

Intro: The Apostle John is traditionally known for two things.

1. He is known as the Apostle of Love: 4x in John referred to as “disciple Jesus loved.” Wrote more about love of Jesus,
2. Known as most Pastoral and caring: Growing out of that love is John’s care for others the way Jesus cared for him.

When you understand that about WHO John IS, then you can better understand why he writes what he writes today.

1 John 2:12-14 Pg 862

Because John is a pastor he takes the opportunity when he is writing to make sure that his readers are hearing him correctly. This short section we are looking at today is considered a parenthetical statement to the overall flow of the book.

It’s like what I do when I’m preaching along and then say, “Pause with me for a minute here...and let me explain something!”

Here, a little into the book, John pauses to do 3 things

- He pauses to COMFORT his readers in the midst of a very strong warning. Illus: (Last week: CS & Racism)
- He pauses to ENCOURAGE his readers and let them know...you CAN do this! Not impossible...God help you
- He pauses to tell them: NO EXCUSES! God has empowered, enabled, encouraged you: So, No Excuses!

As he writes John has something to say to everyone in the church that he is addressing. What he does is divide the church in his mind into three different categories, based on their level of spiritual maturity. And, being a good Pastor, instead of using a shotgun approach he is very cautious to make sure that each of the three different levels of spiritual maturity he addresses hear what they specifically need to hear.

Look with me at the three different categories of people he addresses, based on their self-identified level of spiritual

John doesn’t say: Bob and Tom and Susan and Fred...YOU fit in this level...so this is what I’m saying to you: Self Identified!

3 Levels of Maturity John Addresses

- Little Children: Those who are new to faith, early in their relationship with Jesus
- Young Men: Those who been in faith a little longer...and are fully engaged in growing
- Fathers: Those who have endured long enough in the faith to be able to encourage and lead others!

Look with me at what John says to each one of these groups of people in the church.

Keep in mind there is something for everyone. Even if you are a Father, sometimes STILL need to be reminded Sin Forgiven!

You never get beyond the first level. No matter how long you walk with Jesus, still need to know your sins are forgiven.

1. The Message To Spiritual Children.

Vs 12; 13c

John begins by addressing those that are new to faith. This isn’t a condescending look “down” on people, but rather a simple acknowledgment that we all start somewhere. John defines what that starting point is. Notice that he does a couple things

- He address the people with two different terms. Each term that he uses teaches us something about that stage:
It doesn’t show up in English, but there are two different Greek words for children used:
Two different aspects of this stage of spiritual maturity John wants to emphasize
~Vs 12: “technon”: Lit = my little children, “little darlings!” *Emphasis on relationship and connection*
~Vs 13: “paidion”: Lit = my little child, young one; *Emphasis on Authority of Father and Discipline of child*
- He reminds them of two things that are ALREADY true in their life.
These are not aspirations or hopes, things they are working toward.
These are settled truths that mark them as children of God!
 1. *Your sins are forgiven! Because of His Name!* Because of your relationship with Jesus: **YOU ARE FORGIVEN!**
Perfect tense: Something happened in the past that has perpetual ongoing consequences.
Passive voice: You didn’t act...something/someone acted ON you!
Something happened...that you didn’t do...and it has eternal consequences!
Illus: ML Jones: Quote: Pg 205
 2. *Your KNOW The Father:* You know the Almighty Creator, Ruler of the Universe, Are walking with Him!
The One to whom the debt for sin was owed has said, With all the Authority of the Godhead: You are forgiven!
 - Know He loves you unconditionally: What Father would give his son a stone when asks for bread
 - Know you can trust Him: He always does what is right: “When you Can’t trace His hand trust His heart”
 - Know He only has your best at heart...even when you don’t understand it, He caring for you

What an amazing set of truths! Because of your relationship with the Son and the Father, your sin is forgiven and you are a Child of God! And, not only do you KNOW Him in all of His love and forgiveness, He, the One that has the right to Judge, has said of you: Your sins are forgiven! Not something you hope for, work for, long for, cross fingers for: You KNOW IT!

Applic: Do you know that? Have you come to that place in your life where you, along with John can say: I know My sin...

Suppose you were to die and stand before God today...and He were to ask you...why should I let you into heaven?

There is only 1 answer...and if you don’t KNOW it...not just intellectually...but deep in your heart...Today you can

2. The Message To Spiritual Young Men.

Vs 13b; 14a

Here John is writing to those who are a little further along in their faith journey. Beyond the first stages and growing. He says a couple of things to them, and reminds them of where they are and what God is doing in and through them.

