Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Cultivating a Hunger for God's Word
Scripture: 1 Peter 2:1-3
Code: 80-174

I want to bring you thins morning to a portion of Scripture that is familiar to all of us, and certainly one of my very favorite portions of Scripture; but it seems like the only one fitting for a time like this as we dedicate this study Bible to the Lord's use, and that is 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 1 through 3.

This passage I think sets the tone, establishes the foundation that is essential to make this study Bible, or any Bible for that matter, valuable in your life and mine. Let me read these three verses. 1 Peter 2, 1 to 3. "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

The key phrase here is "to desire the pure milk of the word." Genuine spirituality, genuine Godliness, is always marked by a love for and a delight in God's truth. Jesus said, "He who is of God hears God's word," and Jesus said, "He who is a true believer," in the same chapter, John 8, "keeps God's word." Paul expressed this love for God's word in the believer's heart when he said, in Romans 7, in verse 22, "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man." And Jobe said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." The Psalmist said in the very first Psalm that the Godly man will be blessed because his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." And as we read earlier David, in Psalm 19, said, "The word of God is more desirable than gold, and much fine gold, sweeter than honey, and the drippings of the honeycomb." Again, in Psalm 40, in verse 8, the Psalmist expresses the cry of the Godly, "I delight to do Thy will, oh God, Thy law is within my heart."

But perhaps the richest and most generous portion of Scripture describing the Godly man's delight in the word is too long for us to read - it is Psalm 119, with all 176 verses expressing the Psalmist's love for divine truth. You need to read Psalm 119 and remember that in the middle of it, or near the middle of it, he says, "Oh how I love Thy law." Repeatedly in that Psalm, the Psalmist expresses his delight in the law of the Lord.

This delight in, this love for, this craving to know God's word is what Peter is writing about in this brief passage. He is calling us, by way of command, to desire the pure milk of the word, to long for it. This is a very important exhortation. And the verb, desire, is an aorist imperative verb. It's a Greek verb, epipatheo that is a -- what we call a compound verb, it has a preposition at the beginning of it. And as

I've noted through the years, wherever you have a preposition in front of a verb, you have the intensification of that verb. So, this means a strong desire; hence, a craving, a longing, a compelling desire. That is what Peter calls us to, to have a compelling desire for the word.

This same verb is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Psalm 42 in verse 1, where the Psalmist says, "As the heart," H-A-R-T ah, an old word for "deer," "as the deer pants after the water brook, so pants my soul after Thee oh God." And the idea of the verb is the idea of panting. It's to the place where there is such an immense and insatiable thirst that the animal has only one thought in its mind. "As the deer pants for the satisfaction of water, so pants my soul after You, oh God." In Psalm 119:174, the Psalmist says, "Your law is my delight," and uses the same verb in that verse to express the longing of his heart.

So, we're talking here about a passion. We're talking here about a longing, a driving, compelling craving, something that is strong and intense. Peter, then, is commanding us to have that consuming kind of craving. It's obvious that we all crave things. We understand passion. We understand longing. We understand what it is to be thirsty. Perhaps we don't understand it as much as those who lived in an agricultural society out in the middle of a field being baked in the middle of the midday sun, but we understand what it is to be thirsty. We understand, perhaps, what it is to be hungry. We don't understand what it is to be hungry after you haven't eaten for several weeks and to have that tremendous craving. We know the cravings that we feel toward the things in life that are not only good, but the things that are bad. We have a longing for love and affection. We have a longing for companionship. We have a longing for information and understanding. We have also longings that are illicit and impure.

Peter says, "With all your longings, this is one you need to have - an intense, passionate, overwhelming, insatiable craving for the word." And he defines it as the pure milk of the word; pure, a word meaning "uncontaminated." It's a pure substance in the midst of a world of corruptible, contaminated, polluted things. And he uses the marvelous, beautiful analogy and imagery of a little baby who longs for the uncorrupted, unpolluted, unadulterated milk of its mother's breast. This is the purity of that milk - uncontaminated, untouched by anything, coming straight, as it were, from the mother into the mouth of the child, unpolluted by the world around. And what milk is this that Peter calls us to that is analogous to that, that nourishes that infant? It is the milk of the word. The milk of the word.

