

# *“Holiness Loves!”*

1 Peter 1:22

June 18, 2023

**VIDEO:** *“The Father’s Love Letter”*

**INTRO:** Why do you suppose I began with that video?  
(I hope you keyed in on the Truth in LOVE!)

## **PRAYER**

### **CONTEXT:**

- ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Peter: *“No Matter What!”*
- ~ Almost (after 21 weeks) ready close ch.1
- ~ Today: *“Holiness LOVES!”*

**BIG IDEA:** Biblical hope inspires HOLINESS...  
biblical fear solidifies it; then, Christlike LOVE  
lives, celebrates, and shares God’s holiness.

### **PREVIEW:**

- ~ **Substance**
- ~ **System**
- ~ **Sharing**

**TEXT:**

**1 Peter 1:22**

Having purified your souls  
by your obedience to the truth...

Let this nugget of God's truth in love set in

1. Note the key **words**...
2. Note the key **actions**...
3. Note the key **relationships**...

**QUICK REVIEW of ch. 1:**

- A. Love
- B. Blessings
- C. Hope
- D. Obedience
- E. Holiness
- F. Biblical Fear

Now... ***“purified souls by obedience to truth”***

We MUST clarify this macro Truth & the true Church!

**VIDEO:** *1st John – “This Is What He Said”*

In the same way, we **MUST** clarify the micro Truth that is the doorway or birthing chamber of the true Church!

**VIDEO:** *“What Is The True Gospel”*

NOW... let's return to our text and see what God is saying to His people... His bride... His TRUE family & flock.

**Remember:**

Peter's context was one of conflict and persecution...

~ We're about to hear his **4<sup>th</sup> command...**

~ This one **culminates in a defining application!**

**HAVING PURIFIED YOUR SOULS  
BY YOUR OBEDIENCE TO THE  
TRUTH, SO THAT YOU HAVE A  
SINCERE BROTHERLY LOVE,  
LOVE ONE ANOTHER  
FERVENTLY FROM  
A PURE HEART.**

- 1 Peter 1:22

\*\*\* Watch now for the “system” in the Scriptures...

**HAVING PURIFIED YOUR SOULS  
BY YOUR OBEDIENCE TO THE  
TRUTH, SO THAT YOU HAVE A  
SINCERE BROTHERLY LOVE,  
LOVE ONE ANOTHER  
FERVENTLY FROM  
A PURE HEART.** - 1 Peter 1:22

Having  
Purified  
Souls  
Your  
Sincere  
Brotherly  
-Love

**HOLINESS**

**=**

**OBEDIENCE  
TO THE  
TRUTH**

So that  
Pure  
Heart  
You  
Fervently  
Love one  
another



vv.1-2 = LOVE

vv. 3 = HOPE

vv. 14 = OBEY

v.15 = BE HOLY!

v.16 = BE HOLY!

vv. 17 = FEAR

vv. 21 = HOPE

v.22 = LOVE

vv.1-2 = LOVE

vv. 3 = HOPE

vv. 14 = OBEY

**100%**

**BLESSING!**

v.15 = BE HOLY!

v.16 = BE HOLY!

vv. 17 = FEAR

vv. 21 = HOPE

**100%**

v.22 = LOVE

**BLESSING!**



vv.1-2 = LOVE  
vv. 3 = HOPE  
vv. 14 = OBEY

**SOVEREIGN  
GRACE**

v.15 = BE HOLY!  
v.16 = BE HOLY!

vv. 17 = FEAR  
vv. 21 = HOPE  
v.22 = LOVE

**HUMAN  
RESPONSIBILITY**

vv.1-2 = LOVE  
vv. 3 = HOPE  
vv. 14 = OBEY

**GOD'S  
LOVE**

v.15 = BE HOLY!  
v.16 = BE HOLY!

vv. 17 = FEAR  
vv. 21 = HOPE  
v.22 = LOVE

**MAN'S  
LOVE**



vv.1-2 = LOVE

vv. 3 = HOPE

vv. 14 = OBEY

SEE  
MESSIAH

v.15 = BE HOLY!

v.16 = BE HOLY!

vv. 17 = FEAR

vv. 21 = HOPE

v.22 = LOVE

SEE  
MISSION

Real LOVE = Real HOLINESS

&

Real HOLINESS = Real LOVE

**BOTH** COME WITH FAITHFUL  
OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S MIRACULOUS  
& MISSIONAL, **TRUTH IN LOVE!**

## REVIEW:

Biblical hope inspires HOLINESS...  
biblical fear solidifies it; then,  
Christlike LOVE lives, celebrates,  
and shares God's holiness.

## CLOSE:

***Beyond Christ's command, and  
more than the church's commission,  
supernaturally loving one another –  
BEING ekklesia in koinonia &  
homothoomadon - is to always BE our  
Christ-like commitment and  
Christian culture.***

- JDP

# PRAYER

**WORSHIP:** *How Deep The Father's Love; Hold Us Together; Child Of Love*



# STUDY NOTES:

<sup>22</sup>Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

## New American Standard Commentary (Thomas Schreiner)

(1) *A Call to Love (1:22–25)*

<sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup> For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For,

“All men are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;  
the grass withers and the flowers fall,  
<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord stands forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

