Daily Devotion #213

**Hunger For God’s Word**

**1 Peter 2:1-2 (NASB)** *“Putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.”*

Most people in America grow up having many pleasures that other people don’t have. Most people in America have meals readily available, a roof over their heads, cars to drive, stores in which to shop, and many other blessings. In fact, there are so many things to be blessed with that many families buy storage sheds or pay a monthly fee to have all their belongs safely kept. But there comes a time when all those things need to be sifted through and either given to someone who has a need for them or discarded.

As Peter is doing all he can to encourage the dispersed believers, he not only reminds them of their great God and their eternal blessings that await them, he encourages them to let go of some things that are weighing them down - things that are accumulating in their spiritual storehouses.

1. Malice - a word in Greek for evil or wickedness. This is something that every soul wrestles with, and you can imagine the evil thoughts and intentions that would be going through the hearts of those dear saints as they were being so brutally persecuted. So Peter tells them to put the malice aside.
2. Deceit. This is a word referring to bait or a fishhook. But in this context it means dishonesty and falsehood. There is never a reason to be anything but honest with one another and God.
3. Hypocrisy. That means to get rid of acting like someone you are not. Stop pretending that you can do anything to fix your situation in life by your pride or arrogance and humble yourself before God and let Him have his way.
4. Envy - the desire to have what someone else has. In this case Peter was probably thinking about how good the Roman citizens had it compared to what the Christians were going through. Many people look to their neighbors and wish they could be or have or accomplish what someone else has or is. But God wants us to let that go, set it aside, and focus on what is really important.
5. Slander - “evil speaking”. Saying things that do no good for anyone. When people get in difficult situations, it becomes ease for them to put others down and feel like they are elevating themselves.

As much as things need to be put away, they need to be replaced with something usable. Many times when people get rid of something, they replace it with a newer version of the same thing. Similarly, Peter says, once you put away all those sinful, fleshly things out of your heart, replace them with the Word of God because spiritual growth is what people need if they are to get through life-threatening, freedom-threatening situations. In fact, the only way anyone is able to face the challenges of their lives is to focus more and more on the Word of God. It is the one thing that helps us most. It is the one thing that never changes. There are many times when we are overly burdened by something or someone, and those burdens can cause us to feel the effects of our flesh to the point where we respond inappropriately. God’s Word is the way, the avenue, the substance that will cause our minds and hearts to focus best.

Notice the intensity with which Peter says we should long for God’s Word. As a new born baby longs for milk. Milk is the product that God made that is most effective for growth, especially at an early age. I remember when our children were young, when they were fussy or irritated, usually from being too tired or held too much, the one thing that calmed them down was warm milk. They could go from screaming at the top of their lungs to being sound asleep when they felt the warmth of the milk going into their tummys.

So with that picture, Peter says, if you will focus your hearts on the source of life, God’s Word, you will find that all the things of the flesh will fade away, and God will grow you through His Word to the point where you will be able to handle the challenges of life, no matter how difficult they may be. Praise His Name!