

# 1 Peter 2:2

by John Gill

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*In 1 Peter 2:2, John Gill emphasizes the necessity of desiring the pure Word of God for spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 5:12, 1 Peter 2:2

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Desire for the Word"

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## Description

John Gill emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth in his sermon on 1 Peter 2:2, urging believers to desire the pure milk of the Word as newborn babes. He explains that this desire is not merely for knowledge but for the nourishing and restorative power of the Gospel, which is essential for spiritual maturity. Gill highlights that all believers, regardless of their time in faith, are to approach God with humility and innocence, seeking the truth that leads to growth in grace and knowledge of Christ. The ultimate goal of this longing for the Word is to attain salvation and fullness in Christ. He encourages the congregation to cultivate a deep, sincere desire for the Word, which is vital for their spiritual development.

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## Transcript

Ver. 2. As new born babes,.... The Syriac version renders it, "be ye simple as infants"; and as if it was a distinct exhortation of itself, and from that which follows; though it seems rather to be descriptive of the persons spoken to, and a character of them, under which the apostle addresses them; which carries in it a reason strengthening the exhortation after given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, and that they were just, or lately born; and which is to be understood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with respect to others who were young men or fathers; but that, comparatively speaking, those that had been of the longest standing were but as it were newly born, it being at most but a few years since they were called by grace: and they were as "babes", not on account of their want of knowledge, or unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; or of nonproficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dulness, backwardness, and imperfection; or because of their incapacity in taking in, and digesting the strong meat and sublimer doctrines of the Gospel; or for their instability and simplicity, being easily deceived and beguiled; nor for their weakness in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their insufficiency to defend, or provide for themselves; but because of their harmlessness and innocence, meekness and humility; and for the sincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profession. The proselytes to the Jews' religion are often said {m} to be ymd dlwnv Nwjqk, "as an infant just born", or a new born babe; to which the allusion may here be made:

desire the sincere milk of the word; this is not a declaration that these new born souls did do so, though that might be true, but an exhortation to them so to do, as it became them: by "the sincere milk of the word" is meant the Gospel, even the whole of it, and not, as elsewhere, the more plain and easy truths of it; which is compared to milk for its purity in itself, for every word of God is pure and for its purifying nature, as used by the Spirit of God; and for its sweetness and agreeable taste to a regenerate man; and because easy of digestion to a spiritual one; and because it is nutritive to him, by it he is nourished up unto eternal life; and because, as milk is of a cooling nature, so the Gospel is a means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, of assuaging those inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation, raised in the conscience of a sinner by the law; and because as milk, medicinally used, is a restorative in consumptive disorders, so the Gospel is not only the means of helping a declining person, and who is wasted and consumed by sin, but even of quickening such as are dead in sin; it is the savour of life unto life.

The Jewish writers speak of hrwt lv blx, "the milk of the law" {n}, of which they generally interpret {o} the passage in Isa 55:1 but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or "rational milk": not that the Gospel is a scheme according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, "the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual": and it is "sincere"; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, Jews or heretics: or "without deceit"; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it.

Now, this it becomes regenerate person, to "desire"; and vehemently long after, as a new born babe does after its mother's milk; for the Gospel is that to one that is born again, as the breast is to a babe: desire after it supposes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and esteem for it, even above necessary food, and, at times, an hungering and thirsting after it, an impatient longing for, and desire of it; when such souls will labour after it, and diligently observe and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere the seasons of meeting with it return; for it is suitable food for them, savoury food, such as their souls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation, and of such a desire, and of feeding on the words of faith and sound doctrine, is,

that ye may grow thereby: regenerate persons are not at their full growth at once; they are first children, then young men, and then fathers in Christ; the Gospel is appointed as a means of their spiritual growth, and by the blessing of God becomes so, and which they find to be so by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is desirable on this account, for the increase of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in an experience of spiritual strength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profession, but in the fruits of grace, righteousness, and holiness. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "unto salvation": that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Christ, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and in the possession of that salvation he has obtained for them.

{m} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2. {n} Jarchi in Cant. 5. 12. {o} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Kimchi, in Isa. lv. 1. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 26. 1.

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