1:22 The theme of the paragraph is found in the exhortation to love, and this command is bounded by two perfect participles, both of which give reasons or grounds for the command to love. The first participle uses the language of the cult and purification (v. 22), while the second participle uses the image of begetting and fatherhood (v. 23). The NIV translates the first clause, “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth.” More literally the phrase could be translated, “*Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth*” (NRSV).<sup>156</sup> Both of these translations appear to understand “purified” (*hēgnikotes*), a perfect participle, as referring to conversion. The perfect tense of the participle supports

this view, signifying a past action that has ongoing consequences. Moreover, the phrase (lit.) *“by obedience to the truth”* (*en hypakoē tēs alētheias*) probably refers to “the truth of the gospel.” Often in the New Testament the gospel is designated as “the truth.” **We should not understand the phrase as “true obedience” (an adjectival genitive) but “obedience to the truth” (an objective genitive).**<sup>159</sup> The word “obedience” (HCSB) describes conversion elsewhere in the New Testament, signifying submission to the gospel (Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:19, 26), and I have already argued that **Peter had conversion in mind in 1:2 (cf. also 1:14) when he spoke of “obedience to Jesus Christ.”**

**Grudem argues vigorously**, on the other hand, that the **reference is to the ongoing process of sanctification**. First, he thinks obedience in every instance in the New Testament is postconversion. Second, he argues that obedience in 1:2 and 1:14 follows new life. Third, the verb “purify” describes the everyday life of discipleship in Jas 4:8 and 1 John 3:3. Fourth, the context is one of holiness. Fifth, Christians are never agents of their conversion but are agents in sanctification. Every one of these arguments fails to convince. The first two arguments are refuted by the evidence presented in v. 2. Both in the New Testament and in Peter obedience is used to refer to conversion. The third argument is not decisive since the issue is not whether other writers use the language of purification in other contexts to refer to one’s ongoing life in holiness. In any case, two texts used elsewhere are insufficient to determine Peter’s usage here, and so they can be set aside. The Petrine context suggests that conversion is in view since Peter clearly referred to the conversion of believers in v. 23, and in both this instance and in v. 23 the call to love would be rooted in their conversion. Probably the most important argument is the last one. Actually believers are called upon to repent, believe, be baptized, and confess Christ to be saved (e.g., Acts 2:38; 3:19; 13:39; 16:31; Rom 10:9). It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of obedience is used as well. Of course, the New Testament clarifies elsewhere that faith, obedience, and repentance are the gift of God (Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 2:25; cf. esp. the commentary on 1 Pet 1:2), and so no idea of synergism is involved, nor was Peter suggesting that believers are the ultimate agent of their salvation.

**The goal or purpose of their conversion is a genuine love for fellow believers.** The NIV translates the clause as if the goal has already been reached, “so that you have sincere love for your brothers.” Peter’s intention was not to comment on whether they were actually fulfilling the purpose.<sup>163</sup> Instead, he simply communicated the purpose for which they were converted, and so the RSV’s translation is preferable, *“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren”*

(similarly ESV, HCSB, NASB). **The term *philadelphia* indicates that fellow believers are in view** (cf. 3:8; 5:9).

Since love is the goal of conversion, the injunction to love from the heart follows naturally. We should not draw distinctions between the verb “love” (*agapēsate*) and “love of the brethren” (*philadelphia*) here since they overlap semantically. **In no way did Peter fall prey to works righteousness since the command to love is rooted in their conversion, in the purification of their hearts that enables love.**

*The characteristic of a Christian community is fervent or constant love for one another.*

Probably the latter idea is intended here. **Peter emphasized the ideas of permanence, endurance, and incorruptibility in the near context.** We should note that in vv. 21–22:

Peter spoke of faith, hope, and now love. He did not summon a suffering church to anything other than the mainstream Christian life, to love... for one another.

And...

the flames of such (Christian) love should not be extinguished by the winds of persecution.



# The New Testament Commentary

## (Wayne Grudem)

### *Love one another, now and for ever (1:22–25)*

22. *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth* might be understood to refer either to conversion (where ‘obedience to the truth’ would mean ‘believing the gospel’) or to growth in moral purity subsequent to conversion (where ‘obedience to the truth’ would mean ‘obedience to God’s commands in daily living’).

*Having purified* (*hēgnikotes*, perfect participle) could refer to initial conversion as a completed event in the past with continuing effects, but since Peter elsewhere uses the perfect tense of events in the process of sanctification (4:1; 2 Pet. 1:12), we cannot be certain that this is in view.

More persuasive are arguments in favour of the view that Peter has post-conversion growth in moral purity in mind: (1) *obedience* (*hypakoē*) occurs fifteen times in the New Testament, and never clearly means initial saving faith; (2) Peter uses *obedience* (*hypakoē*) in verses 2 and 14 of obedience in conduct; (3) *purify* (*hagnizō*) when employed figuratively elsewhere in the New Testament is used of moral cleansing subsequent to conversion (Jas 4:8, 1 John 3:3); (4) the context is the apostle’s call to holiness in 1:15, which suggests that the purifying obedience he has in view results from an active response to that call; (5) this ‘purification’ is something the readers have themselves done (‘having purified your souls’), but Christians are never in the New Testament said to be active agents in God’s initial cleansing of their souls at conversion. On the other hand, they are said to be active in the progressive work of sanctification (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1; Jas 4:8; 1 John 3:3).