The Greek word presented here of the word is one word, lagacan. It's an interesting word, and it needs our attention if we're going to understand the passage. It is used only here and in Romans 12:1. In Romans 12:1, it is translated "reasonable" or "spiritual service." And somebody might wonder, "How could you translate the same word, 'reasonable service,' 'spiritual service,' and 'of the word?' That doesn't seem to be at all similar." But, indeed, it is. The original term, lagacan meant "belonging to speech," hence, belonging to reason. Speech, by the way, is what demonstrates

rationality. The only creature on the face of the earth, the only part of God's creation that speaks is mankind. Mankind alone is rational, reasonable. And so, belonging to speech was easily understood as belonging to reason, and it came to mean reasonable or rational. Man, it says, is in the Greek zolalagacan, that is, he is a rational being.

Because the word meant "reasonable" or "rational," it eventually came to mean "spiritual," having to do with the inner part of an individual, and consequently is translated in Romans 12:1 as "spiritual service" in some translations, or "reasonable service" in others.

What is "reasonable spiritual service?" Well, the answer is reasonable spiritual service would be service directly consistent with what is revealed in the word of God. It would be consistent with the mind of God, the rationality of God. And, in fact, lagacan comes from the original root word, lagas, which means "word." And so reasonable service, rational service, would be that which reflected the mind of God. And since the mind of God is revealed in Scripture, it is therefore then of the word. The mind of God is ours in Scripture; therefore, reasonable spiritual service would be consistent with the mind of God revealed in Scripture. And since Scripture is the basic theme of this text, it fits beautifully. You say, "In what way is the theme - is it the theme of the text?" Go back to verse 25, at the end of the prior chapter. By the way, remember in the original autographs of Scripture, there were no chapters to divide. The text would flow like this, "The word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Therefore, desire the pure milk of the word," or "desire the spiritual reasonable truth of God which is revealed in the word of the Lord which endures forever and was preached to you by the gospel." The connection is very obvious, and that is why translators have translated this "of the word" instead of just "spiritual" and "reasonable," because it is clearly linked to the theme which is the abiding and eternal and saving word of God. It is the word that we must see as the source of our nourishment. Desire the pure milk of the word that reflects the mind of God, spiritual truth from God.

Now, when I was thinking about how I might wanna present this very important Bible to you today and put it in your hands and with what Scripture I might embrace this special moment, I was drawn to this passage immediately, because no matter what else I might have said, this is the most compelling issue at hand. It does no good to provide a tool like this if a person doesn't have a desire to study the word of God. If a person doesn't have a craving and a longing, then all of the notes, with all of the material that they provide, are really useless, unless there is a passion in the heart of the individual to read with understanding the Scriptures.

And so, we have to go back to the very foundation, which is to face the issue of whether or not we have such a craving. Nothing obviously would be sadder than to have all of this information explaining the meaning of Scripture and have it stuck on a shelf somewhere. And I know many of you people have waited a long time, and you understand the wonderful treasure of this Bible, and perhaps even some of you know that these leather covered Bibles were basically done by hand for you, and all that

has gone into this makes it some kind of a treasure, and you may want to treat it with delicacy. Well, let me warn you: the only good it's going to do is when you begin to use it. And my prayer would be that you'd have to get another one in a short time, because you've worn it out. It's not a relic to be kept like some icon somewhere. It's to be used.

