything. The way I've taught you to think about it is like this:
 - *"In Christ, there is nothing I could do to make you love me more; and nothing I have done that makes you love me less."*
 - *"You are all I need for everlasting joy."*²
 - When you are consumed with what everyone thinks about you (which is shown in your envy, slander, your willingness to bend the truth) it is because you either **(a) don't understand your sins are fully forgiven in Christ or (b) you don't give His approval the weight that it deserves.**
 - This is where some of you need to start!
 - **D. Martyn Lloyd Jones:** – *"Let me put this in practical form. And I do not hesitate to put it like this: if you are uncertain about the forgiveness of your sin, that in itself is a sin. I want to be ruthless about this because there are many people who feel that an assurance of forgiveness of sin is presumption. And they would rather give the impression that they are humble and modest. They say, 'Oh, I would not like to think that my sins are forgiven. I do not feel good enough to say that. I am so unworthy. They give the impression that they have much lowliness and humility. The simple reply to that is this, 'If you do not know that you have been forgiven, it is because you still rely upon yourself. Because you are not relying on the finished and complete work of the son for you on the cross... Do you right now know that your sins are forgiven? Are you absolutely sure that no matter what you've just done or what you're about to do, or what you do, that your sins cannot condemn you? Do you know that your sins are forgiven? Do you know that nothing can snatch you out of his hand? You can't get past this stage until you become clear.*
- Stage 2, vs. 14 is when you are "young men." You're a teenager. Teenagers don't need as much attention from mom and dad. You don't have to hold their hand when they cross the street.
 - When you're in this stage you don't require enough feelings and warm fuzzies from God to stay stable. God doesn't always need to say, "Now, I'm going in the other room but I'll be right back, I'm not gone forever," like I have to say to my kids.

¹ From a sermon by Tim Keller called *Principles of Christian Growth*, part 1 (1 Peter 1:22-2:3).

² One slide.

- John Newton says, “The babyhood stage was marked by feelings and little knowledge of the truth. Stage B is marked by lower feelings and growth in the knowledge of the truth.”
 - Tim Keller writes, “A profound stage of maturation is when God seems to call you to do something without the sense of his presence and his love.”
- Teenagers have developed some maturity. But teenagers have a hard time staying focused. Temptations are huge. You don’t put them in charge of their bank accounts. They tend to throw away everything on a cheap thrill.
 - So John says, “You need the word of God in you” and the ability to choose God’s ways even in the midst of temptation.
 - You pass through this stage when you can overcome the temptations of Satan because you know that God is better and what He offers you is more glorious than the temporary thrill of materialism or pleasure.
- **Stage 3**, vs. 13. Spiritual fathers: “You know Him who is from the beginning!”
 - This is a profound trust in God. Recognize how much higher his ways are than yours, and so you trust Him even when things don’t make sense.
 - You know how valuable He is, so you trust Him and obey Him and leverage your life for Him.

III. How to grow up:

Says essentially the same thing 3 times:

- 1:22, Obedience to the truth of the word of God
- 2:2, Nourishment on the milk of the word of God
- 2:4, Building your life on the cornerstone

3 qualities Peter gives to the word of God:

(A) Imperishable. Permanent

1 Peter 1:23 ... since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; [24] for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

- The word of God is permanent, imperishable. That’s in contrast to the flesh. Which fades.
 - If you find your life in the approval of people; even if you ever do get it, you find that ultimately that fades.
 - The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley mocks how the great giants of one generation are completely forgotten by the next.
 - He talks about the discovery of a buried monument with the words etched on it, “My name is Ozymandias, the king of kings; look on my works, all you mighty, and despair.”
 - Jerseys hanging in the Dean Smith Center...
 - You find your happiness in how you look, as your body ages, you deteriorate or you start doing weird things to your face...
 - Some of you guys based your approval on the attention of women... unbutton down to your navel.
 - Money:
 - You find it can’t keep your family together (never know quite what to do with stuff like this, but in prayer, God laid on my heart a man being here today who really thought

your money and your success would be the key to a good life; you're looking at a ruined marriage... it doesn't fix it!)

- Climbing the ladder of success
- Go down the list: money, romance, sex, success... all of it fades eventually. The word of God is a rock!
- 1 Peter 2:6, For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."
 - I'm not a builder or a construction guy. I've known some, and they say that the most important piece of any building is that cornerstone, that foundation. Everything else builds off of it.
 - Goes on to talk about people who rejected Jesus. They looked at him and said, "That's not good for the building we are working on!" They rejected him.
 - Peter is saying, "Open your eyes! All other buildings... all of them, are going to be obliterated by God!" Only one life to live will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last!
 - The word of God is permanent, and you must build your life on it! In 10,000 years, that is all that is left.
 - Charles Spurgeon, to his congregation in 1856: "*He who would place himself in front of a fast moving railway car will be crushed and would be just as foolish as you who are opposing the gospel. If the gospel is true, remember that truth is mighty and must prevail. Who are you to attempt to stand against it? You will be crushed. But let me tell you, when the railway car runs over you the wheel will not be raised even an inch by your size. For what are you? A tiny gnat, a creeping worm, which that wheel will crush to less than nothing and not leave you even a name as having ever been an opponent of the gospel. Let all the infidels in the world know assuredly that the Gospel will win its way, whatever they may do. Poor creatures...their efforts to oppose the gospel are not even worthy of our notice. And we need not fear that they can stop the truth. They are like a gnat who thinks he can quench the sun. Go tiny insect and do it if you can. You will only burn your wings and die. Likewise there may be a fly who thinks it could drink the ocean dry. Drink the ocean if you can. More likely you will sink in it and it will drink you.*"