**This ‘purification’ then signifies some clear progress in gaining more purity from the moral pollution of sin, a concept very similar to that of [James 4:8](#) and [1 John 3:3](#).**

*Your souls* emphasizes the inward, spiritual nature of this purification. Though ‘soul’ (*psychē*) is used of the whole person (e.g. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:14), had Peter meant this he would have most probably used *heatous* ‘yourselves’ (as in 1 John 3:3). *Psychē* can also mean ‘inward spiritual nature’ (Matt. 10:28; 2 Pet. 2:8; cf. BAGD, p. 893, c.). That this is how it should be understood here is suggested by its proximity to a call to love ‘from the heart’.

**By your obedience to the truth** might also be translated **‘in [your] obedience to the truth’ (NASB)—both ‘by’ and ‘in’ (NASB and also AV) are linguistically acceptable and theologically true.**

But ‘by’ is preferable here since **it is by means of a process of active obedience that a Christian ‘purifies’ his or her soul.**

(‘The truth’ here carries a sense of the true way pleasing to God, including not merely the gospel message but the whole of Christian teaching on doctrine and life—cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4; 2 Pet. 1:12; 2:2.)

This ‘purification’ is not likely to be a completed stage in the sanctification process, for the New Testament knows of no such unique stage in growth, nor could Peter assume that any one level of holiness had been attained by so many Christians in several different churches.

It is better to understand the phrase as the next logical step in the development of Peter’s argument. *Obedience* would then mean ‘obedience to the exhortations just mentioned’.

We could paraphrase,

'Then, having purified your souls by your obedience to these true commands to holiness ... love one another earnestly.' Peter thus expects that growth in holiness will lead to deeper love among Christians. (Indeed, this conclusion would be true no matter which interpretation one adopted for the phrase 'having purified your souls'.)

A sincere love of the brethren means love that is genuine, not simply an outward appearance or profession of love. This 'love of the brethren' (*philadelphia*) is probably seen by Peter as somewhat less intense than *agapē* (note the progression in this verse, and the discussion of *agapaō* in the next phrase; cf. also 2 Pet. 1:17, which suggests some distinction).

By translating this phrase for a sincere love of the brethren, the RSV understands it to indicate purpose. But love for fellow Christians is seen in the New Testament more as a component or a result of sanctification than its goal. So it is preferable to understand this construction (*eis* with accusative) to indicate result (so NIV, NEB, Phillips; cf. 1:3; 2:9, 21 for the same construction used this way): *'Until you feel sincere affection towards your brother Christians'* (NEB).

Love one another earnestly from the heart commands something which goes beyond the sincere brotherly affection of the previous phrase.

Peter switches from a *phileō*—root ('affection, love') in the previous phrase to *agapaō* ('love, especially strong, deep love') here. He adds *ektenōs*, 'earnestly', a term used elsewhere of strong, deeply felt, even fervent, emotions or desires (LXX, Joel 1:14 and Jon. 3:8; also Acts 12:5; 26:7).



From a 'pure heart' (AV, NIV MG.; CF. NASB mg.) seems to be a better reading, since most of the earliest and best Greek manuscripts include the adjective *katharos*, 'pure, clean', and since it is natural in a sentence that earlier speaks of inward purification.

The sense of the verse is therefore,

'Once you have begun to grow in holiness so that you have a genuine affection for one another, make your love for each other earnest, deep, and strong.'

This is Peter's first specific application of the general commands to holiness in verses 13 to 21.

*It is a reminder that one of the first marks of genuine growth in holiness in individuals and in churches is earnest love for fellow Christians.*

It also gives encouragement that human personalities, far from being immutably fixed early in life, can be dramatically and permanently changed through the power of the gospel.

**Warren Weirsbe: BE Commentary**

*We express the same love (v. 22).* Peter used two different words for love: *philadelphia*, which is “brotherly love,” and *agape*, which is godlike sacrificial love. **It is important that we share both kinds of love.** We share brotherly love because we are brothers and sisters in Christ and have likenesses. We share *agape* love because we belong to God and therefore can overlook differences.

By nature, all of us are selfish;  
so it took a miracle of God to give us  
this love.

Because we “obeyed the truth through the Spirit,” God purified our souls and poured His love into our hearts (**Rom. 5:5**). Love for the brethren is an evidence that we truly have been born of God (**1 John 4:7–21**).

Now we are “obedient children”  
(**1 Peter 1:14**) who no longer want to live  
in the selfish desires of the old life.

***It is tragic when people try to  
“manufacture” love... because the product is  
obviously cheap and artificial.***

*“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords” (Ps. 55:21).*

The love that we share with each other, and with a lost world, must be generated by the Spirit of God. It is a *constant* power in our lives, and not something that we turn on and off like a radio.

Not only is this love a spiritual love, but it is a *sincere* love (“unfeigned”).

We love “with a pure heart.”

Our motive is not to get but to give.

**There is a kind of “success psychology” popular today that enables a person to subtly manipulate others in order to get what he wants. If our love is sincere and from a pure heart, we could never “use people” for our own advantage.**



**This love is also a fervent love**, and

*this is an athletic term that means  
“striving with all of one’s energy.”*

Love is something we have to work at, just as an Olympic contestant has to work at his particular skills.

*Christian love is not a feeling;  
it is a matter of the will.*

We show love to others when we treat them the same way God treats us.

God forgives us, so we forgive others. God is kind to us, so we are kind to others.

It is not a matter of *feeling* but of *willing*, and this is something we must constantly work at if we are to succeed.

**We have two wonderful “assistants” to help us: the Word of God and the Spirit of God.**

The same truth that we trusted and obeyed to become God's children also nurtures and empowers us.

