

PURIFIED UNTIL WE LOVE LIKE BROTHERS

Part 2: Got Milk?

1 Peter 2:1-3

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**I. God's word is like chocolate cake**

Psalm 119:103

Ezekiel 3:3

Hebrews 6:5

**II. Chocolate cake is not good**

<http://www.bing.com/search?q=%25of+post+moderns+who+do+not+attend+church&qsn&sk=&form=QBRE>

**A. When the recipe is not followed**

<http://www.americancatholic.org/news/clergysexabuse/johnjaycns.asp>

Luke 8:1

Acts 5:42

**B. When there is something wrong with the taster**

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[Rage - Today's Christian Videos http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=29CB1NNU](http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=29CB1NNU)

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**Welcome**

A couple of times a week each of us have to get a cotton swab and clean out our ears.

The stuff that comes out is a little disgusting but the improvement in hearing, once our ears are cleared makes it worthwhile.

Like most of you I don't put junk into my ears, they get clogged because there are airborne particles and stuff that get in our ears just from living in this world.

I think our spirits are like our ears.

When our spirit gets clogged we aren't able to hear like we should.

We may not intentionally put junk in our ears, in our spirit.

But living in this spiritually polluted world contaminates us.

We need the cleaning, cleansing, cotton swab work of the Holy Spirit.

Since last week's scripture told us we are purified by our obedience to the Word,

*1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth ...*

let's return to the Word today and give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to clean out our ears

so we can be obedient to the Word.

*Introduction*

Let's return to 1 Peter and continue the topic we started last week

Our scripture reader today is Hannah Styron.

As she reads notice the emphasis on the phrase "the word"

1 Peter 1:22-25

22Now 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.

23For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **word** of God.

24For,

"All men are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;  
the grass withers and the flowers fall,

25 but the word of the Lord stands forever."

And this is the word that was preached to you.

It was God's **word** that brought us into our relationship with God.

It is his **word** that will preserve our relationship with him.

It is his **word** that will improve our relationships with each other,

and it is his **word** that will take us deeper in our relationship with God.

Since anyone who is born again has tasted the Lord

and seen that he is good

then **the next step** is found in the next chapter

1 Peter 2:1-3

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

*I. God's word is like chocolate cake*

My goal today is to help everyone come to the point where you can say

"I have tasted, and the Lord is good!"

I can probably best explain this by comparing God's word to chocolate cake.

I know the Scripture compares his word to a sword,  
but I haven't had much experience with a sword,  
so I have to use a metaphor I can speak of with expertise...

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My relationship with chocolate cake started very early in life.



Here I am at my second birthday  
Yes, I'm in an orange chair and  
in front of me is a chocolate cake  
made from my grandmother's recipe  
which my mother calls "Jackson's Signature Chocolate Cake, tested and  
tweaked over the years by Doris Jackson Carnahan"

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That chocolate cake became a family favorite



and was a feature of every birthday celebration  
for every member of the family.

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This picture is probably my brother's birthday.



It looks as though he's about to receive some presents,  
but you can see my attention is fixed on the chocolate cake.

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Here's a picture of me during my college days



(and yes there was a time when I had hair)  
 There are some characteristic things in this picture.  
 I'm wearing the shirt characteristic of an electrician.  
 There is a Spanish text book on the table  
 characteristic of my struggle to learn another language.  
 I'm talking to my sister and mother about something,  
 and in front of us is a chocolate cake.

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So when **1 Peter 2:3** says  
 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.  
 I think, OK, God's Word is like chocolate cake!

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I'm not the only one who thinks so.  
 Psalm 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste...

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The prophet Ezekiel described his encounter with God's word this way  
*Ezekiel 3:3*  
 Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach  
 with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

The book of Hebrews talks about those

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*Hebrews 6:5*  
 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God...

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## ***II. Chocolate cake is not good***

It's sad, but some people have not found v. 3 to be true.  
 Not because the scripture isn't true,  
 But some people have not had a good experience with church,  
 some had not had a good experience with "Christians."  
 some have not had a good experience with the Bible.

Their experience with God has actually left a bad taste in their mouths. Sadly young Americans who believe in God are growing in their dislike for the church. They are 65% of the population, but only 30% of the average congregation.

<http://www.bing.com/search?q=%25of+post+moderns+who+do+not+attend+church&qsn=&sk=&form=QBRE>

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God's word is like Jackson's signature chocolate cake, but chocolate cake is not good

### **A. When the recipe is not followed**

If you want some of the chocolate cake, you'll have to come to my house on a special day when Cheryl makes it or marry into the family.

