

# Long for the Word of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] We've been studying the book of 1 Peter.

! He had spent much of his life as a fisherman.

He was apparently good at it. A professional fisherman in his day would have to know a host of things in order to provide for his family and that of the crew that he worked with.

First of all, he'd have to figure out, where's the fish? You know, that's an important part of that. You didn't just go out and drop a line in the water.

In fact, they didn't even use lines. They used nets. And it was also very important to know the weather and weather patterns and all that.

[ 1 : 17 ] You did that basically by observing the clouds and reading signs and also adjusting for the wind.

But Peter knew the fishing business. Of course, the Lord has now radically saved him. He said, I'm going to make you a fisher of men. And he'd been filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I think we could say that he had been to this point a success. In his first sermon, 3,000 people were saved. And Peter also was able to write the words of God, although he may not have fully understood.

That's what he was doing at that time. But when we read passages in the books that he authored, we're reading the very words that God inspired.

And we begin this evening with the first three verses of chapter 2, which say, So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

[ 3 : 06 ] This portion of Scripture points out to us that the truly saved long for the Word of God.

That longing for the Word of God moves and motivates the saved man. I think it is reminiscent of the words of Christ Jesus recorded in John's Gospel chapter 8 verses 31 and 32.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples.

and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. I just read to you out of the English Standard Version.

I also like the New American Standard Bible in that section. He says, If you continue in My Word, then you are truly My disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

[ 4 : 25 ] So we have abiding and continuing and we are to do both. We are to abide in and continue in God's Word.

And that, of course, is consistent with the teachings of the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans chapter 7 verse 22. For I delight in the law of God in My inner being.

Now the Old Testament writers also had a strong desire for God's Word. Job said this in chapter 23 verse 12, I have treasured the words of His mouth more than My portion of food.

And then the first Psalm speaks of delighting in the Word of God. First two verses of the Psalms.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly or the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but His delight is in the law of the Lord.

And on His law He meditates day and night. The prophet Jeremiah knew much heartache and travail in his lifetime, but listened to his inspired words uttered in the midst of life's troubles of the Lord.

[ 6 : 10 ] Jeremiah 15, 16, Your words were found and I ate them. And Your words became to me a joy and a delight of my heart for I am called by Your name, O Lord, God of hosts.

The Bible, the Word of God, is filled with such testimonials. The fact is that believers delight in God's Word.

Such delight dominates the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119. In that chapter, there are 175 verses of praise.

And amazingly, they don't repeat themselves. You're not going to, well, I read that in verse 39 and this one in verse 101 and they don't repeat themselves.

But I think it's very instructive as to how the psalmist ends that great chapter 119. And I'm absolutely struck by these words.

[ 7 : 27 ] By the way, this is verse 176. It's a long chapter. I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

Seek your servant for I do not forget your commandments. When Dr. Billy Graham's mother was on her deathbed, Dr. Graham was in the room and he opened up his Bible and he started reading Psalm 119.

All 176 verses. And he got into it about the third verse and his mother, who was quite aged, took over. And she started quoting Psalm 119 verbatim.

And she said, Billy, have you forgotten that I taught you that psalm when you were a little boy? And she quoted all 176 verses on her deathbed.

Here's a sampling of the inspired writings of the Psalms. Oh, how I love your law.

[ 8 : 52 ] It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers for your testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the aged. For I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way in order to keep your word.

I do not turn aside from your rules for you have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste. sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Through your precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way. That's 119 verses 97 to 104.

Well, it should be obvious to us that Peter, the fisherman, loved the word of God. And Peter longed for every believer to embrace that same attitude.

[ 10 : 15 ] In the opening words of 1 Peter 2 verses 1 to 3, the great apostle offers five ways that will lead to a strong and an enhanced desire to study God's word.

The five that we're going to study tonight are as follows. Believers should remember their life source. Believers should eliminate their sins.

