

1st John Lesson 3 - To Children, Young Men, and Fathers

In this next segment, it almost seems like John changes the subject, but he does not. Love your brother was the subject just prior to these verses and love not the world is the subject just after. The subject matter is still having the love of God perfected in you.

1Jn 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Little Children:

The Greek word translated "little children" is G5040 *teknon* - and means - an *infant*, that is, (plural figurative) *darlings* (Christian *converts*): - little children.

The exact word is only used once by Jesus in this verse:

Joh 13:33-35 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. (34) A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (35) By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John is remembering back to the very moment when Jesus gave the "new" commandment ... to love one another as He has loved us ... and ... by this love men will know we are His disciples. It is even more amazing as you consider the larger context of when this happened:

Joh 13:21-30 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.* (22) Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. (23) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. (24) Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. (25) He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? (26) Jesus answered, *He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.* And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son of* Simon. (27) And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* (28) Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. (29) For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. (30) He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

This was during the last supper. Judas was about to betray Jesus. Forever, from that moment on in history, traitors would be referred to as a Judas. Judas rejected love. Judas chose the world over the love of God. For thirty pieces of silver, Judas committed the greatest "non-love" act in history. It is not coincidental that John remembers so well this incident fifty years later. All of them heard Jesus say, "**One of you shall betray me.**" John was reclining on Jesus' chest during the meal. Peter made a motion for John to ask Jesus who it was that would betray Him. John asked Jesus, but we know that Jesus whispered the answer. Jesus whispered to John,

Joh 13:25-26 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? (26) Jesus answered, **He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon.***

If everybody in the room heard Jesus say, "**He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it,**" that sop would have been like a hot potato. Nobody would have taken that sop.

Once the betrayer had left the room, Jesus begins talking again to the disciples. Every person in the room is a grown adult. Estimates of their various ages range from about twenty to thirty five years old. The point is ... they were grown men. Yet in the next segment Jesus used a Greek word that was unmistakable to their ears. He calls them "Infants." John was there. It had to seem strange to their full grown, adult ears for Jesus to refer to them as "newborns." Jesus knows the cross is only hours away. He knows it will not be long until these disciples will be able to be "born again" with the same light of life He had within Himself. He is prophesying of that time ... and John ... having been on this side of the resurrection for more than fifty years ... totally understands the mystery of why Jesus called them "infants" in that setting.

1Jn 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you, infants ... newborns in the kingdom of God ... because your sins are forgiven you. Of all the apostles, only John was at the cross to witness how Jesus suffered to pay the price for our sins. The other disciples were hiding in fear of their lives. John watched every drop of blood fall to the ground. He heard the labored breath of agony as his Savior suffered on the cross in order that his sins could be forgiven. He hears Jesus pray for those who were murdering Him,

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." [Luk 23:34]

John was there when Jesus said, "It is finished" and breathed his last breath. I cannot imagine what was in John's heart as He watched LOVE die ... for him ... and for all ... on that cross. The words of Jesus had to be ringing in his ears, "Infants, newborns in the kingdom of God, a new commandment I give unto you ... that you love one another ... as I have loved you."

John has just witnessed for himself how far the love of Jesus went for him ... and for all men. There was no limit. There was nothing held back. For man to love like that ... for sure that is a "new" commandment, far above the Levitical command to "love your neighbor as yourself." This love knows no bounds. From Hebrews chapter 12 we often correctly say Jesus is our pattern when it comes to faith, to righteousness, to holiness, to dominion over devils, and so forth ... but Jesus did not say we are to be known by those things. People will know we are His disciples by the love we have for one another. It is a love not of this world. That's why those who are of the world "feel it" when they encounter it ... because it is "not of this world." Back to our verse again,

1Jn 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

"Infants, newborns in the kingdom" ... don't ever forget the price that was paid for your sins to be forgiven. Love paid for your sins on the cross. You are to love as He loved you. You are to forgive as He forgave you. You are to honor the price He paid to set you free from sin. That's why I've written so far that you sin not ... walk in the light as he is in the light. Do not sin, because you have been set free from sin. If you do sin, confess it before Him and He will forgive you again, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Always obey the voice of the new nature within you. You are His sheep now and you hear His voice within you. The voice of your flesh you will not follow. The voice of the devil you will not follow, because they are strangers to you. Know and love Him by doing His commandments and the greatest commandment is ... to love one another as He has loved us.

