

Stages of Maturity in a healthy Church Context:

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|---|--|----------------------|
| 1. Children = New in the Faith (Gospel Advocates) | | Babe |
| 2. Young Men = Workers (Implementing Vision) | | Naomi Campbell |
| 3. Fathers = Mature Christians (Wise Counsel) | | Sandy Millar/Gbemiro |

1 John 2:12-14

1 John 2: 1-2, 12-14, 15-17

1My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for^[a] the sins of the whole world.

.... 12I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. _ 13I 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 evil one. _ I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. _ 14I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. _ I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

15Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

An Obstacle in interpreting this passage:

His Address:

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|--------------|--|-----------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1. Children | | Forgiven | | Gospel Advocates |
| 2. Young Men | | Overcome the evil one | | Workers |
| 3. Fathers | | Know Him | | Mature/Counselors |

The Obstacle: What is said to each group is specific and restricted to that particular group.

Proper Treatment:

The Context of the whole letter applies all these privileges to the church as a whole. What is true of each group is true for all believers.

Overall Purpose

As our text (2:12–13) says, "I am writing to you, little **children**, because your sins are **forgiven** for his sake. I am writing to you **fathers**, because you **know him** who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, **young men**, because you have **overcome the evil one**."

Not because you are sick but because you are well—Hallelujah! Glory to God!

John's Purpose

- 1) "I am writing to help you not to sin. I am writing to warn you against the deceivers." He intensifies their appreciation of what they have in Christ, and deepens their assurance of eternal life.
- 2) I am writing because you are forgiven. You know the truth. You are strong. I want you to have assurance of eternal life." He warns them about those who would deceive them, and urges them to have vigilance against sin.

Reference to Spiritual Growth

"I WRITE UNTO LITTLE CHILDREN,"

...Little children in your experience, and what he has to say to them is that your sins are forgiven.

There are people who have just received the Lord and they are babes in Christ.

- You know Christ!
- You have conquered the devil!
- So be encouraged!
- Abide in Christ!
- Use his truth and power to avoid sin and error and to defeat the temptation to sin.

Tell you what Saints, if that's all you know that is great! That is a fantastic start.

And there are a lot of people who are new in the Lord, and the only thing they know is that their sins are forgiven.

They are people out there who cannot connect the Schema of Theology, they are not versed in Doctrine, they don't know much about Christianity yet, but at least they know the important thing that **their sins are forgiven**.

In your first realization as a child of God is the fact that my sins are forgiven.

YOUNG MEN

"I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one."

Young men are those in the Vanguard of the battle against the Devil.

They have experienced God's victory.

God doesn't put infants in the vanguard.

God the Father holds you back as an infant and in that holding back time he is working in you.

He wants you to learn

He wants you to develop (2 Case Studies)

(Paul AD 33, Paul's conversion, the 3 years in Arabia, then AD 44, Paul's 1st Missionary Journey, Moses, at 40 yrs tending sheep, 40 yrs in the wilderness after he received the 10 Commandments, then he leads the Children of Israel to the Promised Land)

He wants you to grow through these temptations, trials and hardships.

As we mature God intensifies what is allowed to strengthen our faith and trust in Him.

And that is why the Scripture exhorts us,

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3**because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2).*

It's part of our growth, part of the development of our relationship with God. It's the thing that causes our roots to go deeper in Him and in the Word.

You know that there is Good News

- When God closes every possible door
- When your Doctor tells you medical science can't help you
- When your teens rebel
- When your husband leaves you
- When your house is just about to be repossessed (Foreclosure)
- When your investments have failed
- When you are made redundant

Why?

Because God is just about to show up. Only He can make a way where there is no way. Now God has the opportunity to show you who He is and what He can do.

God works, so often, when we come to the end of our finite resources, our genius, and our devices. And when we give up is often when God then does His work, and oftentimes He does not do it until we get to that point.