*It is impossible to love the truth and hate the brethren. The Spirit of God produces the "fruit of the Spirit" in our lives, and the first of these is love (Gal. 5:22–23). If we are filled with the Word of God (Col. 3:16ff) and the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:18ff), we will manifest the love of God in our daily experiences.*

## NET Study Bible:

### Notes for 1:22

<sup>40</sup> **tn** *Grk* "having purified," as the preparation for the love described in the second half of the verse.

<sup>41</sup> **tc** Most later mss (P ℣) have διὰ πνεύματος (*dia pneumatos*, "through the spirit") after ἀληθείας (*ajlētheias*, "truth"), while the words are lacking in a broad spectrum of early and important witnesses (ⱼ<sup>72</sup> ℵ A B C Ψ 33 81 323 945 1241 1739 *al vg sy co*). On external grounds, the shorter reading cannot be easily explained if it were not original. The longer reading is clearly secondary, added to show more strongly God's part in man's obedience to the truth. But the addition ignores the force that the author gives to "purified" and ruins the balance between v. 22 and v. 23 (for in v. 23 the emphasis is on God's part; here, on man's part).

<sup>42</sup> **tn** *Grk* "for sincere brotherly love."

<sup>43</sup> **tn** **Verses 22–23 are a single sentence in the Greek text.** To improve clarity (and because contemporary English tends to use shorter sentences) these verses have been divided into three sentences in the translation. In addition, "So" has been supplied at the beginning of the second English sentence (v. 22b) to indicate the relationship with the preceding statement.

<sup>44</sup> **tc** A few mss (A B 1852 *pc*) lack καθαρᾶς (*katharas*, "pure") and read simply καρδίας (*kardias*, "from the heart"), but there is excellent ms support (ⱼ<sup>72</sup> ℵ\* C P Ψ 33 1739 ℣ *co*) for the word. The omission may have been accidental. In the uncial script (ΚΑΘΑΡΑΣ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ) an

accidental omission could have happened via homoioteleuton or homoioarcton. καθαῖς should be considered original.

## Barnes New Testament Notes:

22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls.* Greek, 'Having purified your souls.'

**The apostles were never afraid of referring to human agency as having an important part in saving the soul** (cf. [1 Cor. 4:15](#)).

***No one is made pure without personal intention & effort***  
— any more than one becomes accomplished or learned without personal exertion.

One of the leading effects of the agency of the Holy Spirit is to excite us to *make efforts for our own salvation*; and there is no true piety which is not the fair result of culture, as really as the learning of a Porson or a Parr, or the harvest of the farmer.

The amount of effort which we make 'in purifying our souls' is usually also the *measure* of our attainments in religion.

***No one can expect to have any true piety beyond the amount of effort which he makes to be conformed to God,***

...any more than one can expect wealth, or fame, or learning, without exertion.

*In obeying the truth.* That is, your yielding to the requirements of truth, and to its fair influence on your minds, has been the means of your becoming pure. The *truth* here referred to is, undoubtedly, that which is revealed in the gospel—the great system of truth respecting the redemption of the world.

*Through the Spirit.* **By the agency of the Holy Spirit.** It is his office to apply truth to the mind; and however precious the truth may be, and however adapted to secure certain results on the soul, it will never produce those effects without the influences of the Holy Spirit. **Comp. Titus 3:5, 6. Notes on John 3:5.**

*Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.*

The effective influence of the Holy Spirit  
in applying the truth has been to  
produce sincere love to all  
who are true Christians.

Comp. Notes on **John 13:34; 1 Thess. 4:9**. See also **1 John 3:14–18**.

See that ye *love one another with a pure heart fervently*. **Comp. Notes on Heb. 13:1; John 13:34, 35; Eph. 5:2.**

The phrase ‘with a pure heart fervently,’ meant

(1) that it should be **genuine love**, proceeding from a heart in which there is no guile or hypocrisy; and



(2) that it should be **intense affection**, (ἐκτενῶς;) not cold and formal, but ardent and strong. If there is any reason why we should love true Christians at all, there is the same reason why our attachment to them should be intense. **This verse establishes the following points:**

**(A) That truth was at the foundation of their piety.** They had none of which this was not the proper basis; and in which the foundation was not as broad as the superstructure. There is no religion in the world which is not the fair development of truth; which the truth is not fitted to produce.

**(B) They became Christians as the result of obeying the truth; or by yielding to its fair influence on the soul.** Their own minds complied with its claims; their own hearts yielded; there was the exercise of their own volitions. **This expresses a doctrine of great importance.**

**(a) There is always the exercise of the powers of the mind in true religion; always a yielding to truth; always a voluntary reception of it into the soul.**

**(b) Religion is always of the nature of obedience.** It consists in yielding to what is true and right; in laying aside the feelings of opposition, and in allowing the mind to follow where truth and duty lead.

**(c) This would always take place when the truth is presented to the mind, if there were no voluntary resistance. If all men were ready to yield to the truth, they would become Christians.** The only reason why all men do not love and serve God, is that they refuse to yield to what they know to be true and right.

**(3.) The agency by which this was accomplished was that of the Holy Ghost.** Truth is adapted in itself to a certain end or result, as seed is adapted to produce a harvest. But it will no more of itself produce its appropriate effects on the soul, than seed will produce a harvest without rains, and dews, and suns. In *all* cases, therefore, **the proper effect of truth on the soul is to be traced to the influence of the Holy Spirit,** as the germination of the seed in the earth is to the foreign cause that acts on it.

