

**How Then Shall We Live**  
**Week 2: Crave this (1 Peter 2:1-12)**

**How are we supposed to live as Christ followers, in a culture that doesn't have the same priorities or view of life? We are out of step, or at least we should be. If we aren't, then we are probably being squeezed into the mold of our humanistic, consumeristic, American Dream driven culture. Then Jesus becomes an add-on to help us get through the day.**

**In 1 Peter, this is the major thrust of this letter Peter is writing to a group of new Christ followers scattered around Asia Minor. These people have the same issue, only much more extreme. They are resident aliens living in the area; poor, just above the level of slaves, with no real power or influence. They are chosen by God and have begun to follow him, but they are on the margins, outcasts in that society.**

**Peter is teaching them what he learned directly from Jesus about how they should live as Jesus people in that type of situation. Some of it may surprise you.**

**Our job is to see how Peter's direction to these people can relate to our situation.**

**How to get the most out of this series, or a more accurate way to say it, "how can we best position ourselves this winter, to hear God's voice and experience new life."**

**Winter Challenge:**

- 1. Listen to each sermon, preferably in person if possible.**
- 2. Read 1 Peter straight through.**
- 3. Read each section as we teach through the book.**
- 4. Use the weekly study ideas in your study guide.**
- 5. Discuss and reflect in a Bridge Group.**

**To help you with this, we have a gift for you; a journal that includes the books of 1 and 2 Peter, along with Jude. If you have been around Eagle Ridge for a while, you will have become accustomed to an outline that you can fill in and take notes on. This journal has taken the place of the outline.**

For now, the outline is simply **some key words and scripture, in case you don't want to use the journal.**

**A second gift**, or at least it could be a gift, is hiding in the seat backs. **For you at home**, I snuck into your house late last night and planted one in between your couch cushions, like a creepy Santa Claus. It is a pen with Eagle Ridge Church of God on it and our website. **This is so you always have something to write with.** You can take it home with you, or simply slip it back in the seat back.

This morning, we are looking at **1 Peter 2:1-12**. If you have grown up in church, then you have **probably heard verses** from this section. One of these more quoted verses is a real **center point** for this letter. **As always, as I am reading, allow the Holy Spirit** to direct your gaze. Mark anything that stands out to you. But **first, let's pray** for the ability to understand what God is trying to say to us.

We are going to begin reading at the beginning of chapter 2. **So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1-3**

In verses 1- 3 **there is a command to put away certain behaviors**, followed directly by a **command to long for, or crave**, something different. In other words, **desire spiritual milk of the word, not these things that are opposite** of what the word teaches. **The list of negative things is where we will naturally gravitate if we do not crave spiritual things.**

**Good habits, like reading the bible, praying, small group, attending worship, come from a desire, or craving spiritual milk that nourishes.**

**This brings us back to the question, have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? v. 3**

But how do we **Create a craving** for what nourishes us spiritually? **Write that phrase Create a craving** in your journals across from verses 1-3.

**This is about craving for what brings growth.**

**When I go to a movie theater**, I love popcorn. Do you remember going to movie theaters? All it takes is one whiff of that popcorn with its buttery goodness and I'm hooked. I forget which movie I'm there to see. Its almost like my feet lift off of the ground and I float over to that kid that asks the dumbest question ever, **"Would you like butter flavoring on that."**

**Half of it is gone** during the **free mini movies**. Oh, I'm sorry you might refer to them as previews or trailers. To me, those are a part of the entertainment, not advertisements.

**Here's the problem, and it only shows up later**. I am so full of popcorn, that I'm not hungry for dinner. All of that buttery goodness is sitting like a **hunk of granite** in my stomach. I feel terrible. Why, because I filled up on **empty calories**. Popcorn **doesn't nourish** your body. It **doesn't produce fuel** for your body to run, your muscles to work, your mind to be sharp. **All I feel like is getting my stomach pumped followed by a long nap.**

Popcorn fills you up, but doesn't fuel, or is not "a **gain**." It is a **withdrawal**.

**To create a craving** for what really nourishes you spiritually, **you have put your trust** in the one who is telling you, **"You'll not only like this, but it will give you the full vital life you really want, but don't think you deserve."**

**Trust the restaurant or the cook** before you taste the food...by **reputation, a good rating** on line, health code is A, **the smell** when you walk in.

**The first way to create a craving is to taste it first**. Then, if it is good, the taste will remain in your mouth, or rather, in your mind.

**Have you tasted what God is offering?** Don't say that you wont like it, or that type of diet only works for special, really spiritual people.

Peter is referring to this **verse from Psalm**. It adds something more to **the creating a craving**. **Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Psalms 34:8** If what God is offering that

nourishes us spiritually is tasted and **we see to effects of that taste, then we will crave it.**

**Fact: Jesus is spiritually satisfying. Once you taste you will see.** "Peter uses this text in his argument, contending that the foundation for spiritual craving is the fact that believers have already found spiritual nourishment to be good and tasty." 105

**Tasting is about knowing, but also anticipating that taste and more in the future.** The salvation is in the future hence, 'that by it you may grow up into salvation.'

This is how we create a craving.

- **Accept the word being offered,** taste before you say, "I don't like it."
- **Take note of the prominence of these negative things/what is my life's flavor. Those are initially tasty, but do not satisfy, but create more craving for what is empty and destructive.**

I used to be addicted to **Diet coke.** It was embarrassing. The more I drank it, the more I wanted it, but it **never really satisfied my thirst** or need for refreshment.

