



First Epistle of John

1 John 2:12-14 - Little Children, Young Men, Fathers

- Summary of *1 John 2:9-11*
 - Light and darkness are contrasted.
 - Relates to fellowship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and our brothers in the Lord around us.
 - Abiding in the Vine (light) rather than self (darkness).
- *1 John 2:12-14* – “*I write to you, **little children**, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. I write to you, **fathers**, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, **young men**, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, **little children**, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, **fathers**, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, **young men**, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.*”



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- We have three categories of believers here who will be the focus of our study today.
 - Constable – ‘It seems best to conclude that John used these three stages of life to describe qualities typical of each age group that ought to characterize all believers.’
- *Little children* – *teknion* (*tek-nee’-on*), a little child or born ones (sons of daughters) - at times is a term of kind address by teachers to their disciples.
 - *John 13:33 - “Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you.*
 - Seven of the nine usages of *teknion* are in *1 John*!
 - Let’s look at the way John addresses them - ***Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake*** – why in this manner?
 - The verb is in the perfect active indicative, which speaks of a past completed action with present and often permanent results.
 - Does this reflect their immaturity?



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- » *Rom 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
- » *1 John 2:1 - My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*
- » *1 John 2:28 - And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

- Why does John need to add *for His name's sake*?

– But he goes on to state in verse 13 - *I write to you, little children (paidion) (pahee-dee'-on), because you have known (ginōskō) the Father.*

- *little children - paidion* is literally infant.
- Wuest – ‘Compare *teknia little children*, which emphasizes the idea of kinship, while this word (*paidion*) emphasizes the idea of *subordination* and consequent *discipline*. Hence, it is the more appropriate word when spoken from the standpoint of authority, than of affection.’
- Verb *known (ginōskō)* again is perfect active indicative – a strong statement about these *little children*.
- Do you think this implies that these are children or babes in Christ who are growing in grace and truth rather than still drinking milk?



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» *1 Peter 2:2 - as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*

- *Fathers – patēr (pat-ayr ');* best interpreted here as Christians, who through Christ have been exalted to a close and intimate relationship with God and no longer fear Him as a severe judge but revere him as their reconciled and loving Father.
 - Exemplified by *verses 13 & 14; verse 13 - I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning; verse 14 - I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.*
 - The *beginning* of what?
 - » *1 John 1:1 - That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—*
 - Why does John repeat this nearly identical text in adjacent verses?
 - The overall impression is that these were older men experienced in truth and in their faith.



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- Let's compare the *fathers* to *little children*, and *young men* (to be covered).
- Darby – **This is the result of all christian experience.** The flesh is judged, discerned, wherever it has mixed itself with Christ in our feelings: it is recognized, experimentally, as having no value; and, as the result of experience, Christ stands alone, free from all alloy. **They have learnt to distinguish that which has only the appearance of good. They are not occupied with experience — that would be being occupied with self, with one's own heart.** All that has passed away; and Christ alone remains as our portion, unmingled with aught besides, even as He gave Himself to us. Moreover, He is much better known; **they have experienced what He is in so many details**, whether of joy in communion with Him, or in the consciousness of weakness, or in the realization of His faithfulness, of the riches of His grace, of His adaptation to our need, of His love, and in the revelation of His own fullness; **so that they are able now to say, " I know whom I have believed."**

» *Col 1:11 - strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*

- *Young men* – *neaniskos* (*neh-an-is'-kos*); a youth (under



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forty), young man.

– Here's an example of mindset of a *young man*.

» *Matt 19:20, 22 - The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept, What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

– This is prophetic when we read now about the *young men* in *1 John 1:13, 14 -I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked (pernicious) one.*

- The verb is again in the perfect tense. As Robertson says, "a permanent victory after conflict."
- Wuest - They fought their fight to a finish and were enjoying the fruits of victory, a life lived in the power of the Spirit where their victory over Satan was a consistent one.' The wicked one" is *ton ponēron*, "the pernicious one." The Greek has two words for the idea of wickedness, *kakos*, "evil in the abstract," and *ponēros*, "evil in active opposition to the good."



First Epistle of John

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- *strong* is *is-khoo-ros* ' (*is-khoo-ros* ') relates to one who has strength of soul to sustain the assaults of Satan.
 - And what makes the *young men strong*?
 - The verb *overcome* is *nikaōis* (nik-ah'-o) again in the perfect tense. As Robertson says, "a permanent victory after conflict."
 - Logos Bible – ‘the wicked one—who, as “prince of this world,” enthralled “the world”, especially the young. Christ came to destroy this “prince of the world.” **Believers achieve the first grand conquest over him when they pass from darkness to light**, but afterwards they need to maintain a continual keeping of themselves from his assaults, looking to God by whom alone they are kept safe. Bengel thinks John refers specially to the remarkable constancy exhibited by youths in Domitian’s persecution.’
 - » *1 John 3:8 - He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*
 - » *Eph 6:10, 11 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*
- Are you a *little child*, a *young man* or a *father*?