*No man was ever converted by the mere effect of truth without the agency of the Holy Ghost, any more than seed germinates when laid on a hard rock.*

**(4.) The effect of this influence of the Holy Spirit in applying the truth is to produce love to all who are Christians.**

Love to Christian brethren springs up in the soul of every one who is truly converted:

and this love is just as certain evidence that the seed of truth has germinated in the soul, as the green and delicate blade that peeps up through the earth is evidence that the seed sown has been quickened into life. Comp. Notes on [1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 3:14.](#)

We may learn hence,

**(a) that truth is of inestimable value.** It is as valuable as religion itself, for all the religion in the world is the result of it.

**(b) Error and falsehood are mischievous and evil in the same degree.** There is no true religion which is the fair result of error; and all the pretended religion that is sustained by error is worthless.

**(c) If a system of religion, or a religious measure or doctrine, cannot be defended by truth, it should be at once abandoned.** Comp. Notes on [Job 13:7.](#)

**(d) We should avoid the places where error is taught.** Prov. 19:27, 'Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.'

**(e) We should place ourselves under the teachings of truth, for there is truth enough in the world to occupy all our time and attention; and it is only *by* truth that our minds can be benefited.**

## St. Andrews Expository Commentary

- R.C. Sproul

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart (v. 22). There is much written here for our consideration.

**Peter indicates that our souls are purified through obedience**, yet the reason we fail to give God due obedience is that our souls are not yet purified. We usually think that purification of the soul takes place so that we will obey God, yet here, strikingly, the Apostle tells us that purification is not only *unto* obedience but also *by* obedience.

*The more our souls are involved in obedience, the greater the purification that occurs, and the more our souls are purified, the greater our obedience will be.*

This is not a vicious circle but a glorious circle by which obedience feeds

# purification and, symbiotically, purification feeds obedience.

The concept of obedience is exceedingly important to the message of the New Testament. At St. Andrew's, after I read Scripture, I quote words that *Jesus often used: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."* Elsewhere the New Testament tells us that we are to be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22). There is something of a play on words in the Greek between the verb *to hear* and the verb *to obey*.

The verb *to hear* in Greek is *akouō* from which we get the English word *acoustics*. The verb that means "to obey" is the Greek word *hupoakouō*. There is a similar root in both Greek words. The second word, *to obey*, simply repeats the verb *to hear* and attaches to it the preparatory word *hupo*, which comes into the English language by the prefix *hyper*.

Children might be hyperactive, which means that they are active to a higher degree than others.

So, in Greek the word *to obey* simply means "hyper hearing," that is, hearing beyond the simple sensory experience of sound striking our auditory nerves and being processed by the brain in such a way that we hear something.

*The hearing that God wants from His people means hearing not only in the eardrum but in the ears of the soul. Such hearing brings change to our lives, which is manifested in obedience.*



The obeying of which Peter speaks is obedience to the truth. Our culture is against the idea of objective truth, and this antipathy is rooted and grounded in fallen humanity's fundamental hostility to truth itself. People do not want truth to be objective. We do not want truth to be binding upon our consciences, because by nature truth is our enemy and we do not want to submit to it, or, as Peter says here, we do not want to obey it. The tragedy of fallen humanity is that we tend to give ourselves in obedience to the lie, to that which is false, but the purification of our souls comes in obeying the truth.

It is not enough simply to hear the truth. It is not enough even to recite the truth of the creeds. It is not enough to affirm our agreement with the propositions of the truth.

**Peter says there is a deeper step,  
which is to obey the truth.**

Such obedience happens through the Spirit.

Peter is speaking here of that process of growth and development in the Christian life that we call "sanctification," which is dependent on the operation and energizing influence of the Holy Spirit.

***I will never obey the truth of God  
apart from the power, grace, and  
assistance of the Spirit.***

**We are living in strange times in terms of how the church functions. We have been caught up with a fierce desire to find a way to relate to a culture that has been immunized to Christianity.**

**We try to find new methods to reach the lost.**

The motivation is righteous, because we should have compassion for the lost.

The danger comes when we ask the lost how they want to come into the kingdom of God, how they want to worship God, and how they want to hear God's Word, and then tailor our method to their tastes and preferences.

**That is fatal.**

Sooner or later the church must come back to confidence in God's way of doing God's work, because the Bible does give us a blueprint for evangelism. It gives us a blueprint for reaching the lost and for generating spiritual growth among

## the people of God.

The blueprint is not a matter of rocket science or Madison Avenue technology; it is a blueprint that God guarantees will not be fruitless. **It is accomplished by the method of proclaiming the Word of God, which, as Peter says here, changes lives and purifies souls through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

God has established a church, a fellowship and communion of believers, to gather for mutual support, edification, and encouragement.

*The church is to be a group which, when assembled, experiences an extraordinary kind of love.*

The grace that comes through the preaching of the Word is confirmed by the sacraments that Christ has given to His church and strengthened by the discipline of prayer, both personal and corporate.

Whatever we try to do to make the message attractive to a fallen world, we must never negotiate those fundamental, biblical methods of worship, preaching, evangelism, and spiritual growth.

