

1 John 2:12–14 "Growing God's Way" (p.959)
Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday May 26th, 2024.

1 John 2:12-14. ¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. ¹³ 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. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. 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. (ESV)

Growth is central to life. Naturally, growth happens in both positive and negative ways. If we are talking about cancer or obesity, growth is negative. If we are talking about physical strength, intellectual understanding, or social relations, then growth is a positive development. With any growth there are both active and passive elements. Without striving for positive growth, usually the negative growth occurs. Without exercise, often obesity results. Without intellectual pursuits, ignorance often leads to deception. Without social interaction, there can be a growth in despondency or depression. **Healthy growth** is a foundation of flourishing in any endeavour.

This is true in both the physical realm and in the spiritual realm. Just as living seeds grow into mature plants and infants grow into mature adults, so new Christians grow into Christlikeness. When growth is hindered in the physical realm, either by malnutrition, disease, or birth defects, the results can be tragic. But it is an even greater tragedy when believers fail to grow and mature spiritually. After all, immature Christians cannot fully appreciate all the blessings and privileges that God has reserved for them, nor serve Him with the usefulness He desires (John 15:4–5; 17:21; Rom. 5:2; 8:28, 34; 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:15–17; Eph. 2:19; 3:12, 20; Phil. 4:7; Heb. 7:25; James 1:17; 2 Peter 1:4; cf. Pss. 18:2; 27:1; 46:11; 48:14; Isa. 40:11).

The apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, placed his discussion in 1 John 2:12-14 to give assurance and comfort to his readers that they were the true children of God, unlike the false teachers and counterfeit believers who threatened them. In view of the doctrinal and practical tests that John had already presented—the test about belief in Christ, the test about recognition of sin, the tests for obedience and love—the apostle wanted to confirm the authenticity of his readers' salvation. This paragraph underscores his subsequently stated purpose for the entire letter: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13; cf. 1:4).

Obviously, not all original or current readers of this letter were or are at equal stages of spiritual maturity. Some are spiritual infants while others are spiritual adults. In order to effectively encourage all recipients, John began this very definitive section with a 1) General Reassurance (1 John 2:12), after which he gave specific assurance to those at each general stage of spiritual growth: 2) Little Children (1 John 2:13c), 3) Young Men (1 John 2:13b, 14b), and 4) Fathers. These are metaphors which refer to the various levels of spiritual maturity among his readers (Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). *KJV Bible Commentary* (p. 2633). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.)

1) General Reassurance (1 John 2:12)

1 John 2:12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. (ESV)

John knew that **the people to whom he was writing** were believers and that **their sins are forgiven**. In this verse, and in the verses that follow, **the apostle said “I am writing to you”** or “I have written to you” six times, **in order to emphatically state that his message was limited to his readers**, the ones who truly were part of God’s family. All of the verbs in these verses (except “I am **writing**” or “I write”) are **PERFECT TENSE**, which speak of action in the past resulting in an ongoing state of being (Utley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 206). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.)

The word translated **little children** (*teknia*) means “born ones,” speaking of offspring in a general sense **without** regard for age. **It is commonly used in the New Testament to describe believers as the children of God** (John 13:33; 1 John 2:1, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; cf. Gal. 4:19, 28). **By using this term, the apostle was addressing all who were true offspring of God, at any level of spiritual maturity. His focus was on all who mourned over their sinful condition** (Matt. 5:4), **trusted Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior** (Acts 16:31), **had their lives transformed by the Holy Spirit** (Titus 3:5), **lived in obedience to God’s Word** (Rom. 6:17), and **showed sincere love for one another** (1 Peter 1:22). **Only two spiritual families exist from God’s perspective: children of God and children of Satan** (cf. **John 8:39–44**). **God’s children do not love Satan’s family or give their allegiance to the world he controls** (cf. 1 John 2:15). Instead, **they grow** (though **not** all at the same rate or with equal consistency) in their love for the Lord, a love that **will manifest itself in heartfelt obedience and service** (cf. John 14:15). **In regards to the groups addressed here**, when John addresses children, fathers, and young men, he does **not** mean that what he says of one group is not true of the other. That’s obvious **as you read the whole letter** and see each of these privileges applied to the church as a whole (Piper, J. (2007). *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)*. Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God.).

