

1 John 2:12-14

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

¹³*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him [Jesus] that is from the beginning.*

I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one [the Devil].

I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

¹⁴*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth [lives] in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

I. Introduction

A. Christian spiritual journey begins with spiritual new birth

1. Christian must be born again

John 3:7 *Marvel not that I [Jesus] said unto thee [Nicodemus], "Ye must be born again."*

2. Only way to enter God's kingdom is with spiritual new birth

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], "Verily, verily [Truly, truly], I say unto thee, Except a man be [unless a person is] born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

B. God desires that Christian continue to grow

1. God designed Christian life for growth

1 Peter 2:2 *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word [Bible], that ye may grow thereby:*

2. God expects Christian to make progress in spiritual growth

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

C. Three stages in spiritual growth – child, adolescence, & parenting

II. Christian Begins as Spiritual Child

A. Common title

1. John uses title "little children" 9 times in 1 John

a. New Christian given Spirit of adoption into God's family

Romans 8:15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

- b. New Christian marked as a doer of perfect law of liberty

James 1:25 *But whoso looketh [But anyone who looks] into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein [and does so over and over], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work [not forgetting what he learned, but does accordingly], this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

- 2. Another title given for non-Christian

- a. Called children of disobedience

Ephesians 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world [Before you were saved you tried to please the world in your behavior], according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit that now worketh [that is the spirit you see working] in the children of disobedience:*

- b. Called part of the Devil's kingdom

John 8:44 [Jesus speaking] *Ye [] are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not [and did not live] in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own [When he lies he speaks his native language]: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

- 3. Term of family appeal

- a. Followers of God

Ephesian 5:1 *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

- b. Witness of God's Spirit as children of God

Romans 8:16 *The [Holy] Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

B. Common salvation

- 1. Complete forgiveness

- a. Forgiveness given for sins past
- b. Forgiveness offered for present sins
- c. Forgiveness available for sins future

- 2. God's forgiveness cannot be measured

Psalm 103:11-12 *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

- 3. Redemption always had payment exchanged

- a. Price of redemption – Leviticus 25:51-52, Jeremiah 32:7-8

b. Redemption of a soul is beyond human price

Psalm 49:7-8 *None of them [wealth and riches] can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: ⁸For the redemption of their soul is precious [is too expensive for anyone to buy], and it ceaseth for ever [and the payments would need to go on forever].*

c. But God paid the price of redemption for each human soul

Romans 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Ephesian 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

C. Common start

1. Spiritual babies in Christ know the Father as children of God
2. Spiritual babies know that they are saved & forgiven

Psalm 32:1 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.*

III. Christian Moves into Adolescence

A. John uses words “young men”

B. Christian gaining strength

1. Small children self-absorbed in themselves
2. But teenagers & young adults have more judgement skills than children

Hebrews 13:9 *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines [Do not be confused by all the strange teachings you'll hear from different places]. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein [For it is better to be strengthened by God's grace in our hearts than to try to find strength in the ceremonial foods that clearly don't benefit those who advocate them.].*

3. Depending more on Jesus – example of Paul

2 Corinthian 12:9 *And he [God] said unto me [Paul], “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [I will gladly boast about my weaknesses], that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

C. Christian has soundness of doctrine

1. Word of God stays within Christian soul

James 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness [Therefore, put away all the moral filth and the evil that is so common in the world], and receive with meekness the engrafted word [the word (Bible) which has come to live in you], which is able to save your souls.*

2. Not tossed around by every new fad of thought

Ephesians 4:14 *That we henceforth **be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine [Then we will no longer be immature like children, tossed about in our minds by every new teaching that is carried in by the wind], by the sleight [trickery] of men, and cunning craftiness [carefully-prepared deceit], whereby they lie in wait to deceive [who try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth];*

D. Christian has standing – strength to overcome

1. Sword of the Spirit

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow [able to cut so precisely that it can separate the soul from the spirit as easily as it separates the marrow from inside the bone], and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

2. Nature of spiritual warfare

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds [For the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. They have divine power to demolish confused reasoning and false doctrines.]; ⁵Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God [Answering all the false concepts about God, and demonstrating that the knowledge of God is not found in fancy words and phrases], and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ [and is able to show you how Christ is everything you need, so that all of your thoughts focus on Him];*

3. Philosophies of doctrines of demons

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the [Holy] Spirit speaketh expressly [clearly says], that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits [allowing themselves to be charmed into false beliefs], and doctrines of devils;*

IV. Christian Matures into Parents

A. Term “fathers” to show maturity (full grown)

B. What is a spiritual parent?

1. Christian has personally known God

2 Corinthians 8:9 *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

2. Personal devotion to God who has done so much for Christian

Hebrews 2:9 *But we [Christians] see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

3. Christian changed into similar character as God's Son

Romans 8:29 *For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son [Since God knew beforehand those who would be willing to change their lives in order to be conformed to the image of His Son], that he might be the firstborn among many brethren [since Jesus is an example for all of us and we simply have to follow Him].*

4. Christian desires humble spirit of Christ

James 4:6 *But he [God] giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."*

C. What is work of a parent?

1. Warning to follow spiritual father

1 Corinthians 4:14-15 *I [] write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you [My motive is not to humiliate you, but it is for you to choose right over wrong, as a beloved son listens to his caring father]. ¹⁵For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers [There are many who teach you correct doctrines, but only a few who love you as a father]: for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you [I have become such a loving father to you] through the gospel.*

2. Warning against the love of the world

1 John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

3. Warning against false teachers & false prophets

2 Peter 2:1 *But there were false prophets also among the people [during the age of Israel], even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [who secretly will introduce some horrible false teachings], even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

V. Conclusion

A. Three generations in a spiritual household

1. Babies & little children
2. Adolescents (teenagers) & young adults
3. Parents – fathers & mothers

B. Christians continue to grow

1 Peter 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed [not a physical birth in a body that deteriorates and eventually dies], but of incorruptible [but a spiritual birth that is eternal], by the word of God, which liveth and abideth fo ever.*

1 Corinthians 13:11 *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*