The constituent nature of human beings did not change with Generation X, nor did it change with the Baby Boomers. Television changes culture, and technology changes the way we do

things, but **the fundamental nature of our humanity remains the same as when God created Adam and Eve.**

*The way to the heart is through the mind,  
so mindless Christianity never really  
produces purification of the soul.*

**The purification of the soul comes through obeying the truth of the Word of God through the Spirit of God.**

**There are no substitutes or shortcuts... no such thing as sanctification in three easy lessons.**

### ***Love Thy Neighbor***

**The love of which Peter speaks is also fervent and accompanied by a pure heart. The Apostle is speaking of an extraordinary kind of love.** The Great Commandment says that we are to love the Lord our God with all our mind and strength and soul, and the second is added to it, that we must love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:37–39). Our neighbor is not simply someone who lives next door or someone in our class, group, or community.

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, and one asked, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). Jesus then told them a story about a man who went down from Jericho and fell among thieves. He was robbed, beaten, and left by the roadside for dead. Then some clergy came along and noticed the plight of the poor man. Maybe they whispered a prayer for him before hurrying on their way, but they did not cross the street to offer assistance. It was one from the despised Samaritans, with whom Jews had no dealings, who stopped to care for the injured man. “So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” Jesus asked, and the Pharisees replied, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said, “Go and do likewise” (vv. 36–37).

**Everyone we meet is our neighbor.**



Loving our neighbor means treating him with care, kindness, and patience, as the good Samaritan did. It has very little to do with feelings of great warmth and affection. We can love our neighbor actively apart from any personal affection, but when we get beyond the neighborhood to the brotherhood, everything changes. **Love of the brethren is to be done fervently with a pure heart.** I once heard a pastor in Mississippi say, “We stick with the stuck,” by which he meant that family trumps everything. We stick together because we are family. We are to have that kind of fervent love not only for our biological families but also for our family in the Spirit, our brothers and sisters in Christ. *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35).

That is the impression we should make on a watching world. Those outside the church should look at Christians and note that we do not backbite or fault-find and that we protect one another with fervent love, the love that comes from a pure heart.<sup>1</sup>

## MacLaren's Expositions

1 Peter

### PURIFYING THE SOUL

1 Peter 1:22.

Note these three subsidiary clauses introduced respectively by ‘in,’ ‘through,’ ‘unto.’ They give the means, the Bestower, and the issue of the purity of soul...

One more introductory remark--‘Ye have purified your souls’--a bold statement to make

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<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sproul, [1-2 Peter](#), St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 50–53.

about the vast multitude of the 'dispersed' throughout all the provinces of Asia Minor whom the Apostle was addressing. **The form of the words in the original shows that this purifying is a process which began at some definite point in the past and is being continued throughout all the time of Christian life.**

**The hall-mark of all Christians is a relative purity, not of actions, but of soul.**

They will vary, one from another; the conception of what is purity of soul will change and grow, but, if a man is a Christian, there was a moment in his past at which he potentially, and in ideal, purified his spirit, and that was the moment when he bowed down in obedience to the truth. There are suggestions for volumes about the true conception of soul-purity in these words of my text. But I deal with them in the simplest possible fashion, following the guidance of these significant little words which introduce the subordinate clauses.

First of all, then, we have here the great thought that

## **I. Soul purity is in, or by, obedience.**

Now, of course, **'the truth'--truth with the definite article--is the sum of the contents of the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ, His life, His death, His Glory.** For to Peter, as to us He should be, Jesus Christ was Truth Incarnate. 'In Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' **The first thought that is suggested to me from this expression--obedience to the truth--is that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is, as its ultimate intention, meant to**

**be obeyed.** There are plenty of truths which have no influence on life and conduct, for which all is done that they can demand when they are accepted. But the truth is no inert substance like the element which recent chemical discoveries have found, which is named 'argon,' the do-nothing: the truth is, as physiologists say, a ferment. It is intended to come into life, and into character, and into the inmost spirit of a man, and grip them, and mould them, and transform them, and animate them, and impel them. **The truth is to be 'obeyed.'**

Now that altogether throws over two card-castles which imperfect Christians are very apt to build. One which haunted the thoughts of an earlier generation of Christians more than it does the present, is that we have done all that 'the truth' asks of us when we have intellectually endorsed it. And so you get churches which build their membership upon acceptance of a creed and excommunicate heretics, whilst they keep do-nothing and uncleansed Christians within their pale. But...

*God does not tell us anything that we may know. He tells us in order that, knowing, we may be and do.*

And right actions, or rather a character which produces such, is the last aim of all knowledge, and especially of all moral and religious truth. So 'the truth' is not 'argon', it is a ferment. And if men, steeped to the eyebrows in orthodoxy, think that they have done enough when they have set their hands to a confession of faith, and that they are Christians because they can say, 'all this I steadfastly believe,' they need to remember that religious truth which does not mould and transform character and conduct is a king dethroned; and for dethroned kings there is a short step between the throne from which they have descended and the scaffold on which they die.