In our King James Bible, it is recorded that Jesus did use the phrase "little children" two other times, but He used a different Greek word when He did.

(Mat 18:3) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 19:14) But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

This Greek word is very similar in meaning, however. It is G3813 - a *childling* (of either sex), that is, (properly) an infant, or (by extension) a half grown *boy* or girl; figuratively an *immature* Christian: - (little, young) child, damsel.

Everybody begins their life in the kingdom of God as a newborn infant. Your first birth in Adam was not equal, but your new birth in Christ is equal. Everybody begins their Christian life with one thing in common ... your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake ... because of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Everybody begins as an infant, a newborn, completely innocent. But as we mature into young children, even half-grown adulthood spiritually, it is up to each of us, individually, whether we will obey the voice of the new nature (which is obeying Christ), or whether we will not. "I write unto you little children" ... Think of what John has already written to these newborn children in the kingdom of God. Here is a brief summary so far:

1. God is light and so are you.
2. There is no darkness in Him and there is none in you.
3. You don't have to sin anymore.
4. If you do sin you have an advocate with the Father.
5. Don't think you can live in habitual sin and have fellowship with God. You can't.
6. If you commit a sin, repent and confess your sin before Him and the blood of Jesus will wash you clean again.
7. Forgive as He forgave you. Love as He loved you.
8. Never forget you are in the kingdom because He paid for your sins to be forgiven.

Now we understand why John wrote,

1Jn 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Continuing in 1st John, chapter 2:

1Jn 2:13-14 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. 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 in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Fathers:

The only difference in the two statements John wrote to the "fathers" is in verse 13 John says, "I write" and in verse 14 John says, "I have written." Greek scholars say that is an ancient method used to emphasize a point. What is the point? **"Because you have known Him that is from the beginning."** John used that phrase, **"from the beginning"** in the very first verse of this epistle,

1Jn 1:1-2 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, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

Fathers ... you have known Him that is from the beginning. That is the "life that was manifested" ... that is Jesus Christ the Lord. John uses the same word for "known" that he used earlier in this epistle ... ginosko. What has John already written in this epistle about those who "know Him?"

1 John 2:3 – We "know" Him if we keep His commandments.

1 John 2:5 – We "know" we are in Him if we keep His word. And if you keep His word, then the love of God is perfected in you.

The Greek word translated "fathers" means just that ... a father, a parent. A father is more than a teacher. Remember when the apostle Paul said,

1Co 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye not* many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

A father has more authority in a child's life than a teacher. A father loves the child more than a teacher. John gives the specific requirement that he sees in order to qualify to be a spiritual father ... qualified to not only produce offspring, but to raise up those offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ... the one requirement John has is this ... to be a father, you must know Him. How do you know if you qualify? To know Him you must have matured yourself to the place where you keep His commandments and where the love of God flows through you.

In the natural realm, young men and women mature into puberty at different ages, usually around the ages of ten to fourteen years old. Some younger. Some older. At that age, they "can" produce offspring but that does not mean they "should" produce offspring. Even in

the natural realm, children should not produce children. John is saying it is the same in the spiritual realm. Everybody can be a witness, but to be a spiritual father you must be at the place in your walk where you KNOW HIM WHO IS FROM THE BEGINNING!

JOHN HAS **EMPHATICALLY** WRITTEN [I write and I have written] ... YOU KNOW HIM IF YOU KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. ONLY AS YOU KEEP HIS WORD [YOURSELF] IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED IN YOU.

More and more I can see the need for spiritual orphanages. There are so many evangelists out there who are qualified by their "gifts" to catch men, but they are not qualified by their character to "father" those same men to maturity.

Young men:

1Jn 2:13-14 I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.. (14) I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The Greek word translated "young men" is G3495 neanniskos - a *youth* (under forty): - young man.

