

What Many Christians Miss About the Mandate of 1 Peter 1:22

In 1 Peter 1:22 we're told, "Since your souls have been purified by obedience to the truth through the Spirit unto a genuine brotherly love, love one another deeply with a pure heart."

As Christians, we like to think of ourselves as loving people. We try to do good and think charitable thoughts, especially at this time of year. Yet when it really comes to living to the standard set in 1 Peter, I'd say it's easier said than done.

Even as we smile and put money into the Salvation Army kettles, we know, if we are honest, that there are people who just bug us, hurt us or make our lives uncomfortable. People we would just as soon live without.

But—and if you read today's verse, I think you know where this is going—that's not possible if we wish to have a relationship with God.

As we worship an incarnate God, we learn to humble ourselves enough to love one another.

The quality of our spiritual life is no better than the quality of our human relationships, and the way we connect with people is a picture of our connection to God.

God is love, and in knowing Him, we cannot escape the people He puts in our lives.

Part of being born again into God's Kingdom is learning to relate to people. Peter correlates "obeying the truth" not to rules, regulations and church rituals, but to "loving one another, deeply, from the heart."

“Your life may be morally sound and you may be a good churchgoer with all the right theology, but if the result is not a clean, free conscience overflowing with pure love, then something is wrong,” writes Mike Mason.

I preach the gospel every week. I’ve prayed over the sick and officiated at weddings and funerals of people I know. Sometimes I encounter hard and difficult people. That’s when I need to ask God to fill me with His Spirit, to help me see people through His eyes, to get over my own prejudices and issues. I need to humble myself enough to love.

I think of the words of Peter—that living in the truth results in sincere love—and I know there is hope for my heart because God chose to come to earth and reveal His love to us.

That’s the joy of this season. That’s the joy we can experience as we prepare for the New Year and let our love overflow from the well of God’s love.{eo}

Ray Bentley is a pastor, prophecy expert and author. He founded Maranatha Chapel in August 1984, and the church now serves 7,000 people weekly. His daily radio show can be heard across the United States and on stations around the world. Ray Bentley Ministries produces a variety of printed, audio and video resources for study available at www.raybentleyministries.com. His latest series—“The Elijah Chronicles”—is a fiction series based on end-times events.