But there is another--what I venture to call a card-castle, which more of us build in these days of indifference as to creed--and that is that a great many of us are too much disposed to believe that 'the truth as it is in Jesus' has received from us all which it expects when we trust to it for what we call our 'salvation,' meaning thereby forgiveness of sins and immunity from punishment. These are elements of salvation

unquestionably, but they are only part of it. And **the very truths on which Christian people rest for this initial salvation, which is forgiveness and acceptance, are meant to be the guides of our lives and the patterns for our imitation.** Why, in this very

letter, in reference to the very parts of Christ's work, on which faith is wont to rest for salvation,—the death on the Cross to which we say that we trust, and which we are so accustomed to exalt as a unique and inimitable work that cannot be reproduced and needs no repetition, world without end—Peter has no hesitation in saying that Christ was our 'Pattern,' and that, even when He went to the Cross, He died 'leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps.' **So, brethren, the truth needs to be known and believed: the truth needs not only to be believed but to be trusted in; the truth needs not only to be believed and to be trusted in, but to be obeyed.**

Still further, another thought following upon and to some extent modifying the preceding one, is suggested here, and that is that the faith, which I have just been saying is sometimes mistakenly regarded as being all that truth calls for from us, is itself obedience. As I have said, the language in the original here implies that there was a given definite moment in the past when these dispersed strangers obeyed, and, by obeying the truth, purified their souls. What was that moment? Some people would say the moment when the rite of baptism was administered. I would say the moment when they bowed themselves in joyful acceptance of the great Word and put out a firm hand of faith to grasp Jesus Christ. That is obedience. For, in the very act of thus trusting, there is self-surrender, is there not? Does not a man depart from himself and bow himself humbly before his Saviour when he puts his trust in Him? Is not the very essence of obedience, not the mere external act, but the melting of the will to flow in such directions as His master-impulse may guide it? Thus, **faith in its depth is obedience; and the moment when a man believes, in the deepest sense of the word, that moment, in the deepest realities of his spirit, he becomes obedient to the will and to the love of his Saviour Lord, Who is the Truth as He is the Way and the Life.**

We find, not only in this Epistle, but throughout the Epistles, that the two words 'disobedience' and 'unbelief,' are used as equivalents. We read, for instance, of those that 'stumble at the word, being disobedient,' and the like. So, then...

**faith is obedience in its depth, and, if our faith has any vitality in it, it carries in it**

## the essence of all submission.

But then, further, my text implies that the faith which is, in its depth, obedience, in its practical issues will produce the practical obedience which the text enjoins. It is no mere piece of theological legerdemain which counts that faith is righteousness. But, just as all sin comes from selfishness, so, and therefore, all righteousness will flow from giving up self, from decentralising, as it were, our souls from their old centre, self, and taking a new centre, God in Christ. Thus the germ of all practical obedience lies in vital faith. It is, if I might so say, the mother-tincture which, variously combined, coloured, and perfumed, makes all the precious things, the virtues and graces of humanity, which the believing soul pours out as a libation before its God. It is the productive energy of all practical goodness. It is the bottom heat in the greenhouse which makes all the plants

grow and flourish. **Faith is obedience, and faith produces obedience. Does my faith produce obedience? If it does not, it is not faith.**

Then, with regard to this first part of my subject, comes the final thought that...

*practical obedience works inwards  
as well as outwards,*

...and purifies the soul which renders it. People generally turn that round the other way, and, instead of saying that to do right helps to make a man right within, they say 'make the tree good, and its fruit good'--first the pure soul, and then the practical obedience. Both statements are true. For every act that a man does reacts upon the doer, just as, whether the shot hits the target or not, the gun kicks back on the shoulder of the man that fired it.

*Conduct comes from character, but conduct works back upon character, and character is largely the deposit from the vanished seas of actions.*

**So, then, whilst the deepest thought is, be good and you will do good, it is not to be forgotten**



that the other side is true--do good, and it will tend to make you good.

Obedience purifies the soul, while, on the other hand, a man that lives ill comes to think as he lives, and to become tenfold more a child of evil. 'The dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in.' *'Ye have purified your souls,' ideally, in the act of faith, and continuously, in the measure in which you practically obey the truth.*

We have here

## II. Purifying through the Spirit.

I have already said that **these words are possibly no part of the original text**, but that they convey a true Christian idea, whether the words are here genuine or no. I need not enlarge upon this part of my subject at any length. Let me just remind you how the other verse in this chapter, to which I have already referred as cast in the same mould as our text, covers, from a different point of view, the same ground exactly as our text. Here there is put first the human element: 'Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth,' and secondly the Divine element; 'through the Spirit.' The human part is put in the foreground, and God's part comes in, I was going to say, subordinately, as a condition. The reverse is the case in the other text, which runs: 'Kept in the power of God through faith'--where the Divine element is in the foreground, as being the true cause, and the human dwindles to being merely a condition--'Kept by' {or in} 'the power of God through faith.' Both views are true; *you may take the vase by either handle. When the purpose is to stimulate to action, man's part is put in the foreground and God's part secondarily. When the purpose is to stimulate to confidence, God's part is put in the foreground and the man's is secondary.*

***The two interlock, and neither is sufficient without the other.***

*The true Agent of all purifying is that Divine Spirit.*

I have said that...

the moment of true trust is the moment of initial obedience, and of the beginning of purity.

And it is so because, in that moment of initial faith, there enters into the heart the communicated Divine life of the Spirit, which thenceforward is lodged there, except it be quenched by the man's negligence or sin. Thence, from that germ implanted in the moment of faith, the germ of a new life, there issue forth to ultimate dominion in the spirit, the powers of that Divine Spirit which make for righteousness and transform the character. Thus, **the true cause and origin of all Christian nobility and purity of character and conduct lies in that which enters the heart at the moment that the heart is opened for the coming of the Lord.** But, on the other hand, this Divine Spirit, the Source of all purity, will not purify the soul without the man's efforts.

***'Ye have purified your souls.'***

You need the Spirit indeed. But you are not mere passive recipients. You are to be active co-operators.