And that's all gonna come from the desire. Peter could've launched this section of his Epistle by saying, "You need to read the word," as Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:13. He could've said, "You need to study the word," as Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:15. He could've said, "You need to mediate on the word," as in Psalm 19:14, Joshua 1:8, or in Philippians 4:8, "Think on these things." He could've said, "You need to teach the word," as in 1 Timothy 4:11, or "You need to preach the word," as in 2 Timothy 4:2. He could've said, "You need to search the word," Acts 17:11, or "Wield the word like a sword," Ephesians 6. He could've said what the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:11, "You need to hide the word in your heart." But, he didn't say any of those things. It is crucial to read and study and meditate, and then to teach and preach. It's essential to search and to wield the word, and to hide the word in your heart. But, before you're going to do any of those things, there's going to have to be a desire for the word, and Peter knows that and we know that, and that's why it's so foundational. Everything else flows out of that longing.

But, most of all, we would want the spirit of God to produce that longing in your heart. I remember when I went to seminary, I really didn't go there to learn to preach. In fact, that thought never entered my mind. I didn't really go there thinking I was following a professional career path to equip me to be the pastor of a church. I never really knew if that's what I would be. There was one compelling reason that sent me to seminary after my college days, and that was I had a desire to understand the Scripture. And God had put in my heart this craving to understand what the Bible meant by what it said, and that's what drove me to gain the tools of interpretation. I've never lost that. As I wrote in one of the articles in the front of the Bible, the hard part for me was not doing this, the hard part was leaving it. In fact, since I finished, I confess to having gone through some pretty serious withdrawals, because the intensity of spending so much time in the word of God is so exhilaratingly rewarding and fulfilling when you have that craving.

Peter chooses a simple analogy, a simple analogy of a baby. A baby craves milk, and they crave it in a rather serious way, as you well know. And it's all they crave. And as the baby craves the milk, we are to crave passionately the word.

This is where it all begins. And, if there's anything that I wanna say to you this morning, it's to ask you the question, "Do you have that craving? Do you have a real desire for the word?" I meet people very often who say to me, "We're so frustrated, we live in a certain place, and we cannot find any place where the word of God is taught. We can't find anywhere where we can be fed." I love to hear that from people, because I understand the craving is in their hearts. I'm sorry about the circumstance, but I'm grateful for the craving, because it's evidence of the work of God in their life. Where Bible study is

not a duty, where Bible study is not a chore, it's not some kind of legalistic thing that you do out of fear or intimidation, it's not because it's merely an assignment, but where it flows out of this longing or craving in the heart.

One thing is true about a baby. You don't have to work real hard on a baby to get them to feed. Generally speaking, they will do that. That is the longing and the desire and the craving that God has built into them. It's a very natural and a very normal thing. That baby cries out to be fed. In fact, the sad reality is that as believers, so many times we have to be coddled and motivated and exhorted to do what ought to come most naturally as the flow of our sense of need toward the source for that need: the word of God.

Now, that's the basic exhortation here - desire the pure milk of the word with the same singularity and the same compulsion that a baby desires milk. I like babies. They smell good, they feel good, they're marvelous little miracles, they're treasures beyond description in the human realm. But, I want you to know something: they are - they're literally anti-social. They bring nothing in terms of giving. They don't do anything for you. They're not interested in meeting your needs. They are only interested in having their own met. And you know, God marvelously has built into babies loud, crying mechanisms. I mean, they're weak everywhere but in the voice, and I've never been able to figure out how they strengthen their voice in the womb. But, they come out with this tremendously strong set of lungs and vocal chords. And I think that's a God-given gift. Because in the business of life, a mother could be doing this or that, and her baby left somewhere else might seriously be harmed physically if they were not properly nourished. And so God has a built in mechanism so that the mother can't escape. And the mechanism not only - if she's anywhere in the neighborhood, she hears it. And not only that, but it's irritating noise, so that you wanna silence it as fast as you possibly can. And that, too, is a gift from God. The baby is anti-social. I'll tell ya, they're not only anti-social, they're absolutely selfish. As I said, they don't care about anybody else. "Feed me, feed me now, or life will be miserable for all of you."

I'll tell you something else. If babies had weapons, they would use them. If a baby could pick up a brick and throw it through a window to get your attention, it would do it. Fortunately, they can't. If a baby could rip down the curtains and overturn the furniture, they would do it. When they want milk, they want milk. And so those little hungry reprobates come into the world, understanding the desperation of their condition, and knowing they need nourishment.