This phrase refers to young men, in the very prime of life. This is the time of life when passions and fleshly hormones run the highest. Praise God for those who are warriors for God in their youth. Paul told the young man Timothy,

2Ti 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

James speaks of the man who endures temptation ... and that would especially be during the very prime of life when every hormone cries out to be satisfied and passion pushes young men and women to forsake obeying Christ by rejecting the voice of their conscience.

Jas 1:12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. To them that what? To them that love Him. How do you know you love Him? John has already written the answer to that question:

1Jn 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

The flesh wants sin. The spirit wants righteousness. The war is on. Who will you bow to? Whose sheep are you? Do you still follow the voice of your flesh? Is your flesh your shepherd? No, the Lord is your shepherd. You hear His voice through the new nature and you follow what He says to you. Because you love Him, you keep His word. That is how the love of God is perfected (matured) in you. If this is not your lifestyle ... John says you are not "in him." That is a very scary place to be.

John uses the same, ancient grammatical structure here as when he wrote to the fathers ... I write and ... I have written in order to emphasize the point he is making. First, John writes simply "You have overcome the wicked one." Make no mistake ... it is the love of Christ that causes a person to obey the voice of the conscience through the new nature. Especially in "young men" when the passions of lust are fierce, and the hormones constantly rage against righteousness. No wonder James says there is a crown laid up for those who endure temptation.

John writes ... young men ... **you are strong.** How did they get that way? In the context, they were not born again and abandoned. They were "fathered." They were nurtured by spiritual fathers who themselves obeyed the Lord's commandments. They were matured by men who can truthfully say from experience, *"I know Him who is from the beginning."*

John writes ... young men ... **and the word of God abideth in you.** John is teaching what Jesus taught,

Joh 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John says twice to these young men, "You have overcome the wicked one." How did Jesus overcome when He was attacked by the wicked one? *"It is written, it is written, it is written."* The Word of God abided in Him. He didn't say, *"Just stay right there devil while I go and study the Word to find out what it says in this situation."* NO, the Word of God abided in Him. John uses the same Greek word that Jesus used in John 15:7 when he says the word of God abides in these young men.

It is G3306 meno - A primary verb; to *stay* (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): - abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), X thine own.

John uses the same Greek word for "overcome" that Jesus used when He said,

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In

the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

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

Overcome is G3528 nikao - to *subdue* (literally or figuratively): - conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.

Jesus subdued, conquered, and overcame the devil in the wilderness. Jesus overcame the world with all of its temptations and trials. John says to the young men, "You are strong. The Word of God abides in you. And you have overcome the wicked one."

Preview of chapter five:

The same Greek word translated "wicked one" in 1 John 2:14 is translated differently in the King James in this verse:

1Jn 5:18-19 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. (19) *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

G4190 poneros *pon-ay-ros* (masculine voice) ... the devil, the wicked one. The same word is translated the "wicked one" in verse 18, and earlier in 1st John 2:14. Meaning, "The whole world lies in the power of the wicked one. But you are strong. The Word of God abides in you and you have overcome the wicked one."

One last thing John says about children:

1 John 2:13 I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

As I prayed and listened concerning this verse I heard, "Little children know their Father, not God." Then I heard that same phrase I have heard so often over the years, "CHRISTIANITY IS A FAMILY, NOT A RELIGION." Little children love their father, and they naturally trust their father. We are never to lose that quality as we mature into young men and fathers. Then all of the teachings of Jesus concerning the Father began rising up from within me. If I tried to review them all we would continue on the subject for weeks. Study them out for yourself. Jesus taught us over and over again what the Father is truly like. God is our FATHER. Here are just a few to get you started on your study concerning our Father;

Mat 6 – The Lords prayer and our provider

Luke 11 – The Lords prayer and the bread supplier

Mat 8 – The Lord our healer (It is the Father in me, He doeth the works.)

Luke 18 – The Righteous Judge who avenges His own people.

Thank God His grace has made it possible for His Father to become our Father.

Rom 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.