In this region, too, we are 'labourers together with God.' We cannot of ourselves do the work, for the very powers with which we do it, or try to do it, are themselves in need of

cleansing. And for a man to try to purify the soul by his own effort alone is to play the part of the sluttish house-wife who would seek to wipe a dish clean with a dirty cloth. You need the Divine Spirit to work in you, and you need to use, by your own effort, the Divine Spirit that does work in you.

*He is as 'rushing, mighty wind'; but, unless  
the sails are set and the helm gripped,  
the wind will pass the boat and  
leave it motionless.*

He is Divine fire that burns up the dross and foulness; but, unless we 'guard the holy fire' and feed it, it dies down into grey cold ashes. He is the water of life; but, unless we dig and take heed to keep clear the channels, no refreshing will permeate to the roots of the wilting flowers, and there will be dryness, thirst, and barrenness, even on the river's banks.

So, **brethren, neither God alone nor man alone can purify the soul.** We need Him, else we shall labour in vain. He needs us, else He will bestow His gift, and we shall receive 'the grace of God in vain.'

Lastly, we have here—

### **III. Purifying ... unto ... love.**

The Apostle was speaking to men of very diverse nationalities who had been rent asunder by deep gulfs of mutual suspicion and conflicting interests and warring creeds, and a great mysterious, and, as it would seem to the world then, **utterly inexplicable bond of unity had been evolved amongst them, and Greek and barbarian, bond**

and free, male and female, had come together in amity.

The 'love of the brethren' was the creation of Christianity, and was the outstanding fact which, more than any other, amazed the beholders in these early days.

God be thanked! there are signs in our generation of a closer drawing together of Christian people than many past ages, alas, have seen.

But my text suggests solemn and great thoughts with regard to Christian love and unity.

*The road to unity lies through purity, and the road to purity lies through obedience.*

Yes; what keeps Christian people apart is their impurities. It is not their creeds. It is not any of the differences that appear to separate them. It is because they are not better men and women.

Globules of quicksilver will run together and make one mass; but not if you dust them over. And it is the impurities on the quicksilver that keep us from coalescing.

**So then we have to school ourselves into greater conformity to the likeness of our Master, to conquer selfishness, and to purify our souls, or else all this talk about Christian unity is no better than sounding brass, and more discordant than tinkling cymbals.**

Let us learn the lesson. 'The unfeigned love of the brethren' is not such an easy thing as some people fancy, and it is not to be attained at all on the road by which some people would seek it.

***Cleanse yourselves,  
and you will flow together.***

Here, then, we have Peter's conception of a pure soul and a pure life. It is a stately building, based deep on the broad foundation of the truth as it is in Jesus; its walls rising, but not without our effort, being builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit, and having as the shining apex of its heaven-pointing spire 'unfeigned love to the brethren.'

**The measure of our obedience is the  
measure of our purity.**

**The measure of our purity is the measure of our brotherly love.**

But that love, though it is the very aim and natural issue of purity, still will not be realised without effort on our part. Therefore my text, after its exhibition of the process and issues of the purifying which began with faith, glides into the exhortation: '**See that ye love one another with a pure heart'--a heart purified by obedience--and that 'fervently.'**

## **Word Studies In The N.T.**

22. **Purified** (ἡγνικότες). The Septuagint translation of the Old-Testament technical term for the purification of the people and priests (Josh. 3:5; 1 Chron. 15:12; 1 Sam. 16:5). Also, of the separation from wine and strong drink by the Nazarite (Num. 6:2-6). In this ceremonial sense, John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18. In the moral sense, as here, Jas. 4:8; 1 John 3:3. Compare καθαρίσας, *purifying*, Acts 15:9.

**Obeying** (ὕπακοῆ). Rev., *obedience*. A peculiarly New Testament term unknown in classical Greek. In the Septuagint only 2 Sam. 22:36; rendered in A. V. *gentleness*. Rev., *condescension*, in margin.

**Unfeigned** (ἀνυπόκριτον). Ἄ, *not*, ὑποκριτής, *actor*. The latter word is from ὑποκρίνεσθαι, *to answer on the stage*, and hence *to play a part or to act*. A hypocrite is, therefore, an *actor*.

**With a pure heart** (ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας). The best texts reject καθαρᾶς *pure*. Render, therefore, as Rev., *from the heart*.

**Fervently** (ἐκτενῶς). Used by Peter only, and only in this passage. He uses the kindred adjective ἐκτενής, *without ceasing*, in Acts 12:5, where the narrative probably came from him, and also at ch. 4:8; “*fervent charity*.” The words are compounded with the verb τείνω, *to stretch*, and signify *intense strain; feeling on the rack*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, [Word Studies in the New Testament](#), vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 639–640.

**1**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2**according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

### ***Born Again to a Living Hope***

**3**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4**to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **5**who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6**In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, **7**so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **8**Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, **9**obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.



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[10](#) Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, [11](#) inquiring what person or time<sup>a</sup> the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. [12](#) It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

### ***Called to Be Holy***

[13](#) Therefore, preparing your minds for action,<sup>b</sup> and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14](#) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15](#) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16](#) since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [17](#) And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18](#) knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19](#) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [20](#) He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you [21](#) who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

[22](#) Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, [23](#) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; [24](#) for

"All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower of grass.  
The grass withers,  
and the flower falls,  
[25](#) but the word of the Lord remains forever."

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.