The New Testament plainly states that **all believers**, no matter where they are on the spiritual growth continuum, **are forgiven** of all their sins (1:7; Matt. 26:28; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 26:18; Col. 1:14; 2:13–14). Their sins “are forgiven” (**perfect tense**) on account of Jesus’ name (see 2:1–2). There is **nothing** insecure about this; it is a **completed fact** because Christ has died and satisfied the requirements of salvation (Burge, G. M. (1996). *Letters of John* (p. 112). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.)

Please turn to Colossians 2 (p.925)

Through the gift of faith, believers have fulfilled the condition laid down in 1:9, and as a result of their confession of their sin, and now know the joy of forgiveness. Here, the act of forgiveness is expressed by a perfect tense; John is thinking of the conversion of his readers, whereas in 1:9 his thought was more of the continual forgiveness for which the Christian daily prays...No man can properly rank as a Christian, in the sense of the New Testament, who has not received the forgiveness of sins, or who is not conscious that through its impartation something has happened of decisive moment for his relation to God (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John* (pp. 138–139). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)

Paul explains to the Colossians how **forgiveness is achieved** by the work of God and **realized** as a basic foundational relation in true believers:

Colossians 2:8–15 ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world,

and not according to Christ.⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (ESV).

- In **Colossians 2** Paul emphasizes that **forgiveness is complete apart** from any human work. **Before regeneration**, being **dead** in trespasses and sin, **God makes us alive and forgives us our sins**. He does this **not** because we deserve it or earn it but **because of grace**, His unmerited favor towards us according to the good pleasure of His will.

This is how John concludes this section with the reminder that God grants forgiveness to believers, not because of their own worthiness or merit, but **for His name's sake**. That expression **refers to God's glory** (cf. Deut. 28:58; Neh. 9:5; Ps. 8:1; Isa. 42:8; 48:11), which is **the overarching reason for everything He does** (cf. Pss. 19:1; 25:11; 57:5; 79:8–9; 93:1; 104:31; 106:7–8; 109:21; 111:3; 113:4; 145:5, 12; Isa. 6:3; 48:9; Jer. 14:7–9; Hab. 2:14; Rom. 1:5). **The power of the name of Jesus is central to early Christian proclamation** (Acts 2:38; 3:6; 4:12). John 17:11, 12 indicates that **God has given His own name to Jesus to protect His disciples and keep them safe**. God's name would come to **dishonor if His forgiveness should fail**. (Whitlock, L. G., Sproul, R. C., Waltke, B. K., & Silva, M. (1995). *The Reformation study Bible: bringing the light of the Reformation to Scripture: New King James Version* (1 Jn 2:12). Nashville: T. Nelson.)

God forgives sinners because it pleases Him to glorify His name by manifesting His superabundant grace, mercy, and power. As **those who have been given the gift of forgiveness**, believers will forever praise and magnify God (cf. 2 Cor. 4:15; Rev. 5:11–13). **God forgives sins on the basis of his Son's atoning death on Calvary's cross. The implication is that everyone who believes in Jesus and repents receives remission of sin** (Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). *Exposition of James and the Epistles of John* (Vol. 14, p. 266). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.)

Illustration: **A man was asked if he would like to make a donation** to a particular charity fund in the name of his father who had died. **The son at first contemplated giving a small amount, but then said,** “No; if I give anything in my father's name, I must give as he would have given, I must give all I can.” (Charles Sylvester Horne, “A Letter to Children,” in *The Kensington Congregational Pulpit*, vol. 2, no. 5 (South Kensington, London: Callard, Stewart & Watt, 1901), pp. 56, 57. The illustration occurs in Horne's sermon to children based on this text.)

Believers are forgiven today because of the great sacrificial gift Jesus made on our behalf. **Our love, our service, and our devotion to Jesus should be in light of the great sacrifice he has made for us in bringing us forgiveness of our sins “for his name's sake.”** **We might adapt a famous line in Luke 12:48** and say “to whom much is forgiven, much is required.” (Allen, D. L. (2013). *1–3 John: Fellowship in God's Family*. (R. K. Hughes, Ed.) (p. 89). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.)