- **Remind yourself of his goodness in the past...remember when you tasted and God was good and he satisfied.** It was a camp, camp meeting, in the woods, at church with your family, during a really tough time, or during a really good time. **Have you talked yourself out of that not being real?**

**Here's the bottom line. Calling yourself a Christian and going to church doesn't necessarily mean that you have tasted what Jesus is offering.**

**In this next section, Peter wants you to picture something when you hear these words. So, use your imagination.** <sup>4</sup> **As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,** <sup>5</sup> **you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** <sup>6</sup> **For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a**

stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and **whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.**" Stop right there. Somebody here has shame from their past. Something you did or something that was done to you. This word is for you! <sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," <sup>8</sup> and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of **offense.**" They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:4-10

Write this phrase across from **verse 4.** **A living stone in a living building**  
"who does not believe to stumble over him.

**These resident aliens, outcasts, are called living stones. "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house."** This can also be read, "build yourself" as a spiritual house.

**At this point in history there is one building** that was built to be God's earthly home, the place where **heaven and earth meet** and that is the temple in Jerusalem where God commanded his people to gather to worship him and give offerings and sacrifices to him.

**Jesus said that he came to make that building obsolete. He was where heaven and earth met.** He was fully God and fully human. **But now he is building a new building around himself with living stones.** This is his church of which these social outcasts are built into.

**The new temple and the new Israel is now all who put their trust in Jesus, which includes these resident aliens and us...how that must have sounded to these outcasts!**

**The church becomes something you are built into keeping you connected with Jesus.** It is not something you do or a place you go. It is a **living building**; it is the body of Jesus.

**In the same way, this should resonate with you and with me. You are a part of what God is building on this earth, which is where God will take up residence.**

**The real question is, have you allowed yourself to be built into this living building that is connected to Jesus?**

**Or have you treated it like a place, time, or activity.**

- **Have you let other things take priority?**
- **Have you allowed some sort of disappointment to create distance?**
- **Have you allowed disagreement or the obvious flaws of the pastor to give an excuse? "I'll just read my Bible and listen to Family Life radio."**

**If we are to truly live for Jesus in this culture, we must do what Peter is telling them to do. We must develop a craving for what will nourish us spiritually and we must allow ourselves to be built into the church.**

Now we get to one of the most pivotal passages in 1 Peter. **<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:11-12**

**Remember about the descriptions as sojourners and exiles from week 1. Chosen, resident aliens, and scattered. If you were here last week and used a journal, you will see a couple of descriptions written across from the beginning of chapter 1.**

**These are the people who Peter is calling to create a craving for what will nourish them spiritually, understand that they are living stones built into a living building, the church and...Live the attractive alternative.**

**Not a better alternative in terms of success or ease, problems solved, but better, in that it is different and looks satisfying to those living it. They love one another and their enemies, even though it doesn't make sense.**

**This is powerful because it's not simply an individual living the alternative, but we, as a community doing it together, that living building.**

**They are not in any position of power to make their alternative for living something that everyone does. It cannot be imposed, it must be chosen. They can only live it in front of them in everyday life.**

**Their lives should provide an attractive alternative to the pagan life. This brings us back to holiness from last week.**

**We are commanded to be holy in chapter one. It is being holy that will speak to the culture that is definitely not. To be holy is to be set apart for God's use and his glory. A bowl is a bowl, but one that is made holy for use in the temple is for God's use and his glory. Secondly, holiness means that when we obey Jesus, his holiness is reflected off of us and made visible to those around us.**

**Mark this phrase in your journals, "abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul"...This is where we stop doing the things that the culture promotes and our flesh desires, which are behaviors that are destructive individually and within the community.**

**This is not a call to attack, nor is it a call to withdraw or isolate. Instead it is addressing the world with a counter culture message.**

**The NIV Application Commentary says it this way; "It is not this way because we are trying to be odd; we are odd because we are trying to be godly."**

**See your good deeds and know that they are from God.**

**This phrase gives us clear pictures that these resident alien Christians are scapegoats or blamed for evil "speak against you as evildoers." Even in this case, the message is not to withdraw from the culture into a commune, nor is it to attack the culture because it is attacking us.**

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!  
Matthew 5:43

**This demands we take a good look at the culture and see what it is that we are to counter.**

- Self-indulgence
- Morality
- Consumerism
- The American Dream
- Nationalism
- Poverty

**CSM working in Project Angel food** in Los Angeles. A guy asked me where I was from. When I told him a church he was shocked and asked me, "**Why are you here?**" He assumed that I would like what is happening there.

**Are you craving what nourishes you?** Have you actually tasted what God is offering?

**Are you allowing yourself to be built** into the living building where God's presence lives?

**Are you, by the way you live, providing an alternative** to what the culture is offering?

**Steps of Obedience:**

1. **Keep praying to focus.**

Let's read this together as living stones in a living building.

Father, sometimes following you in this culture makes me feel like a resident alien, somehow not belonging, out of step in this life. Remind me of my true identity as someone chosen by God. Help me to focus my mind on these facts:

I have **hope** that no matter what struggles this world brings, you are with me through them and ultimately you will provide a place for me in an eternity without pain, suffering, and struggle.

Your **holiness** is what you want for me. You have set me apart to be transformed into your image. I was made new when you saved me and I am being made new through your spirit.

Remind me to **fear** you. That means that I am reminded that you are the judge who cannot allow sin. This type of "fear" is not dread, but amazement that you sent Jesus, allowing you to be both just and merciful.

Convict me if I've marginalized my brothers and sisters and Christ and have not loved them in a way that demonstrates the crucial part they are intended to play in my life. Use my **love** for them as a witness to this world of your goodness.

As I keep my eyes on Jesus I will be able to make His Kingdom present for those around me. Amen

2. What must I move away from...What do I need to move toward or crave?

Same as before Winter challenge, join a bridge group.

3. Eat and interact.

Speak to someone after worship at soup on Sunday, open yourself to the body of Christ...taste and taste.