

## 1 John 2:13-14

**1 John 2:13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. 1 John 2:13**

I write to you

John is writing to members in different stages of spiritual growth. He is writing to them to encourage and cultivate their relationship with Christ whether it be fathers, young men or children all of which belong to the family of God.

Here is a review of what John is writing to them:

**1 John 1:4**

**1 John 2:1**

**1 John 2:7**

Fathers

*Define the word father.*

John's definition of fathers was due to their age and were characterized by their wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

*Albert Barnes' New Testament Commentary* states, "But perhaps all that is necessarily implied in this passage is, that they had had long opportunity of becoming acquainted with the religion of the Son of God, and that having understood that thoroughly, it was proper to address them as aged and established Christians, and to call on them to maintain the true doctrines of the gospel, against the specious (false) but dangerous errors which then prevailed."

You recall, during this time there were many false prophets claiming untruths of the gospel message. Even today, false doctrine is hidden with biblical words, Christian clichés, half-truths, and near-truths. Charles H. Spurgeon said, "***Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right.***"

*How can we become mature believers that are able to discern false doctrine?*

We can read our Bible and study His Word. This is where we find the truth! Prayer is vital! Without personal communion with God, we will not know Him. We are to prayerfully, carefully, and humbly apply biblical wisdom to the situations we face in our lives. We can only do this with the help of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:15, "**walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**" We each get there step by step, not individually, it is the Spirit that empowers us to live the Christian life.

**2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

**Philippians 3:12-15 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

**2 Peter 1:5-8 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*What do you see is required from a believer for spiritual growth from the above underlined words?*

It requires action on our part! As you can see, believers are to be productive in their study to be able to discern truth from error.

**Hebrews 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**

*How do we know if we are maturing spiritually?*

God's way is life, growth and fruit. After we receive Christ as Lord and Savior, we are children born into God's family. Every Christian begins the process of spiritual growth, the goal is to become spiritually mature. Over time, spiritual growth should lead a believer to understand with greater substance. Paul stated in Philippians 3:14, "***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***" We must press continually toward a deeper knowledge of God in Christ. Spiritual growth is a process of taking in the truth of God and growing by believing and responding to that truth. We cannot grow spiritually unless we grow in our understanding of God's truth. There is to be growth in each one of us.

**John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."**

**Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**1 Corinthians 13:11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

**1 Corinthians 14:20** Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

**Ephesians 4:13** Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

This knowledge is not head knowledge but a knowledge that is applied towards Christ. It is a life changing knowledge. One's priorities changes from pleasing self to pleasing God and obeying Him. Believers do not make much of themselves and their good works and progress. They make much of Jesus. Even while believers are growing in faith and holiness, they do not grow more dependent on themselves, it is through dependency on Christ alone, and obedience to His command to love God and love others.

*Does a believer on this side of eternity ever complete spiritual maturity? Why?*

Spiritual maturity is an on-going process that will continue throughout our life. Spiritual maturity is following and imitating our Lord and Savior. The key to growth is faithfulness and perseverance in doing what pleases the Lord. When we become inactive and unresponsive towards the Lord, we are out of fellowship with Him and our growth becomes stagnant.

*Something to ponder: If you have no desire to grow spiritually, you won't grow.*

Because you have known Him who is from the beginning

*Who is from the beginning?*

God/Jesus has always been from the beginning and will be throughout eternity!

**Micah 5:2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**John 17:5** And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.

**Colossians 1:17** He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

**1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.**

**Revelation 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**

I write to you, young men because you have overcome the wicked one

Young men - Those who were in the prime of life, whose Christian experience was more limited, but exceptional because they had shown that they had overcome (Greek=*nikao*= subdue, conquer, prevail, get the victory) from the wicked one-Satan. Satan's name alone means adversary, enemy, and the accuser. His efforts are in falsehood and deception. The mention of their overcoming evil emphasizes the power of believers over the power of Satan.

*Albert Barnes New Testament Commentary* states, “You have triumphed over the passions which prevail in early life; you have combatted the allurements of vice, ambition, covetousness, and sensuality; and you have shown that there is a strength of character and of piety (virtue) on which reliance (trust) can be placed in promoting religion. It is proper, therefore, to exhort you not to disgrace the victory which you have already gained, but to employ your vigour of character in maintaining the cause of the Saviour. The thing to which John appeals here is the energy of those at this period of life, and it is proper at all times to make this the ground of appeal in addressing a church. It is right to call on those who are in the prime of life, and who are endowed with energy of character, to employ their talents in the service of the Lord Jesus, and to stand up as the open advocates of truth.

**1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.**

**2 Timothy 2:22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.**

**1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith.**

We too are victorious through Christ! Our Lord Jesus Christ has triumphed over every power, every principality, every ruler of darkness, every spiritual force of evil in the unseen realm. He has triumphed over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He conquered sin, death, and hell. Thanks be to our Lord that our ultimate victory from the wicked one comes by the blood of the Lamb.