My mother was very protective of the recipe for the cake, only giving it to family members.

She didn't want her cake's reputation to be ruined by people who would not use the recipe as intended.

If you ever get some of "Jackson's Signature Chocolate Cake, tested and tweaked over the years by Doris Jackson Carnahan

and it's not good, it's probable that someone did not follow the recipe.

Similarly, if you taste God's word and it's not good

one possible reason is because someone has not followed the recipe.

I think this is one of the reasons the younger generation is staying away from church.

A recent study by the John Jay College of Criminal justice set the number of Americans abused by clergy men to be over 10,667 people

<http://www.americancatholic.org/news/clergysexabuse/johnjaycns.asp>

This is unfortunate -- it should never happen.

The study of abuse by clergy men mostly covered sexual abuse,

but there are many other kinds of abuse

not just by priests, but also by people who claim to represent the Lord.

I'm grateful that I'm not one of those who experienced sexual abuse at the hands of a clergy man, but

I have experienced pastors who abused God's word.

You may remember I mentioned I had a pastor who preached negatives sermons every week. I remember standing during his altar calls, angry because of the way he was misusing God's word, and therefore abusing some very good people. If you have been a victim of Bible abuse... I'm sorry - I cannot change what other people did to you. But I can equip you to experience God's word the way God intended, to taste it and know it's good.

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I am grateful for the influence of Dr. Wes Tracy, the professor of preaching at the Nazarene Theological seminary. After three years of hearing God's word abused in negative sermons I went to the seminary and I was negative too. I was particularly negative about preaching, But I took Dr. Tracy's class anyhow.

Dr. Tracy was fully aware the word "gospel," means "good news." His emphasis, now my emphasis, is preaching should always contain good news. Since the Old Testament precedes the Gospel when preaching from the Old Testament, he encouraged us to emphasize the good news. In his class Dr. Tracy made one statement that was worth the tuition: "If a rabbi can preach your sermon, let him."

For me, that statement was like when a rescue operation opening up a port for light and air to men trapped in a mine. Instantly the damage of three years of negative preaching was removed as I realized the correct handling of God's word will always contain good news. It might be challenging news, but it's always good news.

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Luke's description of the preaching ministry of Jesus says

Luke 8:1

... Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another,  
proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God...

His disciples heard it, saw it, experienced it, and copied it.

Acts 5:42

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped  
teaching and proclaiming the good news ...

If we follow the recipe correctly,

God's word will be good news.

I am convinced even in this world with  
it's bad economy,

uncertain energy sources,

increasing violence and all the depressing stuff you read and hear  
on the news

God's word stands out as attractive because it is good news.

***B. When there is something wrong with the taster***

There have been times when I shared  
"Jackson's Signature Chocolate Cake" with people who didn't like it.  
Assuming the recipe was followed correctly,  
there is one major reason why someone would say  
"that cake is not good..."

Even if you follow the recipe correctly

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chocolate cake is not good when something is wrong with the taster.

If you have some "Jackson's Signature Chocolate Cake,"  
and don't like it, I'll wonder what's wrong with you.

Perhaps you were a smoker, and damaged your taste buds

Maybe you're on some kind of medication that affects your sense of taste  
or you're just weird.

Similarly, sometimes our experience with God's word is negative  
not only because of what other people have done to us,  
but more often because of what we are doing to own community

To explain this concept I've been using a comparison to chocolate cake to move forward I need to change the metaphor.

Anyone who has ever enjoyed a good chocolate cake knows to wash that chocolate cake down, you need a nice tall, cold glass of milk.

When we were children my mother began experimenting with powdered milk.

If you have never tasted powdered milk... be thankful.

We all rejected this substitute to milk because it did not taste the way God intended milk to be.

But mom was committed to making the most of the family budget.

So she began mixing whole milk with powdered milk.

We rejected that too because

once you have tasted the real thing you never want any substitutes not even if it's mixed a little with the real thing.

Because of its nourishing qualities there are numerous biblical references comparing God's word to milk.

I'm trying to explain to you

sometimes our problem in experiencing the good news in God's word is because of the "powdered milk" that is mixed into our lives.

When we would reject the powdered milk.

my older brother would use a word like "contaminated" to describe the mixture of real milk and powdered milk.

I would repeat his complaint:

"Yah, that milk is contaminated,"

even though I had no idea what "contaminated" meant.