And so God lets us get to that place of desperation, hopelessness in ourselves, that when He works, all we can say is, "God is Able."

"I write unto young men because you've overcome the wicked one."

Then he goes back and he goes through the same progression again and saying the same thing to the little children, only declaring unto them this time,

"I write unto little children because you have known the Father." And then

I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that was from the beginning (1Jo 2:14).

Just declares the same thing to them, but then with the young men he changes.

I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one (1Jo 2:14).

So, first of all, he just says, "You've overcome the wicked one."

Now he gives you the **secret of their strength** and how it is that they overcame the wicked one.

"I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, because **God's Word** abides in you."

The Word is always our strength against the enemy.

None of us are immune from the attacks of the enemy. Whether you are an infant, or a young person or adult in the faith.

The enemy will come and attack you, remember he attacked even our Lord Jesus.

No human being can ever grow beyond temptation, in fact, many times the more you grow, the greater is the temptation that the enemy lays before you.

You never grow beyond the point of struggling with the enemy, being in conflict with Satan.

But, "I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, because the Word of God abides in you."

Saints that's the secret of my strength in overcoming the enemy, the Word of God abiding in my heart

Listen to the words of King David,

"Thy Word," David said, "have I hid in my heart, O Lord, that I might not sin against you"
([Psalm 119:11](#)).

There is power in the Word to defeat the enemy every time he comes, in every place he comes, under every circumstance he comes.

When Satan came to Jesus with the temptations, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, Jesus answered those temptations with the Word.

"It is written,"¹

- *'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*^[a]
- *'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'*^[c]
- *'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'*^[d]

Jesus said. And the secret of His strength in overcoming the temptations of Satan was the Word of God abiding in you.

Each time the devil trips us; it means we have neglected the Word.

Satan likes to see us so busy in so many things that we don't have time for the Word.

At that point you are very vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.

Oh, how we need to be strong in the Word, that we might be able to overcome the wicked one, because God's Word abides in us.

Now as we grow and mature, then He addresses the state of the young man, "You're strong."

FATHERS (MATURE CHRISTIANS)

"I write unto you, fathers, because you know² Him who was from the beginning³."

¹ Matthew 4:1-11

4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[a]" **5**Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6**"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:" 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[b]" **7**Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[c]" **8**Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9**"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."**10**Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^[d]"

²

1) to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of perceive, feel

a) to become known

2) to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of

a) to understand

Here is find a profound declaration of the fact that Christ has always existed. He has always been there, there was never a time when He wasn't. Glory!

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

When Micah announced His birthplace in prophecy, he said to Bethlehem,

"Out of thee shall come He who is to rule my people Israel, whose going forth has been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Now it is interesting, there are a couple of Hebrew words that are translated *everlasting*.

WORD 1:

"to the vanishing point"

Meaning: Let your mind go back, and back, and back, and back some more.

Go back 12b years, then 120b years, Go back 120t years

How far can your mind go back before you hit a vanishing point?

Go back till your mind reaches that point where you can't conceive or comprehend

That is the word in Hebrew that is translated *everlasting*.

Word 2: | **YOWM**

b) to know

3) Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman

4) to become acquainted with, to know

3

1) beginning, origin

2) the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader

3) that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause

4) the extremity of a thing

a) of the corners of a sail

5) the first place, principality, rule, magistracy

a) of angels and demons

"beyond the vanishing point".

So when your mind gets to that vanishing point where you can't think any farther back, then beyond that.

Beyond the vanishing point. The one who existed beyond the vanishing point is the one who will be born in Bethlehem. Who God has ordained to rule over the nation of Israel.

"You have known Him," he said, "who was from the beginning."

That which was from the beginning.

He introduces the Epistle this way. "Which we have seen, which we have heard, which we have looked upon, which we have touched. The eternal God, Jesus Christ our Lord, became flesh and dwelt among us." So I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning.

The Fathers have a relationship with the one who is beyond the vanishing point.

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