That's what Peter's talking about here. That's what he's talking about. He's talking about a compulsion here. Now, as you look at your own life and ask whether you have that kind of craving, whether you have that kind of compulsion, you perhaps sometimes wonder. And maybe there are many of you who don't have that, and you admit that. It is true that there can be a point of satisfaction as you mature, where there are some things you have come to know and there's a certain satisfaction in that. But, that craving and that desire should never go away. Peter is saying it ought to be there all the time.

Now, surrounding that exhortation are some elements that will help motivate you. If you're struggling with that, Peter's gonna give us some help. By the way, this outline I'm giving you this morning is in the notes on 2:2 in the footnotes of the study Bible and gives you an illustration of how the study Bible will help you.

Peter gives us five reasons for craving the word, five motivations for craving the word. Number 1 - he says, "Remember your life source. Remember your life source." Back in verse 1, the first word, "Therefore." "Therefore." Now, in that one word is this whole point, because that one word is a bridge back to what has just been said. "The word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Therefore, desire the pure milk of the word." In other words, because of what the word did to give you life in Christ, because you've already experienced its power, you ought to have a continual longing for it. Go back to verse 22. "It was the truth which purified your souls." Verse 22, "It was the incorruptible word of God which brought about your new birth." Verse 23, "It was the word that purged sin from you, purified your souls, and brought you to obedience to the gospel. It was the word that brought you to a new birth which gave you life eternal." He's talking about salvation. It was the word that endures forever that was preached to you in the gospel in which you believed. You've already experienced the life-giving power of the word. Peter's point is clear. Since this living, abiding, eternal word of God was the power of your new birth, it was the power of your cleansing from sin, it was the word that transformed you, it was the word that brought the grace of God to work in you, it is the seed of the word that gave you life and transformed you, since you have already had that powerful word expressed in your life through the saving work of God's Spirit, you've already experienced its power, you oughta remember its power and crave its continuance in your life.

The word is not just powerful in your salvation, the word is powerful in your sanctification. This word which gave you new life will sustain and enrich and embellish that new life. "Of His own will, He begot us by the word of truth," James 1:18 says. In Matthew 13, "The seed which goes into the soil and produces the fruit is the word of God." It is called in Philippians 2:16, "The word of life." In Hebrews 4:12, "The living word." It is the word that gives life. "My words, they are life," the Lord says to us.

And so it is that you have already experienced the life-giving power of the word, this thrilling, marvelous power expressed in your transformation - the forgiveness of sin, the cleaning of your soul, the new birth. That wasn't the end, that's only the start. You have been given new life - thrilling, marvelous, new life through the power of the word, and that's just the beginning.

Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers as he was reminding them of how they had responded to the word. In 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2 in verse 13, he says, "For this reason also we thank God without ceasing because when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you welcomed it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God," then he says this, "which also effectively works in you who believe." Whatever it could do in your salvation it

can do in your sanctification. It is still powerful in its work in your life. Remember then your life source. Remember how powerful the word was when it took you out of the kingdom of darkness and put you into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Remember how powerful the word is when it broke the power of sin and made you a servant of righteousness. Remember how powerful the word is when it washed you and cleansed you, when it transformed you, when it caused you to be regenerated. That power is still available. That oughta be motivation for you to desire the word, the powerful word.

I saw an ad in a Christian magazine, yesterday I was reading through it, advertising the fact that so many, many people have all these problems and hurts and kept saying, "Hurting people," "hurting people this," and "hurting people here," and H-U-R-T-I-N-G, hurting people. And then it offered an opportunity to go and get a Master's Degree in psychology - Christian psychology so you could help hurting people. And I just sat back and thought to myself, "The solution to help hurting people is not human psychology, it is the truth of the word of the living God." It is that very life-giving truth which transforms them in the beginning and alone will continue that transformation. The reason that people are in the trouble they're in, "hurting," unfulfilled, lacking spiritual maturity, unable to cope with life, is not going to be solved - I should say, the problem is not gonna be solved by psychology. The reason they're that way is because they're malnourished in the truth of the living God. You will be nourished on the word. Remember, it is the life-changing word. You've already experienced it, it'll continue to express the same power in your life.