At five years old I needed someone to explain what a contaminate was.

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I Peter lists five spiritual contaminates that affect the way God's word tastes to us.

1 Peter 2:1-2

1 Therefore, 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,

Every one of these contaminates affects our relationship with each other  
Let me explain:

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*A. Malice*

The first thing Peter lists as a contaminate is: malice.  
The Common English Bible calls it “ill will,”  
The Contemporary English Version calls it “being hateful,”  
It is the desire to hurt someone else,  
or at least see them be hurt.

Due to a movie in 1981,  
and some well-known legal terms we’re familiar with the term malice.  
When someone injures another and is taken to court  
the lawyers work to prove whether or not there was an attempt  
to injure the other.

Legally we call it the presence/or absence of malice.  
We understand what the presence of malice does  
to the person who receives the injury  
and less familiar with what the presence of malice does  
within the person who has it.

This short video explains what malice does to us:

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Rage - Today's Christian Videos <http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=29CB1NNU>

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Did you get the point?  
Holding malice in our lives is self-destructive.  
It’s like drinking poison  
It’s like putting powdered milk in our milk because  
it interferes with our ability to get the real milk.

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*B. Deceit*

*and all deceit,*

Deceit is something that hides the unworthy motive.  
It’s an attempt to be something we are not.

We already have revulsion to:

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products that deceive us



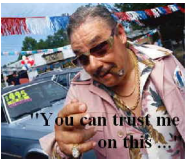
53

politicians who try to deceive us,



54

and merchants who try to deceive us.



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But Peter didn't write this verse to warn against deceptive products, politicians, or merchants. He's writing this to the church fully aware that in the church we have a problem telling the truth about how we are doing, because we want everyone to think we are Super Christian. If we succeed in faking others into believing we never struggle, we create dissatisfaction with their own Christian experience because they can never become as good as others pretend to be. Deception is the powder in the milk that makes it taste bad.

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### C. Hypocrisy

The third thing on Peter's list of contaminates is hypocrisies. There is a word that's way too familiar to us. We're aware hypocrisy is pretending to be something you're not. It's "unfelt righteousness." We see it as similar to deception. But the context of I Peter gives it a special application.

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You'll notice it in the first word of the first verse of c. 2

*1 Peter 2:1*

*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.*

This is a good example of one of those times when you need to figure out what the “therefore” is there for. It is there for to connect these thoughts with the previous thoughts, specifically 1 Peter 1:22

*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.*

We are called to love each other deeply, therefore we have to get rid of hypocrisies. It is not hypocritical to say you don't love Satan. It is not hypocritical to say you don't love satanic things. It is not even hypocritical to say you don't love people outside of the church. However, it's hypocritical to say you love Jesus, without loving his children. Hypocrisy is dirt in your milk. If it's in your life neither the milk nor the chocolate cake taste good.

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*D. Envy*

The fourth sin that prevents us from tasting what is good: envy – a dislike for someone that develops because they have something you don't.

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Envy is one of the things Jesus describes

*Mark 7:22-23*

*22greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.*

*23All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"*

The Jewish community who heard Jesus say this understood the concept of “unclean.” Something that made you unclean prevented you from entering the temple.

They all understood the temple as holding the presence of God.  
 When Jesus lists envy as something that makes a person unclean  
 he's saying envy prevents you from entering the presence of God.  
 In other words, it's a contaminate.  
 Envy is the manure in the milk.

The fifth contaminate is

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*E. Slander*

*1 Peter 2:1*

*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.*

Slander is the evil we speak about someone else,  
 not because it's true.

but in order to advance ourselves.

It's last in Peter's short list of contaminates  
 but it's the culmination of the previous four.

Each succeeding sin listed here  
 springs out of that which immediately precedes it,  
 forming a genealogy of the sins against the deep love we're called to.

Malice is the motive,

deceit is hiding the malice,

hypocrisy is pretending you don't have the malice,

envy turns the heat up on the malice

and every one of those things can be done in your head,

or committed in your heart

but slander is when they come out.

The person you are slandering probably isn't hurt by what you say

The person who is hurt is the person you give the slander to

because you are putting non-loving thoughts in their heads.

If they already had a problem with the person you slander,

you just made it worse and

they cannot grow while they do not love their brother.

If they didn't already have a problem with the person you slandered,

they do now and they still cannot grow.  
 Nothing you can say about that other person is as bad as  
 what you just did to the person who had to hear it.

