

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE (Part 1) | 1 John 2:12-29 | Pastor Mark Bofill | 11/20/2022

I. Awareness of Our Spiritual State (12-14) | II. Abhorring the World (15-17) | III. Awareness of Antichrist(s) (18-23) | IV. Abiding in Truth (24-29)

ANNOUNCE: 1. Our new *“Invite Cards”* available 2. New *“Online Giving”* platform [QR Code or Website]

INTRO: When I first got saved, I found myself consumed with *eschatology* (Study of last things). As time went on, the Holy Spirit convinced me that I also need to *grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (2 Pet 3:18). In fact, **EVERYONE who is a child of God should likewise seek to Know and Grow Spiritually!** – Unfortunately, **many people** have made only an emotional decision for Christ and they NEVER DEVELOP spiritually. (Much like what the parable of the Sower teaches – Mark 4:3-9)

Involves...

I. Awareness of Our Spiritual State (12-14): READ – It is important to understand that not everyone in the body of Christ is at the same spiritual level as each other. (1 John 2:12-14) makes clear the fact that there are different stages of believers.

A. Know the Stages of DEVELOPMENT – John mentions three groups which we associate with physical age, which also can be paralleled with the spiritual development of believers: **Fathers, Young Men**, and **Little Children**. He mentions them twice, adding little or no variation to each.

1. In (v.12), the word for *“Little Children,”* {Gr.– *teknia*} means to give birth to; or little born one, and is used throughout the epistle (1 John 2:1, 28; 3:7; 4:4; 5:21). (Term used of teacher to their students)
2. In (v.13), the **ALL three levels of spirituality** are given to us.
 - a. **Fathers:** Lit. the older men that have walked with Christ for many years from their youth.
 - b. **Young Men:** Those who are in their vigorous prime of life, conquering over the enemy.
 - c. **Little Children:** {Gr – *Paidion*}. (Prop.) **infants** or **baby Christians**, (by ext.) **half-grown Christians**.
3. Awareness of these groups is not the goal. Awareness should prompt us to excel in our own spiritual growth as we desire to become mature in the faith. *John wants us to...*

B. Know the Stages of MATURITY – Each stage reveals a level of spiritual advancement. – It is possible that one can grow and never develop **physically** or **spiritually!** (e.g., *adults acting like kids!*)

1. **Nourishing** has to do with **food** (diets) and is vital for life and growth. (You are what you eat, or not!)
2. **Development** has to do with the **progressive growth**, of the potential and capacity in Christ.
 - a. The **Newborn Believer** is compared to a **newborn baby who has potential for growth**. (1 Pet 2:2) *“as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”*
 - The believer is to grow from the milk stage to the solid food stage, or he will be **“Carnal.”** (1 Cor 3:1,2) *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”*
 - b. The **Young Man** stage speaks of those who have grown significantly, they are Strong...why?

Because *God's Word abides in them, have overcome the wicked one*. They **KNOW** what they believe, and nothing can separate that from them. – The word **Overcome** is {Gr – **Nikao**}, Lit. **Victorious**. (Rev 21:7), *He who "O" shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son*.

- **God's Word is a source of spiritual strength for this stage**. When we know it, believe it, and keep it...Satan can't touch us! (1 John 5:18) **make this clear**: *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him*.
- Seeking this spiritual stage is what all new Christians should pursue!

c. **The Father stage** (*fig.*) speaks of those who have **known** and **grown** in fellowship since they *first believed (the beginning)*. Their **Maturity** is the result of a healthy diet, who can digest the deeper things in Christ. **READ (Heb 5:12-14)**, *...For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*.

CLOSING THOUGHT: By God's Grace we are partakers of the fellowship! Peter tells us that we need to **GROW in KNOWLEDGE (2 Pet 1:2-3)**, Paul tells us that we are to **MATURE in our FAITH (Eph 4:13)**.

- If you are a Newborn Believer, then you need to be nourished and **develop into a young man!**
- If you are a Young Man, then you need to **press on towards maturity!**
- If you are a Mature Father, then you need to be **an example** to, and **help others grow in their faith!**

HAVE YOU GROWN TO KNOW THAT YOU'VE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE?

Secondly, **GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE** Involves...

