

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

by John Dunlap

Read:

1 Peter 2:1-3 (New International Version (NIV))

¹Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Reflect:

At the end of chapter 1 of First Peter, he urged his Christian readers to love each other from pure hearts - deeply, earnestly, and exhaustingly. Since we have been born again through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have become eternal people, like the word of God, and now have the capacity to give true, Christlike love to each other. Thus, part of our identity as Christians is the responsibility to love each other.

Chapter 2 of First Peter begins with a description of human failings that stand in the way of this duty to love one another as Jesus has loved us. But not only do these five relational sins constitute actions which thwart love, they also represent a selfish choice to put our own interests over the interests of others. Peter instead suggests that we are to be "like newborn babies," who clearly have no capacity to engage in such relational sins, and with a clean slate we can start all over again in our relations with one another.

This born-again theory and the exhortation to be like little children has always seemed to me to be a little Pollyannaish. Are we always to play the "Glad Game" and avoid facing the reality of our human condition? Of course not. Peter understands, maybe more than the other disciples, how our human frailty restricts our ability to be good Christians. In the lyrics to the Hampton Grease Band song *Sewell Park*, Bruce Hampton describes a day at the park watching families interact and notes that "there were children there with no wounds of distinction." That concept has always intrigued me. We all suffer slights and losses as children whose traumas we carry with us forever. But Peter says we should be able to overcome those wounds of distinction which lead to our relational sins, if we, like newborn babies, imbibe the pure spiritual milk of the Scriptures so that we grow up as Christians. We should

crave God's Word as babies do their mother's milk because it sustains us as Christians and shows us the way out of the confines we have made for ourselves in reaction to our wounds of distinction.

Ask:

How can these relational sins (2:1) hinder desire for God's Word?
Must every Christian become a student of the Word in order to grow?

Pray:

Lord, forgive us for letting our wounds of distinction define us and for allowing our human failures to contradict our Christian duty to love one another. Give us a longing for your Word so that we may grow up in our salvation. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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