*Something to ponder: Are you aware of the ploys of the devil?*

*Why is it important for the mature believer to come alongside the younger believer?*

One of the things that I loved about Women's Bible Study was having the younger ladies join us. It was refreshing to hear these young women share their insight of God's Word. I personally love being around the older ladies because there is so much wisdom to be gleaned. Many of you ladies have walked with God many years and have wonderful truths of how God has worked in your life. Oh, you may be thinking, I am older and of no use to anyone. Well, your wisdom, godly advice, and knowledge is there to support a younger one! You are always valuable in the family of God no matter what your age is! God has a purpose for you!

*Something to ponder: Am I coming alongside a younger believer and helping them grow in their walk with the Lord?*

I write to you little children

Little children- infants, spiritually immature Christian. Those who have only the basic awareness of God the Father and need to grow. The defining element of spiritual immaturity, refers to a child who needs to be trained, taught, and instructed.

*Why do you suppose there are different levels of spiritual growth?*

Spiritual growth is basic to the life of a believer just as physical growth is basic to the life of a physical person. I think of little Alice (my granddaughter). When she was born up until she was 5 months, she survived on just breastmilk and later formula. She was quite happy with just milk or formula. You never would have known her daily nutrients only came from a bottle. She had rolls on her arms and legs for days. Even if I wanted to feed her solid food, her stomach was not mature enough to process the food. In fact she did not even have teeth to chew with if I were to give her a piece of steak. But as the months went by she continued to grow and her teeth started to come in. Now she is able to move on to something other than just milk in her diet. In the same way, a believer's spiritual growth must begin with the simpler things. We begin our new birth with the "milk" (basic, elemental teachings) of the Word and then we should progress to the "meat" (deeper, more complete teachings) of the Word.

**Hebrews 5:12-13 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.**

**1 Corinthians 12:1-2 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.**

**1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.**

*Something to ponder: We are not going to grow if we are not being fed.*

Because you have known the Father

These children know the Father and are reminded of their forgiveness through Christ. Even though they are young in the Lord, he/she knows God the Father, just like a baby knows its father. Although a baby knows his/her father when he/she is born, they will know him better later in life. They have become God's adopted son/daughter through the Name of His own Son. Every believer has been chosen by God to be the recipient of forgiveness and eternal life.

**1 John 2:12 I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.**

*Family Bible Notes states, "The gospel is suited to persons at every period and in all relations of life. None who can understand are too young to embrace it and experience its saving power; none are too vigorous and active, or too full of business, to be governed by its spirit and perform its duties; and none too old to inculcate (teach) its principles and exemplify its precepts."*

**Romans 8:14-17 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**

**John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

*Something to ponder: Do I take time to know my Heavenly Father intimately?*

**I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. 1 John 2:14**

I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning

In verse 14, John repeats, "*I have written to you fathers, because you have known Him from the beginning,*" as he did in verse 13, maybe to emphasis what He said previously.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong

This reference to strength is not about muscles, but spiritual strength. These young men have drawn their strength from the Lord!

**Isaiah 40:29-31** He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

**Ephesians 3:16** That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

**Ephesians 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

For every trial, heartache, and temptation...the Lord's strength is available to us! **“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Psalm 73:26)**. Thanks be to the Lord who gives us His reliable strength!

*In what ways have you seen God's strength in your life?*

And the word of God abides in you

Strong's Greek Dictionary defines abide <meno> as: to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy, continue, dwell, endure, remain, stand.

Abiding in Christ pictures an intimate, close relationship, and not just a superficial acquaintance. Without that vital union with Christ that salvation provides, there can be no life and no productivity. Abiding is an ongoing condition without intermission or end of complete trust in Him, complete dependence on Him, continual faith in Him, and a continual relationship with Him. God's Word abiding in us!

**John 15:4** Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

**1 John 2:5-6** By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

**1 John 4:13** By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

And you have overcome the wicked one

These youths have overcome the wicked one by their faith in the Son of God. The means of overcoming is faith. Jesus, the Son of God is the Conqueror. All those who have such faith in Christ will conquer!

**1 Corinthians 15:11** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 John 4:4 You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**

**1 John 5:4 For whoever has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith.**

One Commentator states, “Jesus came to destroy this ‘Prince of the world.’ Believers achieve the first grand conquest over him when they passed from darkness to light, but afterwards they need to maintain that continual keeping of themselves from his assaults, looking to God by whom alone they are kept safe.

Remember, the Evil one comes to steal, and to kill, and to destroy! God’s Word says to, resist Satan and do not let him have a foothold.

**Ephesians 4:27 Do not give place to the devil.**

**James 4:7-8 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**1 Peter 5:7-11 Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

**1 John 3:8b The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

The best way to thwart the enemy’s deception is to study God’s Word for oneself. It is always about getting the truth from God’s Word. His Word is truth! How do we grow by God’s Word? We read it, cross-check one verse against another, and then apply it.

Conclusion: We are all at different levels in our spiritual growth. We must keep growing in wisdom and understanding of God’s Word and Truth so we can have victory over the evil one and to be able to discern Truth from error. Our goal is to become like Christ in our walk and conduct. We are to be sanctified (set apart) from the world and live holy lives daily. The only way we can do that is by abiding in Christ and having an intimate relationship with Him. When we have sinned against our Lord, come before Him humbly in confession. Thank You Jesus for your gift of grace, faith and salvation!

Remember loved one, Jesus came that you might have life and “**have it more abundantly**” (John 10:10)!