II. Abhorring the World (15-17): READ – In (1 John 2:9), John had just instructed us **NOT** to show **HATE** for the brethren. In this next section, John provides the object and three reasons WHY believers are to show NO LOVE towards...the World.

A. Know our POSITION (15) – John simply states... *Do NOT LOVE the World!* The opposite of **LOVE** is **HATE** which, in this context can mean "**Abhor**," **Websters**: to regard with extreme **repugnance**: to **feel hatred** or to **LOATHE**. – To be clear, John is **NOT** referring God's creation (Gen 1:1), for "*it is Good*" (Gen 1:31). Additionally, it can't be the **world of mankind**, b/c God himself **Loves** it (John 3:16) – John **IS** directly referring to the world of "*sin*", the world of "*evil*"! I.e., the "**sphere**" in which **sin, evil, and Satan dominates**. – **Love not THIS world!** John then declares **WHY** we are to abhor this world:

- Because it conflicts with what Jesus taught us (John 15:19) "*If you were of the world, the world Would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*"
- It is a **direct command** for everyone who says that they "*walk in the Light*" (*Obey His Commands*)
- Anyone who rejects this position confirms that "*the Love of God is NOT in him!*" (*Many play Church*)

“Christians should live in the world, but not be filled with it. A ‘ship’ lives in the water; but if water gets into the ship, she goes to the bottom. So...many Christians live in the world; but if the world gets into them, they sink!” - D.L. Moody (What is your current position? Are you sinking?)

B. Know it’s PERSUASION (16) – It’s allurements: **Lust** in our **flesh** and **eyes**, **Pride** in our hearts! Since the fall, the world has enticed humankind, seeking to draw us away from our love for God. **John lists three areas that we often succumb to:**

1. **The lust of the flesh (Immorality)** – The allurements of the world can be so strong that our flesh has the tendency to cast off any spiritual restraints, so as to fulfill the *“works of the flesh”* **READ (Gal 5:19-21)**. **Note:** this list reveals both **sexual** and **social sins**: Sexually (fornication, adultery, licentiousness), Socially (hatred, contentions, jealousies). – The doctrine of Gnosticism allowed for such gratification, without condemnation... (*how convenient*).

2. **The lust of the eyes (Covetousness/Materialism)** – This is the **unlawful longing for things which we can see**. When tempting Eve in the garden, Satan used all three of these enticements to persuade her to disobey God’s Commandment (**Gen 3:6**), *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (flesh), that it was pleasant to the eyes (eyes), and a tree desirable to make one wise (pride), she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* (WOW...Church family, we need to be reminded that Satan still uses the same tactics today! – Expound!)

3. **The pride of life (Self-importance)** – **Pride**: WOW {Gr.– **alazoneia**} i.e., empty, braggart talk; an insolent or empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights! This would include pride based upon such things as: Age, Experience, Ancestry, Accomplishments, Money, Position, Power, etc.

a. **John makes clear that these three-allurements operate in a spirit of worldliness**, and they are **NOT OF THE FATHER! (16c)** – They have the potential to pull you away from God’s Love!

b. **Paul instructed us NOT to follow after the spirit of this world: (Rom 12:2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** (*The world is bombarding us with that which is NOT of the Father.*)

The final reason to Abhor the World is...

C. Know it’s CONCLUSION (17) – **It is Passing Away! (2 Pet 3:10)** makes this very clear – *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.* – **We must live our lives aware of this fact.** (*Stay Focused!*)

CLOSING THOUGHT: Know OUR Conclusion! – *But he who does the will of God abides forever!* This stands in strong contrast to the passing world. If the world is passing, it is much wiser to invest our lives into that which cannot be lost... doing the will of God... **For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt 16:10)**

What matters most to you?

*A group of tourists visiting a picturesque village walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked him, “**Were any great men born in this village?**” The old man replied, “**Nope, only babies.**”*

Every person who is a born-again believer starts life as a baby in Christ. Whether the new convert is six or sixty, **that person is still a new Christian and needs to grow in the Lord**. *A baby Christian who has been saved for forty years is a tragedy.* God intends for us to grow and mature so that we can be a positive influence in the lives of others. Until we learn to dig into the meat of the Word for ourselves, we will never grow.

Let's Pray!