Believers should admit their need. Believers should pursue their spiritual growth. And number five, believers should survey their blessings.

I'd like to take credit for coming up with all these, but the fact is Dr. MacArthur covered all these in his commentary on 1 Peter.

And the first one is believers should remember their life source. And we really get that out of one word in chapter 2 of 1 Peter.

[ 11 : 31 ] It's in verse 1a. Therefore. That really resonates.

Therefore. Now I've said this many times over the years that I've been teaching. When you see the word therefore in the Bible, it is incumbent on us to figure out what the word therefore is there for. It's very important. In the Bible, the word therefore almost always refers back to what has preceded it.

In this case, therefore is there as a reference to 1 Peter verses 23 to 25. Chapter 1 verse 23 to 25. All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers and the flower falls but the word of the Lord remains forever.

[ 13 : 03 ] And the word therefore is a great reminder to the readers down through the ages. It reminds us of Peter's letter as a commentary on the saving work of God found in the scriptures and how we grow and are spiritually transformed by our commitment to scripture.

The word is the power of how we are to live the Christian life. And the Psalms are filled with evidence of this truth.

Another area of the Bible which offers help on this truth is found in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 55 very popular among believers verses 10 and 11 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and did not return I should say did not return there heaven but watered the earth making it bring forth and sprout giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word be that that goes out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55 10 and 11 The word of God is powerful. It is powerful in the life of the true believer and Jesus said this when he was on earth John 15 3 already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you you are already clean second thing we want to discuss is eliminating sin the true believer must eliminate sin put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander and slander and that's 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 1b we have said in here many times that though saved we are still in a battle with the world the flesh and the devil and our battle is especially with the flesh

[ 16 : 13 ] Peter in this verse calls for us to put away malice and deceit hypocrisy envy and slander and this is similar to what the apostle Paul said to the Colossian church in Colossians chapter 3 verses 8 and 9 but now you must put them all away wrath malice slander and obscene talk from your mouth do not lie to one another saying that you've put off the old self with its practices that sounds wonderful but how do we achieve how are we going to achieve that the Greek word for put aside or put away had reference to taking off old and soiled garments and putting on clean clothes this was especially done during baptismal ceremonies and sins are the great hindrance as we strive to study and apply

God's word to our life and the first thing that Peter mentions is malice in English malice has become associated with harming someone we treated them with malice but in the Greek language it had more to do with behaving wickedly sometimes it is translated malice other times they actually the writers injected the word behaving wickedly in New Testament translations and then Peter commands us to get rid of all deceit remember we're trying to put away sins get rid of all deceit it didn't say get rid of some deceit it said all deceit in

Greek literature it referred to bait or a fish hook by which you trick a fish into biting I was never very good at tricking a fish into anything but Dr.

Luke used it in the book of Acts to describe Paul's references to evil magicians remember how he always had to deal with those guys he said these magicians are full of deceit and fraud and they went around trying to trick people through the practice of fraud they still do that by the way the third thing that Peter refers to is hypocrisy and that word was very familiar to Greek speaking people it was a reference to actors wearing a mask which they did in Greece in order to deceive audience members in God's word it refers to spiritual insincerity it is a word used to describe behavior that is not consistent with a person's beliefs during the incarnation the

Lord Jesus had much to say about hypocrites and hypocrisy envy is next on Peter's list it is used to define a person's resentful attitude toward others who are doing better than he is and he is envious because they're succeeding where he failed and the last thing Peter mentions is slander I'm going to try this I don't know if I can pull it off Dr.