2) Assurance to Spiritual Children (1 John 2:13c)

1 John 2:13c (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.) I write to you, children, because you know the Father. (ESV)

The term rendered **children** (*paidia*) is **different** from the term rendered “little children” (*teknia*) in **verse 12**. As noted above, *teknia* refers to all the children of God. But *paidia* denotes more specifically young **children, those still under parental instruction**. Such children are **ignorant** and **immature** and in need of care and guidance. **Immature spiritual children** are those who **know the Father** (Ps. 9:10; cf. John 10:4, 14; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) **in the same way as an infant has little more than a basic knowledge of his or her parents**. **The distinguishing characteristic of babes in Christ** is that they are consumed with their new-found relationship to the God and Savior they have come to know savingly (e.g., Luke 19:5–6), and **with the resulting joy and peace of that knowledge**. But they are **still infants**, who have yet to feast on the nourishing spiritual meat of sound doctrine (cf. Heb. 5:12–13). **To know the Father** is to be like the Father. **Spiritual maturity** moves us into a deeper and fuller knowledge of our God with **the result** being familial resemblance. **Children** should resemble their Father. **John believes they will** (Akin, D. L. (2001). *1, 2, 3 John* (Vol. 38, p. 106). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

Please turn to Ephesians 4 (p.918)

As with physical babes, the **ignorance** of spiritual children makes them **prone to weaknesses** and highly susceptible to **dangers**. They are all **too** often motivated by fleshly desires and **lack** discernment to avoid what is harmful and pursue what is beneficial. They often **naively** attach themselves to their spiritual heroes or favorite teachers, for which Paul reprimanded the Corinthians: “For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not mere men?” (**1 Cor. 3:4**; cf. vv. 1–3, 5; 1:12–13). **Spiritual children** also **lack** discernment and are **vulnerable** to the allurements of deceivers and their **heretical** doctrines.

That is why Paul explained the situation and warned the Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:10–16 ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until 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, ¹⁴so 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. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (ESV). (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13)

- **My job as under shepherd**, is to equip you for ministry, **through knowledge** of the Son of God with **the aim of maturity**. This **protects you** from **false** doctrines, and **deceit**.

Paul’s word for “**mature**” (τέλειος, *teleios*) means “**full grown**” (Phil 3:15 Believers **must and can** reach a degree of maturity that pleases and glorifies the Lord. **Mature believers can applaud new believers’** exuberant love, their eager and sincere devotion to God, their attachment to new-found friends in Christ, and their often optimistic

viewpoint toward their new Christian life. However, mature Christians must **also warn the less mature** against the **danger** of being led astray by false teachers and their **demon-inspired doctrines** (2 John 10–11). (Boles, K. L. (1993), *Galatians & Ephesians*. The College Press NIV commentary (Eph 4:13). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.)

Illustration: Shepherds and ranchers tell us that **sheep** are virtually defenseless against predators, **not** very resourceful, inclined to follow one another into danger, and absolutely dependent on their human masters for safety. Thus, **when Isaiah wrote**, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray,” **he was referring to our tendency** to move as an **unthinking** herd away from the watchful care of the Shepherd.

A documentary on television was filmed in a packinghouse where **sheep were being slaughtered** for the meat market. **Huddled in pens outside** were hundreds of nervous animals that seemed to sense danger. **A gate opened** that led up a ramp and though a door to the right. **To get the sheep to walk up that ramp**, the handlers used a “**Judas goat**.” He walked to the bottom of the ramp and looked back. Then he took a few more steps and stopped again. **The sheep** looked at each other skittishly and then began moving toward the ramp. Eventually, they followed the goat to the top, where **he** went through a little gate to the left, while **they were forced to turn to the right** and to their deaths. It was **a dramatic illustration** of **unthinking** herd behavior and the deadly consequences it often brings (Larson, C. B., & Ten Elshof, P. (2008). *1001 illustrations that connect* (p. 393). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.)

