

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 1:22 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Purifying Ourselves - A Distinct Course Of Action, That Brings Many Benefits

INTRODUCTION: When you have gone to the dentist for a checkup and cleaning, have you ever had the dentist tell you that you need to floss in between your teeth daily, in addition to brushing them? Was your initial silent reaction to the dentist, "No, I don't want to do that! That's stupid and ridiculous!" ? And then a few years later when you got a cavity in between two teeth, did you realize that the advice from the dentist to floss in between your teeth daily was actually good advice, effective, for your benefit, and worth your time, sacrifice, and efforts? In this study in 1 Peter, we are going to see that God has given us specific instructions that are actually good, effective, for our benefit, and worth our time, sacrifice, and efforts.

READ: 1 Peter 1:22, with vv.13-17 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - In response to the salvation that we true believers have been given from God, we are to change, establish, and orient our thinking and our life in all the ways that God wants for us. (v.13)
 - - In obedience to God, we true believers are to deliberately and diametrically change what we desire, pursue, and conform to. (v.14)
 - - In response to a calling from God, we true believers are to be comprehensively holy in the same way that God who called us is comprehensively holy. (v.15)
 - - Each of us true believers possesses a new informed standard for how to live in holiness, which God will hold us accountable to implement, as a temporary foreign resident in this world. (v.17)
 - - We true believers are to know, stay aware of, and be motivated by the priceless redemption that we have received through the perfect God-man Jesus Christ. (vv.18-19)
 - - The revealing of Christ Jesus and how He provide redemption about 2,000 years ago as recorded in the New Testament was and is for our benefit, serving to establish and increase our faith and hope in God. (vv.20-21)
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v.22 - READ

[Lesson Question: How do we "purify [ourselves] by obeying the truth"?]

SECTION POINT: Purifying ourselves requires taking and maintaining distinct steps of action that conform us to the holiness that God is and has, as described in His Word.

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth"

- - Even though the content of verse 22 seems to introduce a new topic - "having purified yourself", a closer examination reveals that this topic in verse 22 of "having purified yourself" is a continuation of the section of verses 13-17.

- - "Having purified yourself" or 'purifying oneself' can be simply defined as 'establishing holiness in one's life - that is pervasive'.
- - The Greek word for "purified" means "to make clean", which certainly also would relate to the dictionary meaning of "to become clean or pure; to rid of impurities; to cleanse; to rid of foreign or objectionable elements; to free from defilement; to extract, refine", or weed out what corrupts its nature. (Strong's #0048; AHD - 'purify')
- - So by extension therefore, 'purifying oneself' is a course of action that a true believer (an already and permanently saved person) implements in his/her life to make and to maintain himself/herself spiritually clean before God.

-- Drawn from the imperative descriptions in previous verses 13-17, the course of action to 'purifying oneself' requires:

- - - - action - initiating, implementing, and completing hands-on distinct steps of action; ("prepare your minds for action" - v.13);
- - - - self-control - ("be self-controlled" - v.13);
- - - - determination and perseverance - ("set your hope fully on..." - v.13);
- - - - a different perspective - ("set your hope fully on..." - v.13; "live your lives as strangers here" - v.17);
- - - - developing a reverent fear for one's impending accountability before God - ("live your lives... in reverent fear... a Father who judges each man's work impartially" - v.17);
- - - - obedience - ("as obedient children" - v.14, "obeying the truth" - v.22), in other words, obeying God, obeying everything that God has directed in His Word - the Holy Bible, and obeying the truth that is intrinsically in His Word;
- - - - resisting, abstaining from, and quenching doing evil and the desires to do evil - ("do not conform to the evil desires you had..." - v.14);
- - - - becoming increasingly more informed about what God instructs for living in holiness - ("when you lived in ignorance" - v.14);
- - - - intentionally and comprehensively and consistently and successfully living in holiness - ("be holy in all you do" - v.15);
- - - - substantial self-sacrifice - giving up and relinquishing what you want and instead pursuing what God wants - "Be holy, because I am holy" - v.16);
- - - - thereby and consequently, 'purifying oneself' requires holistically re-orienting yourself, in effect consecrating or sanctifying yourself (setting yourself apart for God's holy purposes) - making and maintaining yourself in a spiritual state of rightness and cleanness before God (in other words, conforming to His holiness).

 [Lesson Question: Why does God want us to be "purified"?)

SECTION POINT: Purifying ourselves thereupon creates conducive conditions within us that can enable us to appropriately and effectively accomplish what God has for each of us to do.

"Now that you have purified yourselves... so that you have..."

- We need to be purified in order to please God (Romans 12:1-2), which involves:
- - - - to be on current good standing with Him - that He is pleased with you - how you have been currently maintaining yourself spiritually and how you have been currently conducting yourself; (cf. 1 Peter 2:1-5; 1 John 1:9)

- - - to have a currently healthy and unhindered communing relationship with Him that will be acceptable to Him, appropriate, and effective. (example: Exodus 19:10-11)
- - Notice that this 'purifying ourselves' does not involve nor affect our salvation - we became "God's elect" through salvation by faith in Christ (1 Peter 1:1-2,5,9).
- - Also notice that this 'purifying ourselves' clearly does not involve nor justify ignoring or minimizing one's own sins and one's own engaging in sinfulness.

