



Lesson Six Handout

Peter's Perspective: Zoom out, Zoom in

1 Peter 1:22 to 2:3

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the day, family is what really matters.

My closest friend, for most of my adult life, was like a brother to me. He and his family were very close to me and my family. Our families even vacationed together a few times.

When my friend was nearing death in the hospital, I offered to come to his bedside with his wife and sons. His oldest son was very kind to me on the phone, but told me no, they just wanted family there.

At the end of the day, family is what matters most.

We've seen this during the current pandemic. Siblings reaching out to siblings. Family members who had all but lost touch with each other, are once again talking, sharing, reminiscing.

When we "zoom out" and look at the big picture – when we consider what is really important in life – family emerges as a priority.

In his first letter, Peter calls upon us to have a "sincere brotherly love" and to "love one another earnestly from a pure heart." (1 Peter 1:22) There needs to be something special, something akin to family, in the way that we relate to each other. In fact, something even more intimate than biological family, as Jesus observed early in His ministry on earth (Mark 3:33-35).

Jesus command us to love each other (that is, to love our fellow disciples) as He loved us... as part of our witness to the world (John 13:34-35). Paul calls upon us to prefer those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). And John observed that our love for each other within the church is actually a sign of our having been saved (1 John 3:14-15).

Sometimes it seems like we need to work on our love for each other within the church. What can we do to nurture this kind of brotherly love?

This lesson is an opportunity to consider what it means to obey Jesus' command that we love one another as He love us.

OUTLINE

1. Peter's one-two double-exhortation punches
 - a. Get girt and set your hope on grace (v.13)
 - b. Be holy and don't conform (vv. 14-16)
 - c. Fear God and act like you are redeemed (vv.17-18)
 - d. Love deeply and act like you are purified (vv.22-25)
2. Poll: When it comes to my close relatives (parents, children/grandchildren, siblings, etc.), the current pandemic has, on the whole:
 - a. Has actually brought us a bit closer to each other;

- b. Created more distance between us / even some estrangement
 - c. Has had no noticeable impact on our closeness with each other
 - 3. Zoom out #1: *for All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.* 1 Peter 1:24-25
 - 4. Zoom in – Family first: 1 Peter 1:22-23; Galatians 6:10; Mark 3:33–35; 1 John 3:14-15; and John 13:34-35
 - a. Compare: Howard Snyder, *The Problem of Wineskins*, “The church today is suffering a fellowship crisis. ... One seldom finds within the institutionalized church today that winsome intimacy among people where masks are dropped, honesty prevails, and that sense of communication and community beyond the human bounds — where there is literally the fellowship of and in the Holy Spirit.”
 - 5. Discussion: We (the church) are commanded by Jesus to “love one another just as I have loved you”, and challenged by Peter to “love one another earnestly from a pure heart.” How can we nurture this kind of brotherly love?
 - a. “So [therefore] put away [rid yourselves]” ...
 - b. “Long for [crave] the pure spiritual mind”
 - i. Sin and loss of desire for God’s word
 - 6. This week: Do
 - 7. Next week: 1 Peter 2:4-12
 - a. Discussions on Cornerstone Connection
 - b. Facebook group discussions
 - 8. Conclusion: 1 Peter 2:4-6
- We need to hear from each other!