3) Assurance to Spiritual Young Men (1 John 2:13b, 14b)

1 John 2:13b, 14b (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**. (I write to you, children, because you know the Father. ¹⁴I 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**. (ESV)

The second stage of spiritual growth takes believers from an emphasis on the basic relationship **to an emphasis** on biblical revelation. In **contrast to spiritual children**, who are **primarily focused on devotion to God**, **spiritual young men have advanced to be concerned with clarity of doctrine**. **Modern readers might be tempted to conclude** that **John was somehow sexist** in that he does **not** refer to “mothers” and “young women.” However, **John’s use of the masculine form here** and throughout his letter in **no** way excludes women. **The Greek masculine participle** semantically encodes gender inclusivity when used generically and when the context clearly supports such. **Spiritual young men are marked by an understanding of Scripture truth** (cf. Pss. 1:2; 119:11, 16, 97, 103, 105, 148; Acts 17:11; 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15). They have **outgrown** the childish self-absorption with feelings and **moved beyond** the elementary struggles often associated with new Christians. **They have** a biblical worldview, their theology is largely in place, and they have a mature love for the truth and a desire to proclaim and defend it (cf. Eph. 6:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:12). (Allen, D. L. (2013). *1–3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family*. (R. K. Hughes, Ed.) (p. 89). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.)

Please turn to Romans 16 (p.894)

Youth is typically a period of idealistic vision, high energy, strong passion, **conflict, pride, and inexperience**. The teenage years especially are like an emotional roller coaster. **Pride** is easy for young people because sometimes they think they already know everything! ... John appeals to the spiritual vitality of these younger believers in overcoming the temptations of Satan in their lives. So far they have fought a good fight. Fight on, John says, in the strength of the Lord and his Word.(Allen, D. L. (2013). *1–3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family*. (R. K. Hughes, Ed.) (p. 90). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.)

Paul explains about the resources given to believers and their use:

Romans 16:25–27.²⁵ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (ESV)

- **Knowing and understanding the truth of the Gospel**, strengthens believers. It means **coming to grasp** the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages. **Faith itself** is expressed here as obedience to that truth. That mature obedience brings glory to God.

John concludes the second half of verse 14 explaining how those to whom the word of God abides in, they are strong in doctrinal truth (Eph. 4:13–16; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Titus 2:1; cf. Ps. 119:99). **As a result, they have already overcome the evil one (Satan). Overcome is in the perfect tense**, again, as in all these verses, **implying a past reality with continuing consequences**. It is **Christ’s past victory**, by his death and resurrection, over the powers of evil and darkness **which gives believers the victory today** (Johnson, T. F. (2011). *1, 2, and 3 John* (p. 50). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.)

This **realized eschatological victory** is so reminiscent of the Gospel of John). **Believers are victors, yet** because of the “already but not yet” tension of the Kingdom of God, they **still struggle** with **sin, temptation, and persecution** (Utley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 206). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.).

Satan’s primary emphasis is **not** on tempting individuals to sin (cf. James 1:14), **but on working through** manifold false religious systems to **deceive** the world and lead most to damnation (2 Cor. 10:3–5; 11:13–15; Eph. 6:11–12; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1–2; 1 John 4:1, 3). Again, John **opposes the Gnostics’ concept** that **Christians do not sin** (cf. 1:8–2:2) (Womack, M. M. (1998). *1, 2 & 3 John* (1 Jn 2:13). Joplin, MO: College Press.).

The spiritual young at this stage of maturity, however, are equipped through their understanding of Scripture to stand firm against his deceptive schemes (Eph. 6:11). **Armed with the sound doctrine they have been taught, they are able to refute error and guard the truth. By continuing to allow the word of God to remain/live in them, the young men are strong, and thus have overcome the evil one** (Kruse, C. G. (2000). *The letters of John* (p. 93). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.).

Illustration: OVERCOMING, POWER OF

One of the earliest punching bags for kids was basically a painted balloon. **You could hit the punching bag every which way, but nothing you did would keep that punching bag from popping right back up. You could slam it to the ground and BOOM! it would come right back up. You could kick it and BOOM! it would come right back up. The reason it would come back up is because at its base, there was a weight**, and the weight

forced whatever external pressure you put on it to bring it right back up (Evans, T. (2009). *Tony Evans' book of illustrations: stories, quotes, and anecdotes from more than 30 years of preaching and public speaking* (p. 216). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.).

Finally, we see that when the weight of Christ through His word is our base, then no matter what force comes against us, it cannot keep us down.