2 Things He Says Identifies this stage of spiritual life

➤ **Overcome the evil one:** Lit = *to conquer; to prevail in conflict; to defeat; to obtain victory*

~ POSSIBLE: You have learned to fight...and win the battles of the spiritual life

~ STRENGTH: You have understood where the strength come from

~ PATTERN: Winning those battles has become the pattern of your spiritual life, not the exception!

You see, a spiritual infant, or child, sometimes they despair at winning. Sin seems to overpower them...Think Can't win But as you grow, you understand, that isn't true. I CAN'T win...But as I lean into Jesus...have His Word in my life! I CAN And once you know that...and begin to live that out...it becomes the pattern of your spiritual life. It may take you longer on some particular area of sin and struggle than others...but you discover...you can overcome!

You see, here is what the spiritual young man knows: The battle is the Lord's! The victory is already won. Executed in my life Verb Tense: That is why the verb tense is so important:

Perfect: An action completed in the past that has ongoing consequences up to and including the present!

What Jesus did on the cross in defeating sin, "overcoming" is still in effect today! As I trust him

➤ **You are Strong and Word abides:** These two are integrally related...and the one that wins spiritual battles knows it! Here John reveals to us the key to spiritual victory. Listen closely here...If you are struggling with sin, if you feel that you are losing the battle, if you think...I CAN'T win victory in this area...understand where the strength is found.

Strong: Word Abides: The two are integrally connected. Spiritual strength comes from the indwelling word of God

Illus: Jesus: In spiritual conflict with Satan directly in the wilderness:

3 different times Jesus was tempted: He responded exactly the same every time: Quoted scripture

Appl: So, here is what you do: If you are battling...and losing...an area of spiritual life, Find the scripture addresses Memorize it, hide it in your heart, get two, three....four of them. Learn to lean into Jesus

Enlist some spiritual support from others: Confess you sin to them, Ask them to help carry this burden

Here John, as a seasoned Pastor, is telling the church...YOU CAN WIN these battles. Not easy, Not quickly, BUT POSSIBLE!

3. The Message To Spiritual Fathers. Vs 13, 14

Finally John has a word for the Spiritual Fathers in the church. There is something interesting here. With the first two, he has a couple of different things to say. With the spiritual fathers he only has one message. He repeats it twice, but same words.

➤ **You have known him who is from the beginning:**

First thing I want you to see here is the verb tense. Again it is the perfect.

You have known him. Something that took place in the past...but has ongoing consequences.

Because you KNOW him, it is going to affect every single second of your life since that relationship was initiated.

Know: Lit = *to perceive, to understand, to experience, to grasp experientially*

Here you are talking about not just knowing ABOUT God...but you have come to know Him so well you understand

Illus: This is the kind of knowledge that comes from years of interaction. Learning the patterns of someone's life

Starting to think the way they think, understand the way they work, recognize their actions, hand, values

➤ You have something to share with others: You know Him...and so you can lead

You have the ability to invest in others...Help them on their faith journey:

God wants to use you in that way...to smooth the Journey:

Illus: Met with a Pastor Friend: Going through a tough time....Left I prayed: Told Him...Its going to be: OK

That is what John is saying to the Fathers:

You KNOW God.

➤ You recognize His hand at work...when others see just random events

➤ You see His Spirit gently, subtly at work in the heart and live of others.

➤ You know what He is doing before others see it, you know where He is leading

➤ You know what pleases Him and displeases Him...

➤ You know the patterns of His hand...and His work in the world...so you can cooperate with what He is doing.

Illus: This is the knowledge of the fruit of experience. You have walked long enough, in so many different ways: Learned

Years ago my daughter had car that ate batteries. Seriously...in a year we put like 3 or 4 or 5

Checked everything: couldn't find it. Finally took it to a mechanic: Greasy old garage. Walked in looked

NEVER got up from the chair: Does you daughter smoke? Spend 8 hours tracking it down...NEVER forget!

Fathers: You KNOW the one from the beginning: Been walking with Him...KNOW him...haven't forgotten

CONCL:

• Do you KNOW that your sin is forgiven? (Hoping, working, trying: KNOW?) If not, come today

• Is the Word of God in you sufficient to insure that you are growing?

If you aren't growing...becoming more like Jesus If you aren't OVERCOMING:

Then Go back and ask yourself: "How am I doing at putting the word of God in my heart?"

~ Reading ~ Studying ~ Listening ~ Memorizing

~ Worshipping ~ Talking about it ~ Sharing ~ 10 Ways

• Do you know Him today well enough to teach others: If so...Are you doing that?