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1 Peter 1:1

.... To God's elect, strangers in the world... who have tasted the word  
 We are outnumbered by the people who live contrary to The Word and  
 the last thing any smaller army needs is to start attacking itself.

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Today The Holy Spirit is calling us to eliminate  
 Malice of every kind  
 Deceit of every kind  
 Hypocrisy of every kind  
 envy of every kind  
 and slander of every kind.

Make no mistake - all five sins listed in verse two  
 are contrary to God's command to love each other deeply.  
 They are contaminates in the milk that ruin the taste  
 of the chocolate cake.

Here comes the good news...

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### ***III. Improving your experience with chocolate cake***

Did you notice the lengthy name of my mother's cake?  
 "Jackson's Signature Chocolate Cake,"  
 tested and tweaked over the years by Doris Jackson Carnahan.  
 Her mother found the chocolate cake recipe in a magazine  
 She made the cake every week for her family and changed it slightly.



The original recipe called for 6 oz. of unsweetened baking chocolate

and 2 cups of sugar.

She used 4 oz. of baking chocolate and reduced the sugar to 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups.

My mother made some similar adjustments to the recipe improving the taste each time.

God's word can not be improved, it's perfect.

But if it doesn't taste good to you, your experience can be improved.

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First by eliminating the contaminates of malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

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Second by craving pure spiritual milk

1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk...

It doesn't matter if you get the word through

music,

sermons,

radio preachers

Sunday School classes,

Bible study

reading a chapter a day ...

If you crave it, you'll get it any way you can.

Years ago I was working in someone's house

I forget what kind of electrical improvement I was making,

but I won't forget the chocolate he offered me.

I knew he had just returned from Germany so

the chocolate he offered me was going to be good.

... and it was good!

It was so good I spent the rest of that work day

trying to figure out how I could get him to give more some more!

Since we have tasted and found the Lord is good

why is it our we don't spend the rest of our time

trying to figure out how to get more?

Shortly after I started teaching Bible studies on Wednesday nights.

someone came to me and thanked me for doing it.  
 He recognized it took a lot of time and effort to prepare those studies.  
 The truth is -- I love the study and the teaching.  
 So I told him, "if I had time I would teach this every night."  
 He responded "and I would be here every night,"  
 and from that early experience with him,  
 I had no question about his spiritual status.  
 I knew he was born again, and a part of God's family.  
 I knew it because I could sense his desire for the Word.

Just in case parents of newborns forget to feed the baby  
 God invented a "feed me alarm" in the baby.  
 If he or she gets hungry that alarm starts to sound  
 and you know it's time for some milk.

When you see anyone with immature actions or attitudes  
 If they are not loving each other deeply as the scripture calls for,  
 when you hear any of the five negative attitudes listed in v. 1  
 either if they are coming from you or for someone else  
 it's an alarm they are hungry for God's word.

The reason we need that word is

1 Peter 2:2

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk,*  
 so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

You might expect at this time I would start listing  
 all the things at the church where God's Word is taught and  
 challenge you to get more.  
 I would like to do that,  
 but that's not all this text is saying.  
 This is not just a call to get into God's word,  
 it's not just a call to come to Bible study  
 it's a call to get out of the stuff that keeps you from hearing his word  
 because that's what it's going to take for us to

*1 Peter 1:22*

... love one another deeply, from the heart.

*Lights: 14-17 off, fade 9-12 down*

Peter is telling us we have to stop chewing on these negative things so we can get the opportunity to eat something better.

He's not calling us babies,

he's just making an analogy of what we should be like because any parent wants to make sure their newborn has a healthy appetite.

Every parent who has seen their kid eating M&Ms before dinner understands how eating junk will reduce your capacity for eating anything nutritious.

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Today I want to give the Holy Spirit some time to speak to each of us about our own attitudes.

During this set of music,

if you find the words hard to sing

look deep into your life to see if there is an attitude that needs to change.

If you need help you can pray with someone else who is here today,

I'll be glad to have a short prayer with anyone after the music.

3. Breathe (key of A)

4. Breathe On Me (key of G)

5. Holy Spirit Rain Down (key of F)

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## Epilogue

Books available from the library

When I read v. 2's call to crave God's word  
I think of the plants I put in the house for the winter.  
No matter how I rotate them, they keep stretching toward the window,  
wanting the nourishment they receive from light.

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So I'm here to ask you today  
do you just want a taste, or do you want it all?  
Are you stretching toward the source that will nourish your soul?

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Psalm 34:8

Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

### Sources

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