

Women's Bible Study
1 Peter 1:22-23

1Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

First, the assumption for those being addressed is they have acted in **obedience to the truth**. This means they have heard the gospel and acted in faith through the work of the Holy Spirit, and are in the process of sanctification, learning to be more like Jesus.

We use phrases like 'being saved' and 'acting in obedience', freely.

♥ **How would you explain these terms?**

The readers of Peter's letter have developed a sincere kindness and affection towards those who are of the same mind – the 'one anothers'. This love is intentional and pure. The KJV says, "love one another with a pure heart fervently".

Obedience begins in a heart yielded to God's commands. We hear His truth, we understand His truth, then we act upon His truth. These actions look different than the world's actions. And they result in love for one another.

Because obedience to truth is essential, we are challenged to consider our own response to the Gospel.

♥ **How has God, through the work of His Holy Spirit, manifested His love in your heart?**

♥ **Have you yielded to His commands, striving to follow God in *all* circumstances?**

Obedience involves action and it may not always be what we would choose. Consider this example – you offer your help to someone and they willingly accept. This alone may take us by surprise because we can easily say words that sound good but have no sincere meaning. Sometime what someone needs is a bit more time consuming or difficult than what you had anticipated. How do you respond?

We might love one another the way we think we should, when it fits into our schedule or comfort, but what about loving one another the way God tells us to? It takes effort to obey the truth. Our response often is to watch out for self first. We have a built-in protection mechanism of survival and preservation. When we recognize that our true value is in Christ, a heart of humility softens our selfishness. You will be please to sit and talk with someone and you will be pleased to scrub a floor for someone. You will be pleased to spend time with those who are 'difficult' and those who are 'easy'. Yielding to God will result in love for one another.

♥ **What does it mean to have a sincere love of the brethren?**

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The KJV uses the word unfeigned, meaning without hypocrisy, without dissimulation. There is no deceit or 'hidden' agenda for self-gain in this type of love, only a sincere desire to see another's best interest.

Consider our greatest example of love. Read Paul's words to the church at Thessalonica, "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for [anyone] to write to you, **for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another**", 1 Thessalonians 4:9.

Sincere love is genuine. It is honest. It does not seek to give a false impression. It must come from the heart before resulting in action. Otherwise it is a façade. I think of an old mining town. There are several you can visit here in California and some have preserved their history well. Many of them have a similar look with the center of town lined with buildings which once used to be where all mercantile transactions took place. The fronts of these stores look very detailed and have exquisite framing and fretwork. It is obvious that skilled carpenters put their creative thoughts into making each building look unique. However, if you walk around to the back of these buildings, what you see is that each is roughly the same – a square or rectangle shape with a façade on the front. Sincere love does not act so that others might see, it acts so that others might be blessed.

♥ **What do we learn about love from God?**

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Philippians 2:5-8

Ephesians 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Love is sacrificial. Sincere love for one another does not differentiate between background, race, appearance, social status, accomplishments, or anything that might set us apart in the world. Sincere love is possible because a believer recognizes that each individual has the singular need of God's redeeming love which is available only through the sacrificial offering of His Son. There is no distinction in our need of a Savior. We are all saved through the blood shed of Jesus Christ. No matter who we

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are, what we have done or where we have come from, our destruction is imminent without the display of God's great love for mankind.

Take the wealthiest, the poorest, the highly-educated, the non-educated, the largest, the smallest – the Gospel is the same for everyone and it is received in the same manner for everyone, by humbly admitting the need for a Savior and accepting Jesus' death and resurrection as a gift from God.

Consider what it requires to prefer another above self.

- Perhaps even when you are tired and feel you have nothing else to give, you may need to stretch and give just a bit more.
- Preferring others above self may mean setting aside your schedule for someone's need at that moment.

Think about your willingness to forego 'your time' in order to respond to a request for help. Are you willing to sacrifice your comfort to serve others? Practically speaking, many of the things I might need to get done will wait without much consequence. We need to be willing to give up our own interests, our rest, and our comfort, to help another. While we may not be able to 'be there' for everyone, we do not want to miss the opportunities that are placed before us.

♥ **Do you sincerely love your brothers and sisters in Christ, preferring their needs above your own?**

Romans 12:9-13

1Peter 3:8-9 To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

1Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

1John 3:14-18

1John 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Hearing truth produces faith which leads to repentance resulting in a soul purified, yielded in obedience and characterized by a sincere love for fellow believers. The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* says, "Love to the brethren is the evidence of our regeneration and justification by faith".

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We are to **'fervently' love one another from the heart**. This is intentional love, characterized by purpose and willingness to labor for one another; having a strong and tender affection for one another. Perhaps one of the greatest proofs of God's work upon a heart is the love and kindness shown toward another. Those individuals Peter addressed had been following the world in their deeds and desires. Their repentance

and trust in Christ should have turned them from selfishness to service. Peter challenged them in their obedience to the truth, to love one another fervently.

Fervently means we *intentionally* love one another. Our love is purposed, more than just talking about it but acting upon it also. Love takes the time to consider what would encourage someone and then follows through with that plan. It has a heart that desires to see others prosper. Love takes sacrifice and selflessness.

We are able to love from the heart sincerely and fervently because of our relationship with Jesus.

1Peter 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, [that is,] through the living and abiding word of God.

We are different from who we used to be. We had a physical birth but now God has granted us a spiritual birth. Physical birth is transitory, our bodies will grow old, die, and decay. All humans have a physical birth and physical death in common, we are born and we will die. What will continue forever is a spiritual birth, wrought through the Word of the living God.

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

We rejoice at the birth of each new baby in our family. As of date, my 94-year-old Mom has sixteen great-grandchildren with three more due in the next few months. Each addition is celebrated and welcomed. How much more should we celebrate the individuals who are born into the knowledge and understanding of saving faith!

Back up to 1 Peter 1:18 for a moment. This verse describes the perishable things of this life using the examples of silver and gold. Silver and gold were perhaps the most valuable trade in commerce at the time. However, these precious metals could not purchase the souls of man. Redemption is only possible through God's provision of His Son.

1 Peter 1:3-4

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:3-5

The following commentary may give us insight into Peter's words of encouragement to those Christians scattered abroad: "The temper and conduct which I recommend, may justly be expected from you, considering your relation to God, and to each other; as having been regenerated, not by corruptible seed, not by virtue of any

descent from human parents, but by incorruptible; not laying the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you had the honour to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not entitle you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is by means of the efficacy of the word of God upon your hearts, even that powerful word which lives and endures for ever, that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical privileges", *Philip Doddridge N.T.*

We are to be set apart in obedience, sincerely encouraging one another. Notice how the above commentary reminds us that this is a privilege! A privilege is a special advantage, an exclusive right reserved for a particular group of people. If you have responded to God's offer of eternal salvation through Christ alone, then you have been given a privilege. God's children have the benefit of having been saved for eternity. With this truth comes great responsibility. It is our duty and should be our pleasure to serve one another for His glory.