Number 2 - he says, "Remember your life source." This will motivate you to desire the word, and secondly, eliminate your sin. Sometimes I've written in a Bible of someone, "Remember, this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book." That is true. In verse 1, Peter says, "Laying aside," this is a participle, "laying aside, rejecting all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking." You're never going to have a singular desire for the truth of God until you stop desiring other things. As long as you desire evil, as long as you desire deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking, your desires are polluted and corrupted, and you will not experience the singular desire for the truth of God.

This is an aorist middle imperative participle, it carries the same imperative or command tone as the verb, "desire." It is equally, then, a command. It's a command to strip off. It's a term used to take off dirty, filthy clothing. Strip off the filthy things in your life. Those lusts, those longings, those desires, those appetites, those cravings, those intense passions for the wrong stuff, they are injurious to you.

And that little baby wants nothing but milk. Nothing but milk. And in that singularity, tremendous nutrition is poured into that little life, and it grows into health. It isn't long before that little baby becomes a little child and is exposed to different options. And then what happens? They gravitate toward everything that is bad for them, typically. If it's the sweeter it is, the better they like it - candy and ice cream, and sugars of all kinds. And then as they grow, their appetites get worse and worse, and of course we are living in a culture today where we're being blasted and bombarded by the

medical field, telling us we've gotta start eating healthy, right? Because the older we get, the more we gravitate toward what is unhealthy, because we wanna satisfy our appetites.

And in a sense, that's analogous to what has to happen in the spiritual realm. When you have that singular desire for the word of God, then you will be satisfied with that word. But, when your desire is corrupted by all kinds of desires for wrong things, things that are spiritually unhealthy, debilitating and destructive, you have real danger, and those will crowd out your hunger for the word of God.

Five things are mentioned here. All malice - that's the general word, coccia, for wickedness. It's just a general word for evil. And he starts in the most generic sense. It could be translated "baseness," "wickedness," "good-for-nothingness," one lexicon says "disgracefulness." It refers to the general evil of the heathen world, the pervasive malignance of the flesh, out of which all kinds of evils emerge. You've gotta deal with it. It has to be put off. It has to be ripped off. It has to be stripped aside and thrown off, eliminated, confessed, and repented of if you're gonna clarify your desire. People who don't have any desire for the word are having desires for all kinds of wrong things that fill 'em up, fill up their minds and their longings and provide nothing edifying or spiritually beneficial.

Secondly, he says, "All deceit." The word means "deception," "dishonesty," "falsehood," "seduction," "treachery." It's just the word for deceit. It's sometimes translated "guile." It's even a word used for "fishhook," because nothing is more deceptive to a fish than a baited hook. Set aside all evil and all that is deceptive or dishonest. And then he adds, "Hypocrisy." Hypocrisy - something that's not real, not genuine, phony, fake. And then he adds, "Envy." Khanas, an interesting Greek word. It means "to want what others have, to want to be who others are, to resent somebody else's situation because it's not your situation, which leads to grudges, bitterness, hatred, conflict. And then, fifthly he adds, "All evil speaking," kata lalia, that's an onomatopoetic word that in the Greek sounds like what it means. Kata lalia, "la, la, la, la, la." It's just - it's used of defamation. It's used of speaking unkindly, speaking disparagingly, gossiping, being malicious. You've gotta get rid of that in your life. If your mind is all filled with wicked things, if it's - if you're desiring deceptive things, hypocritical things, if your mind is filled with envy, or your mind is filled with the evil of everybody else, and you get pleasure of slandering all of those people - if that's the pattern of your life, then your desires are polluted, and the singularity of that longing for the word of God is corrupted.

