



## Fervent

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. (1Peter 1:22-23)

The text from **1Peter 1:22-23** is frequently used to make the point that being born again is through the word of God, and rightly so. There is perhaps no passage more concise in explaining the relationship of obedience, purification, love, and the word of God. Too often, the instruction contained in this passage is not emphasized—*“fervently love one another from the heart.”* While most grasp the basic idea of *“love,” “one another,”* and *“from the heart,”* how many appreciate the intensity given through the word, *“fervently”*?

People, who have purified their souls by obeying the truth, are to love brethren with a pure heart fervently. The word translated “fervent” in the Greek language originally meant “fully-stretched, i.e. describing the verbal idea as extended out, to its necessary [full] potential [“without slack”]; strenuously, without undue let up [as “completely taut”].” One, who would really strain or stretch for a thing, was fervent. This is why, in metaphorical usage, it came to mean, “earnestly, strenuously, intently.” Even in the English language, it is easy to see the relationship between the original meaning and the metaphorical meaning—the English word comes from the Latin “fervere” meaning “to boil.” The opposite of this is dull or listless or spiritless. Scripture speaks of the Christian’s need to be fervent in a number of avenues, all of which have a direct bearing on the brotherhood.

### Fervent in Love

As is stated in our text, Christians should be fervent in loving the brethren. The idea is that Christians should stretch and strain a little in their care and concern for their brethren. This shows real conversion. *“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down*

*His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1John 3:14-18).* This is a badge of true discipleship. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). Being fervent in this, one will help his brother in that which is needed—not only in physical things, but more importantly, in those things which are spiritual. "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). This is why Peter continues in the fourth chapter: "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins" (1Peter 4:8).

### Fervent in Spirit

Christians are to be fervent in spirit. This was said of Apollos: "Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:24-26). Upon learning more accurately the truth, his fervor of spirit was not diminished. He continued working and speaking for the Lord and in so doing, encouraging the brethren (Acts 18:27-28). Christians are told to be of this attitude and action. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality" (Romans 12:10-13).

### Fervent in Prayer

Christians should be fervent in prayer. Epaphras is a superb model: "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis" (Colossians 4:12-13). The Christians in Jerusalem are another fine example: "So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God" (Acts 12:5). There is success promised through this fervency (James 5:16).

Christians must never forget that this fervor must be for the Lord and His word by which we have been born again. His word is truth—not any individual's opinions or judgments. It is with this fervor that all Christians show their love from the heart for God's people—stretching out, boiling over for them.