4) Assurance to *Spiritual Fathers* (1 John 2:13a, 14a)

1 John 2:13a, 14a 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. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.) ¹⁴I 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.) (ESV)

The fourth stage of spiritual growth is when believers do not merely understand doctrine intellectually, but have come to know (from *ginōskā*, “to know by taking in knowledge; to come to know”) **Him (God), the source of the truth and the object of the worship and praise it produces. John asserts that reality in both verses 13 and 14, and Paul echoes it in Philippians 3:10. Those who are spiritual fathers have meditated (cf. Josh. 1:8; Pss. 1:2; 19:14; 49:3; 77:11–12; 139:17–18; 143:5) on the depths of God’s character to such an extent that they gain a deep knowledge of Him and worship Him intimately. The only way believers can progress on the continuum of spiritual growth—from children, to young men, to fathers—is through the life-giving, life-transforming application of the Word of God in their lives (2 Tim. 2:15; cf. Ezra 7:10). By reading, studying, memorizing, meditating on, and applying the Bible’s truth in every situation, Christians are transformed into the image of God (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18) by the power of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 6:17; Col. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19–21). There is something about a mature Christian’s walk with the Lord that comes from many years of trusting him. I see this in the lives of many senior adult Christians who have lived for Christ for many years. They just exude it. Charles Spurgeon wrote about an occasion when he was a young preacher and was talking about forgiveness in his sermon. His grandfather happened to be present. Spurgeon asked his grandfather to close the service in prayer. The elder Spurgeon came forward, put his hand on young Charles’s shoulder, and said, “Charles can tell you about it, but I have lived it.” Mature Christians tell me it really is true: “The longer I serve him, the sweeter he grows.” Perhaps John is thinking about his own life now. He has walked with Jesus for over fifty years. When he was a young man, perhaps the youngest of the Twelve, he outran Peter to Jesus’ tomb and found it empty. Now as a mature Christian who is also mature in years, John writes to the mature believers in the churches and says, “your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake.”** (Allen, D. L. (2013). *1–3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family*. (R. K. Hughes, Ed.) (p. 89). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.)

In a sense, **the most mature saints** have come full circle, with **the emphasis of their Christian lives again on their relationship with the eternal God who, as the beginning of verse 14 states, is from the beginning** (Pss. 90:2; 102:25–27; Rom. 1:20; Rev. 1:8; 16:5; 21:6; 22:13; cf. John 8:58). **To call Christ “him who is from the beginning” reveals these faithful believers’ full understanding of Jesus Christ’s deity. He has been alive from the beginning, from the foundation of the world** (Barton, B. B., & Osborne, G. R. (1998). *1, 2 & 3 John* (p. 40). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House.).

The expression also **stresses the historic origins of the faith** and **the growth of the personal knowledge of Christ that comes only with experience**. Six times **the author uses the perfect tense** to describe the action expressed in the subordinate clauses. In each instance, **what is described has been initiated or established in the past** (i.e., the Cross and/or **their conversion**) and **continues to be true into the present** (Barker, G. W. (1981). 1 John. In F. E. Gaebelien (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation* (Vol. 12, p. 320). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.).

Please turn to John 17 (p.849)

As they continue to grow in their sanctification, **the goal of all believers** must be to become spiritual fathers, **characterized by an intimate communion with God**. **Christ proclaimed and exemplified this goal in His high priestly prayer for the apostles and all believers:**

John 17:19–26 ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (ESV)

- Jesus stated (v.19) that it was the truth from God that brings about sanctification. **Jesus desired that believers would know God not** in a superficial way, **nor** in an academic sense only, **but with supernatural intimacy**, made possible only by lifetime obedience to Him and His Word. This action **glorifies God** (v.22, 24), because **it shows the world about Jesus, His redemptive plan and calls people to repentance and faith**. **Christians now reflect God's excellency in their own lives, in imitation of Christ**. (Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2060). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.)

John's description of the stages of spiritual growth challenges believers to “excel still more” (1 Thess. 4:10) in their Christian walks. **Spiritual children** must move beyond their initial delight in the Father's love **to a sound knowledge of biblical truth**. **Young men** must **not** rest in their knowledge of biblical truth, but **press on to know** deeply the God from whom all truth comes and to whom all truth points. And even **fathers** must continue to expand and deepen their knowledge of the eternal God. **As long as saints live on this earth**, they are bound to obey the mandate to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

(Format note: Outline & some base commentary from MacArthur, J. (2007). *1, 2, 3 John* (pp. 69–77). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.)