Now, there's a flow in those five. General evil leads to deceit, because you need to be deceptive about your true character. Deceit leads to hypocrisy, you need to put on a good front. Hypocrisy manifests itself in envy of those who are genuine and ultimately leads to their slander. Certainly, this is the absolute opposite of what we're called to back in chapter 1, verse 22, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth of the spirit. In sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart." Fervent love should be the mark of the believer, not evil leading to deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Peter says, "Strip off those filthy rags." 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

So, if you're gonna have a desire for the word, you've gotta clear your mind and heart of other illicit desires; and, if you have no longing for Scripture, it's probably because you're real busy fulfilling all kinds of other desires. If you don't have the desire to read the word, learn the truth, hear it taught, hear it preached, study it, then you better go back and remember your short-circuiting its power which you experienced in your salvation; and secondly, you better deal with some sin. It's time to confess and repent.

Thirdly, Peter says, "You must admit your need for the truth." There has to be a sense of humility and a recognition that you don't have all you need. As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word. You give a baby its food, and it's amazing how fast they're back, isn't it? That - newborn babes, by the way, is brefae in the Greek, and it literally means "a newborn baby." It's used of infants who were nursing at their mother's breast. It's a word describing an infant. And "newborn" means exactly that. So, he makes it very clear that we're talking here about a baby that has just come out of the womb in those very newborn hours and days, so tremendously dependent upon the nourishment of its mother, and so singularly devoted to that. The instant that baby is born, it goes right to its mother's breast where God has already prepared the milk to begin the nourishment. And this the only desire the baby has. It has no other desire. It doesn't care about all the stuff that you care about, like ribbons, and bows, and clothes and stuff.

One God given instinctive craving, and that craving is essential for two things: nourishment and protection. Because it is by that mother's milk that that child is nourished and that the appropriate antibodies are brought to that little life to protect it from disease. If it doesn't get that, it is unprotected and malnourished.

Peter here is talking about desiring the word in the same sense, and recognizing you don't have all you need. You need more nourishment. You need more protection. You wanna be sure that you can sort truth from error and not become a victim of Satan's wiles and cunning craftiness. You want the word to protect you from the onslaught of the enemy and subtle temptation. You want the word because you don't wanna be disobedient to God. You want the word because you wanna grow spiritually to maturity. You wanna gain victory over sin and temptation. You wanna be useful to God. You understand that it provides nourishment and protection, and you desire it because of that.

Nothing is worse than somebody who thinks they've arrived at a point where they don't need anymore. You sometimes hear people say, "Well, I don't really need to study the Bible. I know what I need to know to get to heaven, and sort of live my life." And that is a betrayal of a very infantile mentality and of certainly a life that is characterized by pride. I never think I have enough knowledge of the word of God. And no matter how much you know, the more you know, the more you know you don't know about the depth, and breadth, and height and length of God's great person.

A newborn baby craves the milk he realizes he needs desperately, and it's a desperate craving, and there's nothing else that'll satisfy. And that's the way it oughta be with us. Try giving a baby potato chips and see how well they do. They don't want junk food. They know what they need, they know what will protect them. And as believers, we need to recognize we have a need. We haven't arrived. Paul says, "Not as though I have attained, I haven't come to the place where I don't need help. I do need help, and I need it desperately." Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Even Jesus used Scripture to combat His own temptations.

We have desperate need for the word in the church today. We have weak Christians, weak churches, rampant spiritual malnutrition reflecting the rejection of the true spiritual milk. We have very defective antibodies in the body of Christ today, very little discernment, very serious deficient immune system, a kind of spiritual AIDS that makes the church vulnerable to all kinds of infection from error because it has not been appropriately nourished. You'd better recognize how desperate your need is. Don't read the Bible traditionally because your parents read it. Don't read it superstitiously as if it's gonna deliver some religious charm. Don't read it educationally to know the facts. Don't read it professionally for material in your lesson or your sermon. Don't read it inquisitively just so you can bring out the latest biblical trivia and appear to be a scholar. Read it spiritually. Read it because it's nourishment. Read it because you can't live without it, and you'll be exposed to terrible danger if you don't.