[ 20 : 46 ] MacArthur says that slander used here is an onomatopoeic word and I had no idea what that meant so I looked it up for a definition and I still don't know what it means I read the definition have no clue I think it is a way to gossip or back bite or to defame one's character but we have to just be pleased with the fact the bottom line is we're not to slander anyone don't slander people and next on our list is believers to admit their need 1st Peter chapter 2 first part of verse 2 like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk followers of Christ need

God's word and we need God's truth just like a newborn baby needs milk when a baby is first born the driving force is to get to that mother's milk why is that and because God and may I add not evolution has impressed upon the newborn baby that his life depends on it that drive in the baby is used of the Holy Spirit to tell us that our desire for the word of God should be just as intense and that intensity should never diminish in our Christian walk our spiritual life depends on it and Peter by inspiration used the word long for long for the pure spiritual milk that commands all believers to crave something and craving is to desire Paul used that word often to express a passion that was basically insatiable and Peter uses the metaphor of pure milk to describe this driving forth he calls it the pure milk of the word or the spiritual milk now if we read the Bible closely as we should we come across many helpful commands concerning the word of God we are to read the word study the word meditate on the word teach the word preach the word search the word memorize the word well

Peter focused on something else we are commanded to do so we are going to add to our list tonight long for the word put that on that list and Jesus quoted the great Old Testament passage from Deuteronomy in Matthew 4-4 when he said this man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God and do I remember correctly that was during a confrontation with

the devil with Satan you don't live by bread alone live by every word that God has spoken to us I think we should all make a commitment tonight to be daily nourished from

God's word and believers should pursue their spiritual growth 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 2b that by it you may grow up into salvation there is a reason that we should pursue spiritual milk and it's a sad thing to see graphic images of babies children and adults that are starving or malnourished I've seen that many times I remember kids in Algeria that were eating out of the dump finding any morsel of food they possibly could other places Egypt Asia but it's even sadder when we see believers that are spiritually malnourished it is

[ 26 : 41 ] God's desire that every believer should grow spiritually as we take in the word of God that is a way of saying as we grow in the word of God it is God's design that the believer mature in Christ Peter's going to use this example when he writes his second letter second Peter chapter 3 verse 18 he says but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ there are men in here who have been saved for many years but God still commands us to grow in respect to our salvation far too many people think that salvation is the end of something instead of embracing the great truth that it's actually the beginning of something we're taking baby steps when we're saved it is the beginning of a new life in

Christ I think in many respects all this is reminiscent of Paul's words addressed to the Philippian church listen to his command in Philippians 2 verses 12 13 therefore my beloved as you have always obeyed so now not only is in my presence but much more in my absence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure I want to say this to all of you and then I can only hope that I can back it up we should all be dissatisfied with the status quo and we should seek spiritual growth at a pace we've never experienced before time's short listen to how Paul talked about this again in Philippians

Don Coleman's favorite book of the Bible former pastor Philippians chapter 3 verses 7 to 14 but whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish it's an interesting word sometimes you can look it up and it'll say dung and even worse I count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in death that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead not that

I've already obtained this or I'm already perfect but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own brothers I do not consider that I've made it my own but one thing I do I love this forget what lies behind put it another way forget the past and strain forward to what lies ahead when you do that Paul says I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus Philippians 3 7-14 are you satisfied with your current status in your private study of God's word if you're thinking yes are you prepared to sit down with Christ and explain to him where the satisfaction comes from maybe you are Peter gives us a fifth and final motivation tonight for desiring God's words believers should survey their blessings if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good 1st Peter 2-3 this is Peter's fifth perspective for desiring God's word it sounds a lot like the words found in Psalm 34 first part of verse 8 oh taste and see that the Lord is good this is really a call for believers in every age to survey frequently what we have experienced the Holy

[ 33 : 21 ] Spirit uses the word tasted the kindness the goodness and the grace of the Lord it begins with our conversion and never ends do you ever survey your blessings how many times has God answered your prayers and all the time we thought he was silent Jeremiah said this your words were found and I ate them and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart for I'm called by your name oh Lord God of hosts Jeremiah 15 16 may the Lord bless us richly as we move even further into the book of 1st Peter in the days ahead let's close with a word of prayer thank you father for the day for your grace and mercy thank you for your word it is living may we read it and plant it in our heart may we teach it to others I pray in Jesus name amen