

## WEEK 12: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? 1 JOHN 2:12-14

1 Jn 2:12-14 **believers' maturity is compared to different members in a family.** A father, a young man and children. Each one is a believer at different levels of Christian maturity.

### I. CHRISTIANS MATURE DIFFERENTLY

- A. Not all believers have the same spiritual maturity.
- B. God desires for all Christians to continually grow spiritually
- C. **Goal of spiritual maturity is to be MORE like Christ!**
  - 1. Ro 8:29 ¶ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
  - 2. 1Co 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we **shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.**
  - 3. 2Co 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.** For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
- D. Mature Christians enjoy the abundant life (Jn 10:10)
- E. **Christian growth → work of God, demands Human Responsibility**
  - 1. Commanded to pursue Christlikeness.
  - 2. Php 2:12 ¶ Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, **so now**, not only as in my presence but **much more** in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,**
  - 3. 2Pe 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.
- F. **Paul desired to grow spiritually**→ Phil 3:14 I press on toward **the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 ¶ **Let those of us who are mature think this way,** and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.
- G. **John repeated the same thought**→ 1Jo 2:6 whoever says he abides in him ought to **walk in the same way in which he walked.**
- H. **Every Christian is commanded to pursue sanctification in their lives**
  - 1. Accomplished by obedience
  - 2. Utilizing God given graces to grow in our spiritual lives
- I. Hebrews → Word God should bring about some changes in our lives→ sanctification.
  - 1. Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 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.

**J. Being More Spiritual mature doesn't mean:**

1. **You can improve your standing before God**
2. **God will love you more**—>Ro 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**K. Old in Christ doesn't mean More Mature Spiritually**

**L. Spiritual Maturity is not how much you know about Christ.**

1. **Growth in Christ is directly related to your commitment to obedience to Christ.**
2. Will be judged for the knowledge you have been given
3. Lu 12:48 But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

**M. God has given us His Word—> He expects us to listen and apply.**

1. Peter commanded—> 1Pe 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—<sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.+
2. James-> James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

**II. COMFORT TO BELIEVERS**

- A. 1Jo 2:12 ¶ I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.
- B. **little children** – teknion – little child, used as a term of kind address by teachers,
  1. Different word in V13 paidion *pahee-dee'-on*
- C. **Addressing those who confess the name of Christ,**
- D. All of them, regardless of their spiritual maturity, are children of God
- E. These are those who strive to put away sin in their daily lives.
- F. Gnostics put faith in a higher knowledge, cared nothing for what their physical life.
- G. John writes this letter so that these **little children** of God may know that they have eternal life.
- H. John says **I am writing to you, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake**
  1. John has confidence that if they have trusted in the name of Jesus Christ, their **sins are forgiven.**
  2. **forgiven** – aphiemi – “to send away”

3. **for his name's sake**→ sins taken off their accounts “sent off”
  - a. Not just forgotten→paid for by Jesus Christ
  - b. Sins imputed to Him→ His righteousness imputed to the believer

- I. Promise to all who would trust in Christ.→ **for his name's sake**
  1. Not about the works of the believer, Not because of all they know,
  2. But in WHOM THEY PUT THEIR TRUST.
  3. Because of Christ, His death, His resurrection→ **[their] sins are forgiven**

### III. WRITING TO FATHERS

- A. **1Jo 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning**
- B. John understands that not all God's children mature at the same rate, not all are conformed to the image of Christ at the same rate.
- C. Addresses 3 basic groups in the faith
  1. Speaks from the most mature to the least: Fathers, Young men, Children
- D. **Fathers represent the most mature believers**
- E. They “**know him who is from the beginning**”
  1. “Him” in this context could be Christ who they know from the beginning of their salvation who actually is God existing “**from the beginning**” of eternity
  2. Or “Him” who is God the Father who is from all eternity, who loved them and gave them eternal life from before the foundation of the world
  3. Or both as God the Father and God the Son are both equal as Triune God
- F. **know him** – gnosko – an intimate knowledge→represents a deep knowledge of God
- G. Not just read but have studied God's word → understand the doctrines of God
  1. They know the attributes of God
  2. They have applied Scripture to lives and relationships with others→ code they live by.
- H. Been tested by fire of trials and been found faithful
- I. Seadfast in their faith in Christ.
- J. Mn and women who can say as Paul: **1Co 11:1 ¶ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.**
- K. mn and women that are walking examples of Christ
  1. **Php 3:17 ¶ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.**
- L. Lke the prophets of old proclaim eternal life to those they teach or those they interface with in their lives.
- M. Dsire others to “have fellowship with the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ”.
  1. Lve the brethren and sacrifice to bring others into the family of God.

- N. They know the ways of Satan and strive to stay far from the darkness.
- O. No necessarily the oldest in years or even in how long they have been believers.
- P. These are just mature believers that are matured in walking as Christ walked

#### IV. WRITING TO YOUNG MEN

- A. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.
- B. young men are those in the middle.
- C. Came to Christ and abide in the light→Not just to talk but live in it.
- D. Those fighting the battle of Christ each day and winning.
  1. Understand what they need to win the battle
  2. Using the full armor of God to stand firm against Satan
- E. These Are being tested– are being found faithful →have overcome the evil one
- F. Not desiring to sit on the sidelines watching, they are in the game!
- G. They are busy advancing the kingdom of God!

#### V. WRITING TO CHILDREN

- A. V13b – . . I write to you, children, because you know the Father.
- B. children - paidon – young child, infants, metaphor referring to child in intellect
  1. Totally different word used for “little children” teknia in v12
  2. Least mature believers, infants in the faith
  3. Have basic knowledge of the gospel– know the Father but have not matured to really “know Him intimately”
- C. Have come out of the darkness into kingdom of light but still struggle with the darkness
- D. Trusted in salvation of Christ but still “need milk, not solid food”
  1. Cannot chew the meat of the Word- don’t know how apply it
  2. know the Father but they are babes in the faith
  3. Need much parental guidance –must be led, weak on their own
  4. Have righteousness of Christ but will have little works or fruits that will not burn as wood, hay and stubble.
  5. Can be easily fooled by the deceit of men, even false teachers at times
- E. **God has provided for these infants in the faith to grow:**
  1. Eph 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 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,
- F. Paul’s Warning to those that remain in this childhood state:
  1. Eph 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.
  2. Dangerous stage of Christianity– can be pulled away easily

3. Caught up in the world easily-->talk about what they do not know at times
4. Are weak and suffer much hurt in their own failures, they fall down repeatedly.

**G. Believers are Children because:**

1. **New Believers-** new to the faith,
  - a. have not had time to read, study God's Word
  - b. Like newborn infants, they are still learning how to walk
2. **Long term believers that are NOT committed** to strive to know Christ more
  - a. Unfortunately describe much of the church today- Failure to thrive Children
  - b. Saved but do not avail themselves to the graces that God has made available
  - c. Can be lazy!
  - d. Not in the battle, satisfied to be in the stands or on the bench of Christian life.
  - e. Listening and watching others fight the battle for the faith.
  - f. They are nominal Christians

**VI. Marketing to Spiritually Grow!-> Next week!**

- A. 2:14 I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

**VII. Discussion Questions:**

- A. Which one are you? Where would others say you are?
- B. Are you striving to be mature spiritually?
- C. What has to change in your life to move up?