Remember your life source, eliminate your sin, admit your need, and four: desire your growth. Desire your growth. In admitting your need, your affirming your growth. Desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby. Acknowledge that you need to grow, that you aren't what you oughta be, "that you have not attained," as Paul said in Philippians 3, that you are still wretched man that needs to be delivered for the body of death. You're a spiritual child, you're a spiritual young man. And even if you're a spiritual father, there's still much yet to go. Recognize that you need to go from glory to glory to glory, from the level of glory you're on to the next to the next to the next, as 2 Corinthians 3:18 says. Hear the words of Peter in 2 Peter 3:18, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

The word will grow you up and make you strong, and stalwart, and effective and fruitful. When you grow, what happens? You increase in spiritual understanding, which means you can deal with the issues of life. You have a deeper delight in spiritual things, which means you become disconnected with what goes on in this world and you find your joy and your delight in the spiritual dimension, which is unchanging and utterly fulfilling. You will have a greater love for God; and consequently, less love for the passing world. You will have strengthened faith in the Lord; and consequently, you will be able to deal with anything that comes and goes because you understand it's all in His control. And you will have more consistent obedience, and therefore more consistent blessing that God pours out on those who are obedient.

So, if you desire spiritual understanding, delight in spiritual things, love for God, faith in the Lord, and consistent obedience, then you need to grow. And you grow by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. This is your nourishment.

And then lastly, as we close, Peter says, "Remember your life source, eliminate your sin, admit your need, pursue your growth, and survey your blessings." The end of this little section, verse 3, "If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." His simple point is this: just take a little survey. Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? It's possible it could be translated "since you have tasted" or "because you have tasted." Because you have. You have tasted that the Lord is gracious. That word literally means "good" and "kind" and "gracious." You've seen His goodness. You've seen His kindness. You've had a myriad of answered prayers. You've seen His salvation and blessing in your life. You've seen His providence in His protection. You've seen His grace to your spouse and to your children, to your friends, and relatives and family. You've seen Him work in your life in meeting the needs, the deep cries of your heart. You've seen Him bring joy into your sorrow. You've seen Him bring comfort to your pain. You have experienced His mercies which are new every morning, great is His faithfulness. You have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. All of those things should be right at the top of your memory. Survey those blessings. They all came to you, by the way, through the word. They all came through the word.

And if you do those things, if you remember your life source, if you go back and remember the power exhibited in your salvation, if you eliminate your sin, admit your need, pursue your growth, survey your blessings, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that will cultivate a desire for the word.

In closing, anorexia nervosa is a disease of women who starve themselves, sometimes to death. The symptoms of anorexia nervosa include these: occasional binges, followed by vomiting or enemas to eliminate the food, hyperactivity; secondly, excessive exercise to prove oneself competent and healthy; thirdly, depression, an inability to deal with issues in life; and fourthly, social isolation, fear of getting too close to people and that they might find out your true condition.

Occasional binges followed by purging; hyperactivity; depression; and isolation. Let me tell you something. That's analogous to spiritual malnutrition, too. Spiritual malnutrition is characterized by occasional overdoses of exposure to the word of God, the truth of which is generally eliminated without the benefit of any application or nourishment. Spiritual malnutrition is characterized by hyperactivity, where church activity replaces true spiritual growth. It is also characterized by spiritual depression, because there's no victory over sin. And by spiritual isolation, because such a person flees intimate fellowship with believers, less they be exposed.

There's a simple prescription that a doctor can write for somebody with anorexia nervosa. You just take out your paper and write, "Eat." There's a simple prescription for spiritual malnutrition, "Eat." As

babes desire the pure milk of the word, you desire the truth of God that you may grow as well.

Father, thank you for this time this morning. Thank you for the reminder of the foundation of all Bible study, which is desire. We have to want it. Create that desire in every heart, oh God. Give us a strong desire, borne of the spirit, for the rich, boundless wonders of Your word. In Christ's name we ask these things, Amen.

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