

Born of God

by J. Mike Minnix

TITLE:	Born of God
BIBLE BOOK:	1 Peter 2 : 1-3
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SUBJECT:	New Birth; Christian Development
SERIES:	The People of God
OBJECTIVE:	Every person who is saved comes into the kingdom as a newborn babe in Christ. That person is as saved as he will ever be, but he is not as mature as he should be, could be and would be, if only he could develop his spiritual appetite. Good spiritual nutrition is necessary for the child of God to grow and develop into the full measure of all that God intends.

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Introduction

Today we begin a series entitled, The People of God. We are going to see three aspects of being God's people. We begin where our life in Christ begins, with the new birth. Our first message is entitled, Born of God.

Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey wrote a wonderful book entitled, In His Image. In this book they tell about the difficulties that people who have been blind from birth but through medical technology receive their sight. Interestingly, such people often have problems the shape of objects which you and I take for granted everyday. It can take weeks for them to begin to distinguish between objects that are square, round, oval, etc. They tell about one patient who mistook an apple for a key, and a loaf of bread for a hand. One girl saw a yellow matchbox. From that point onward, she called every yellow object she saw a matchbox.

If it requires weeks of laborious work for a person who has recently received vision to be able to differentiate between normal objects, how much more difficult is it for a person who has come from the darkness of a lost condition to grow in understanding spiritual things? The newfound joy of life in Christ is no substitute for growth and development in the spiritual realm. Every believer must go through the process of learning and growing in Christ. Actually, this process never ends. Some of us may be more mature than some others in our spiritual walk with Christ, but all of us can stand more growth and development.

Lets look at how this growth takes place.

I. The Correcting Of An Appetite

A correct appetite demands that improper eating habits be changed. This is a major problem in our generation physically. It is a greater problem spiritually. We need a proper hunger for the Word of

God. Peter tells us that some things must go if we would have a proper appetite for the Word of God. We must get rid of,

Malice

Deceit

Hypocrisy

Envy

Slander

The "wherefore" in this passage means that what is being said is a consequence of that which has just been said. A look back in chapter one at the preceding words indicates that Peter has already introduced the idea of "new birth". Now he is expanding the idea by comparing the appetite that a Christian should have for the Word of God with that which a newborn baby has for pure milk.

The words "rid yourselves" come from the word "apotithemi" which comes from "apo" plus "tithemi". The first Greek word means from; the second Greek word means to lay or put. Thus, the Christian is to "put aside from or away from" himself the things, which follow in the passage. The command is given in the aorist middle, meaning the subject must carry out the task. God will not do this for you. Also, it begins at a point in time. One must have a point at which he determines to rid himself of the characteristics later mentioned. Furthermore, it is a participle. This means it is an ongoing act. Without diligence the unwanted items will return.

The word "malice" comes from the word "kakios" which means "evil" and stands in this case for the evil intention of hurting another. Peter has been pointing out that we must love the brethren (see 1 Peter 1:22). Here he is showing us that one will never have a proper desire for the Word of God, nor will he grow thereby, unless he rids himself of any desire to every hurt a brother or sister. Malice will hinder our appetite and stunt our spiritual growth.

The word "deceit" or "hypocrisy" comes from "dolos" which means to decoy. It stands of crafty behavior that is less than totally above board. One cannot grow while trying to use subterfuge in the Christian life.

The word "envies" comes from the Greek word "phthonos". This word comes from a root word meaning to "pine away". It means to envy what someone else has or is able to do. It means to want their knowledge, position, or material things. Christians must never be envious of each other.

"Evil speaking" comes from "katalalia" which means to "utter against" or "speak down".

Note that these four things involve:

1. An evil Will - Malice
2. An evil Way - Hypocrisy
3. An evil Want - Envy
4. An evil Word - Evil speaking

II. The Craving Of An Appetite

The appetite speaks of desire. The newborn Christian must turn from the old desires to those that God implants when He redeems the believer. Eve craved that which God had forbidden and it brought about all kinds of human suffering. Samson craved a relationship outside the will of God and ended up captured and blind. Judas craved money and because of yielding to that desire, sold Jesus to His enemies for 30 pieces of silver.

The believer is to crave the Word of God, which is God's food for the soul. Jesus spoke of it as bread. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

III. The Consequences Of An Appetite

If we would grow in Christ, we need to realize three truths.

A. There Is Something To Alleviate

B. There Is Something To Appropriate

C. There Is Something To Appreciate

Have you tasted that the Lord is good (gracious)? He is good in the way he Loves us. He is good in the way he Lifts us. He is good in the way he Listens to us. He is good in the way he Leads us.

Billy Graham, in his book "The Secret of Happiness" states that there are four things that can spoil your appetite for the things of God. He states, "There are at least four things that can spoil your appetite for the righteousness of God. FIRST: "Sinful Pleasure" can ruin your appetite for the things of God. I once heard the story of a man walking down the road. Behind him followed a pig. A friend called to him and asked how he got the pig to follow him. He said, "It's very simple. Every step I take, I drop a bean, and the pig likes beans." Satan goes along the road of life dropping his beans, and we are following him to eternal destruction. SECOND: "Self-sufficiency" can impair your hunger after God. No man is so empty as he who thinks he is full (but is not). No man is so ill as he who has a fatal disease and yet thinks he is in perfect health. No man is so poor as he who thinks he is rich but is actually bankrupt. THIRD: "Secret sin" can take away your appetite for the righteousness of God. That secret sin you committed has cost a price. You always thought you had got away with it, but the remorse of it still remains in your heart. Those evil resentments you harbor in your breast against your neighbor! The failure to forgive those who have wronged you! When the heart is filled with wickedness, there is no room for God. The jealousies, the envies, the prejudices, and the malice will take away your appetite for the things of the Spirit. FOURTH: "Neglect of your spiritual life" can take away your appetite for the righteousness of God. All Christians believe in God, but they have little time for God. They are too busy with everyday affairs to be taken up with Bible reading, prayer, and being thoughtful to their fellow men. Many of them have lost the spirit of zealous discipleship" (pages 82-84).

Our duty is to grow in the Lord. We are to keep a good appetite for the things of God and we are to avoid the junk food of this world so that our appetite for God is not spoiled. Someone has said, God never alters the robe of righteousness to fit man; He changes the man to fit the robe.

Someone passed on to me a quote attributed to the late A.B. Simpson:

"Once it was the blessing; now it is the Lord.

Once it was the feeling; now it is His Word.

Once His gifts I wanted; now the Giver own.

Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

Once 'twas painful trying; now 'tis perfect trust.

Once a half salvation; now the uttermost.

Once 'twas ceaseless holding; now He holds me fast.

Once 'twas constant drifting; now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning; now 'tis trustful prayer.

Once 'twas anxious caring; now He has the care.

Once 'twas what I wanted, now what Jesus says.

Once 'twas constant asking; now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once I tried to use Him; now He uses me.

Once it was my working; His it hense shall be.

Once the power I wanted, now the Mighty One.

Once for self I labored, now for Him alone.

Once I hoped for Jesus; now I know He's mine.

Once my lamps were dying; now they brightly shine.

Once for death I waited; now His coming hail.

And my hopes are anchored safe within the veil."

How about it Christian, is your desire (your appetite) wholly and totally for God? When that is our greatest desire, we can grow to be all that He intends!