



"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth..."-Jesus in John 8:31b-32a

Longing for God's word begins with putting away sin, desiring the word as spiritual food and experiencing spiritual growth.

Longing for God's Word Begins With...

(v. 1)

Therefore put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

"Therefore" is connecting us back to the truth that the living and abiding word is an imperishable seed that once planted by the Holy Spirit becomes a continuous, life-instilling force that brings an ongoing radical transformation (Phil. 1:6).

To "put away" refers to the removal of stained or dirty garments and symbolically represented the putting off of the old life prior to salvation in Jesus.

"Put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through your deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness"-Ephesians 4:22-24

"Malice" is a comprehensive, all-inclusive word for evil while "deceit" is intentional deception in order to take advantage of someone.

"Hypocrisy" is projecting an image which lacks substance and was used of Greek actors who wore masks when on stage.

"Envy" is resentment toward others that leads to conflict while "slander" is falsely attacking another person through defamation of character.

Sin deadens our spiritual faculties choking out the power and efficacy of the word by entangling and weighing us down (Heb. 12:1).

How to Put Away Sin-

1) _____

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin...So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus"-Romans 6:6 & 11

2) _____

"Be killing sin or it will be killing you."-John Owen

"Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."-James 1:15

3) _____

"Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...a doer who acts...will be blessed in his doing." -James 1:22 & 25

(v. 2a-b)

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk of the word...

"Long for" means to crave with an intense hunger.

Newborn infants instinctively crave their mother's milk and in the same way a true Christian should intuitively crave "the pure spiritual milk of the word"

The "pure spiritual milk" of the Word does not have any harmful additives or contaminants but it contains all the heavenly nutrients necessary to live the Christian life.

"Pure" means the absence of additives, contaminants or fillers.

"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."-Jesus in Matthew 4:4 & Luke 4:4

How to Desire Spiritual Nourishment-

1) _____

"For the time is coming when they will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."-2 Timothy 4:3-4

The junk food of the world will keep you from hungering for the spiritual nourishment of the word.

2) _____

"Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart."-Jeremiah 15:16

The more of the word that you take in, the greater your desire will be to get more of the word.

(v. 2c-3)

...that by it you may grow up into salvation-if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

"Grow" is used of the physical growth of children and is used figuratively of the Christian maturing spiritually.

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"

-2 Pet. 3:18

"And now I commend you to God and the Word of his grace which is able to build you up..." -Acts 20:32

The conditional statement-"if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good"-is telling us that only those who have experienced the Lord personally through salvation will "grow up into salvation."

How to Grow in the Lord-

1) _____

The reading of Scripture causes you to mature in your breadth of understanding the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

"His delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night."-Psalm 1:2

2) _____

Memorizing the word will give you Scripture that you can always access for the need of the moment.

"I have stored up your word in your heart, that I might not sin against you."-Psalm 119:11

3) _____

Praying the word assures us that our prayers are in line with the will of the Lord.

"The Lord is near to all who call on him, who call on him in truth."-Psalm 145:18