Secondly, it's **(B) all about the gospel**

- Notice how Peter goes back and forth between the word of God and Jesus.
 - At the end of chapter 1 Peter is talking about the imperishable word;
 - then in chapter 2:3 Peter switches and starts talking about spiritual milk, tasting that the Lord is good;
 - Vs. 4 he talks about Jesus as the cornerstone.
- There's no distinction between the word of God and Jesus. The reason I point this out is that you talk about learning the word sometime and people think you mean learning doctrines, or moral precepts.
- The word for Peter is the gospel. In chapter 1:25 Peter says it directly, "And this word (that I'm talking about) is the good news that was preached to you."
 - Gospel prayer 1; Gospel prayer 2
 - If you master those two things, 95% of the spiritual problems in your life will disappear. You'll grow up!
 - He's your rock; your cornerstone.

Thirdly, **(C) It's alive!**

- 1:23, the "living and abiding" word of God; 2:4, Jesus is a "living" stone
- It's completely different from all other idols and foundations.
 - Other foundations fade; they disappoint: but God's word is alive. Refreshes you, and challenges you.

- At every point in my life the Word of God has been a source of life. I've been seduced away in my life to feast on other things... approval of people; physical pleasures; money... there is a soul-numbing, soul destroying effect. Fills you with malice, greed, hypocrisy.
- The word of God makes you alive; makes you love.

So, Peter says you should do 3 things:

- **Accept it** (vs. 22: obedience to the truth);
 - God's word tells you many counter-intuitive things.
 - It tells you to give away your money; so much that it lowers your lifestyle; scares you how much you're giving.
 - God's word tells you to think about sex as an exclusive covenant
 - Accept it as from God. If God's word is not scaring you, offending you, pushing you, you're not listening to it.
- **Nourish** yourself on it (2:2, like milk);
 - Like milk. Babies need milk several times a day.
 - 2:4, says we "come" to him as our foundation (present tense, not "came")
 - Daily coming to him
 - One generation of smart phones: battery quickly dies...
 - Some of you the only Bible you get is here. Imagine if I fed my baby one day a week or charged my phone once a week.
 - I can't impress this upon you enough! You're like a car severely out of alignment.
 - This is like life or death for you. Like Moses said (Deut 34), *"This is not an idle word; this is your life!"*
 - I've pointed this out to you before: 1800 verses record Jesus' words. Of that 1800, 180 are quotations from the Bible. 10% of everything Jesus said in the Bible was a quotation of your Scripture. How much of your speech would be Scripture quotation and illusion? You think you need it less than Jesus?
 - Businessmen, you say, "I work 70 hours a week." Get a listening Bible—in the car. Here's the thing: I don't really buy the "I'm too busy line." You always find a way to eat. In some way. Even if you did get so busy you missed a day eating, you wouldn't miss two. **When the word of God becomes as essential to you as eating, you won't miss it for days on end.**
 - **Mothers, "Kids. No time for God's word."** How are you going to raise your kids if you're not full of God's word? Go to bed ½ hour earlier.
- **Build** your life on it (2:5)—even to the point that you let tragedy re-establish you in it!
 - Lauren Chandler: "It's a good thing to have the props kicked out—that's when we find if we're building on rock or sand."
 - What's going to happen when your "flesh" fades?

2:11, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

- Right now there is a war against God's word. Sin. Materialism. Idolatry.
- Some of you are so into the passion of the flesh that it is destroying your appetite for grace. Imagine a pill that kills your appetite... never works, btw. But sin destroys your whole appetite. Some of you are right on the brink! There's no coming back.
- It's not that God would not receive you, it's that you'll never want to!

- 2:3 In our faith, we have tasted, actually tasted, the goodness of God. It is like milk to us. We have only tasted that the Lord is good, which means we must wait for the fulfillment of that taste.
- Wisdom from C.S. Lewis - [What to Remember When Fighting Temptation](#): I think one may be quite rid of the old haunting suspicion—it raises its head in every temptation—that there is something else than God—some other country into which He forbids us to trespass—some kind of delight which He ‘doesn’t appreciate’ or just chooses to forbid, but which would be real delight if only we were allowed to get it. The thing just isn’t there. Whatever we desire is either what God is trying to give us as quickly as He can, or else a false picture of what He is trying to give us—a false picture which would not attract us for a moment if we saw the real thing.
- Pure heart gives us the ability really to love others. Gospel gives us the pure heart! Otherwise, we are depend on the flesh for life, which leads to using and exploiting others.
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“We are caught in the spurious logic of thinking that having found him we need no longer seek him.” Tozer

Grass fades: Jesus is the great cornerstone

What you are building your life on?

He was the stone shattered for us

Battleground, part 3

Cf. 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

- Be sober (1:13); wage war (2:11)
- Desire milk
- There is a war going on in your soul: temptation, idolatry, unbelief, to more temptation from desperation: when I am enslaved to the opinions of others, that leads to more sin
- Sinning in private is like in a movie when they walk back into a haunted house: don’t do that! I’d give them a list: to bad guys: never make a gloating speech; never do anything when the music changes; never go back into the haunted house
- We have an enemy (5:8) whose goal is the complete annihilation of our souls; he is also working for the annihilation of our appetite for grace
- Quenching the Spirit in our church may happen through you in private: Achan
- The greatest gift we can give to our community is our private holiness
- Hope in God who will himself lift us up
- He is the God who stayed perfect for us; always put our needs above His own; because of His perfect obedience for us we are saved. We can do that for others.