- - We need to be purified in order to serve God acceptably, appropriately, effectively. (1 Peter 2:4-5,9,16; examples: Numbers 8:21-22; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11)
- - We need to be purified in order for God to be willing to move with power amongst us
- in other words, to accomplish spiritual outcomes and ministry results that we cannot accomplish without God's assistance. (Joshua 3:5)

-- We need to be purified so that we are currently moment-by-moment suitable to implement God's holy purposes without interference from any negative influence that originates from our own personal engaging in sinfulness. (1 Peter 1:22 "Now that you have purified yourselves... so that you have..."; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16)
- - - - For example, we need to maintain a state of being purified even in the midst of "suffering grief in all kinds of trials" (1 Peter 1:6) so that we consistently respond appropriately to that suffering of grief in all kinds of trials.

-- We need to be purified in order to have generated within us a "**sincere love for [our] brothers**".

- - - - Our being in a state of purification creates conducive conditions that facilitate God in re-orientating our love onto our "brothers" (fellow believers),
- - - - and that love is "sincere", "not hypocritical", not "presenting a false appearance that disguises or conceals one's true regard to the contrary". (Strong's #0505, AHD - 'dissemble')

[Lesson Question: If, from a state of being currently purified, we naturally have sincere love for our brothers, then why do we need to be instructed by God to further "love one another deeply, from the heart"?)

SECTION POINT: Purifying ourselves results in the obligation and need to develop and maintain sincere brotherly love in a manner that is furthermore "deep" and "from the heart".

"love one another deeply, from the heart."

- - Within being in a (current) state of purification, God distinctly infuses us with a love for our brothers in the faith.
- - Thereby, we are not only enabled to possess and extend that love to our brothers, but we furthermore are empowered and endowed with a quality of sincerity to this love for our brothers.
- - However, now what we do with that "sincere love" for our brothers lies within our own control and our own choices - to enhance it further, or to hold it at its original God-given level, or to diminish it.
- - Here in verse 22, God instructs us to enhance that "sincere love", a "brotherly love" for "one another". (Strong's #5360, #0240)

- - Our responsibility is to establish and maintain that "sincere love" as being "deeply", meaning "fervently" in an "extreme passionate and devoted manner" and "intently" with "diligence, attention, and concentration". (Strong's #1619; AHD - 'fervent', 'intently')
 - - This deep sincere brotherly love for one another suggests that it is unshakeable, unwavering, never withdrawn, never withheld, never diminished.
 - - This deep sincere brotherly love should also be "from the heart" - a genuine virtue, component, and value that each true believer is to securely possess as a core priority element of who the believer is as a believer.
 - - It should not be artificial, not a pretense, not compelled, not selfishly-motivated, not shallow, not incomplete, not corrupted in any manner. (cf. James 4:8)
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BIG IDEA: God has designed and intends that purifying ourselves is to result in us true believers living in holiness, serving God effectively, and possessing a deep sincere brotherly love for one another.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - For those of us here who are true believers, are you doing all of this that God instructs you to do?
- - Have you been consciously and distinctly working on purifying yourself, as instructed here in verse 22?
- - Are you "obeying the truth" - consistently successful in obeying all that God instructs in His written Word - the Holy Bible?
- - Have you currently been taking and maintaining distinct steps of action that conform you to the holiness that God has?
- - Have you currently been abstaining from participating in sinfulness? Successfully? Even in the sinfulness that you enjoy doing?
- - If your answer is 'No' to any of these questions, then are you willing to start right now in 'purifying yourself' in the manner that we have learned today from studying this in verse 22?
- - Are you willing to start right now in holistically re-orienting yourself - making and then maintaining yourself in a spiritual state of rightness and cleanness before God by conforming to His holiness?
- - If you become successful in making and then maintaining yourself in a current state of being purified, will you be willing to then serve God in whatever He has for you to do?
- - If you become successful in making and then maintaining yourself in a current state of being purified, will you be willing to possess, embrace, and even endeavor to further enhance a deep sincere brotherly love for all of the other persons in this ministry?

- - For those of us here who are not true believers, do you find it difficult to love the other persons in this ministry?
- - As a non-believer, do you find it difficult to be sincere in your interactions with the other persons in this ministry?
- - As a non-believer, do you find it unappealing to obey God, to obey what He instructs in His written Word, to obey the truth according to what God says the truth is?

- - And instead, do you find it easy to pretend to possess all of these virtues of godliness when you are here or to act as if you possess them?

- - As a non-believer, do you shelter an innate strong resistance and refusal to submit to God's authority over you and His claim to have the right to mandate how you should live your life? Even to the extent that you harbor resentment?

- - For all of us here today, we need to stay fully aware that what God mandates, like this activity of purifying ourselves (for example), is designed and is implemented by God to be for our good, "for [our] sake" (v.20; example: v.12), to benefit each of us personally.

- - Therefore, if you personally are not successfully completing these various aspects involved with 'purifying yourself' (for example), then why not? Why would you fail or refrain from successfully completing these mandates from God when you know that these are for your own good now in the present, and in the future, and in eternity? In the next life, will you be ashamed and seriously regretful for how little you tried to obey and fulfill what God has for you?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What characteristics will be present and perhaps visible if a believer has deep love for fellow believers?

- - What characteristics will be present and perhaps visible for ministry leaders who have a deep sincere love for the people in their ministry?

- - What effect will there be on a church or ministry if all of its believers possess a deep brotherly love for one another?

- - What effect will there be on a church or ministry if only a few of its believers possess a deep brotherly love for one another? Note: If you cite an actual situation that you have experienced, be careful not to disclose any information that could identify who you are talking about in a negative way, that you are "speaking against" (James 4:11).]

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