

I. Introduction and review.

- A. Why does John digress?
- B. Many of us need encouragement about our standing with God.
- C. Different people have different spiritual needs. I Th. 5:14 I Tim. 5:1-2 Heb. 12:12

II. Interpretive challenges in John 2:12-14

- A. What is the significance of the three groups addressed by John?
 - 1. Does he refer to chronological age or spiritual maturity? I Co. 3:1 Titus 2:1f
 - 2. How many different groups are being addressed? 3 or 1 or 2?
 - 3. It may be that John addresses them all as *little children* and then breaks the church into two groups: *fathers* and *young men*.
 - 4. When John speaks to fathers and young men, he is also speaking to mothers and young women. Rom. 8:14
- B. Why does John repeat himself?
- C. Why does John write in the present tense in the first three lines and in the aorist (past) tense in the second three lines?

III. You children know the Father's forgiveness. v. 12,13c

- A. John uses two different Greek words for children synonymously.
- B. God has forgiven you. v. 12b 1:9 Ps. 103:10-14
 - 1. The forgiveness spoken of here is the once and all forgiveness which takes place at conversion. Luke 24:47 Acts 13:38 Jer. 31:34 Ezek. 36:22f
 - 2. The assurance of forgiveness is not a privilege reserved for the spiritual elite. Every child of God is forgiven. Rom. 8:1
- C. You have a relationship with God as (Abba) Father. v. 13c Ga. 4:6 Ro. 8:15
- D. The sole reason God has forgiven and adopted you is for His (Jesus') Name's sake. v. 12c 1:7 2:1-2 3:23 5:13 John 1:12 Acts 13:38 2:38 4:12 Luke 5:20-23 I Co. 6:11
 - 1. There is no other ground by which anyone can be accepted by God. Acts 4:12
 - 2. The Name represents the life and character of an individual. Mt. 1:21 Ex. 3:13-14
 - 3. God forgives you because of your relationship to Christ. 2:1-2 II Sam. 9:1-13

IV. You spiritual fathers know the eternal Son. v. 13a, 14a

- A. Paul is referring to those who are most mature in the faith. Acts 7:2 22:1 I Co. 4:15 Pr. 16:31 II Ki. 2:12 Judges 17:10 I Tim. 3:1f Titus 2:2f I Pet. 5
- B. They have achieved a higher, deeper, and more satisfying knowledge of Christ.
 - 1. The true knowledge of God is mediated only through Christ. 1:1 Ps. 110:1-2 John 14:6 1:1f 17:24 Jer. 31:34
 - 2. As the years go by your personal knowledge of Him grows. Deut. 34:10
- C. John is offering implicit exhortation.
 - 1. Act your age. Heb. 5:11f
 - 2. Pass your wisdom and knowledge on to the next generation of believers.

V. You young men have gained victory over the Evil One. v. 13b, 14b

- A. The young are those who are in the full flower and vigor of life. Pr. 20:29**
- B. You are engaged in hot spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:10f**
1. The pull of the world, the flesh and the devil is strong. II Ti. 2:22
2. You are in the time of greatest strength and activity. I Tim. 4:12f
- C. You have overcome the Evil One. 3:12 5:18-19 Mt. 6:13 John 17:15**
1. John speaks of a victory which has already been won. .
2. You are victorious because you are in Christ who has already conquered Satan.
3:8 4:4 5:4-5 Jo. 16:33 Ro. 8:31f 16:20 Co. 2:15 Re. 12:11 Luke 10:18 11:21-22
- D. The secret of your strength is the Word of God.**
1. You have been made strong. Pr. 20:29 Isa. 40:30-31 Phil. 4:13
2. You are strong because the Word of God abides *in* you. Eph. 6:10f
- E. John offers further implicit exhortation.**
1. Be encouraged; God has made you strong. Phil. 4:13
2. Abide in the Word. Ps. 119:9,11,162 1:1-6 John 15:7 Heb. 4:12 Eph. 6:17
3. Use your strength to serve God. *Don't waste your life.*

VI. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. What are the three tests of spiritual life in I John?
2. Why does John interrupt the flow of his letter?
3. How does John show pastoral sensitivity to his readers?
4. Who are the “little children”?
5. On what grounds are our sins forgiven?
6. Who are the “fathers”?
7. What is expected of the fathers?
8. Who are the “young men”.
9. In what sense have they won victory?
10. What is the secret of their strength?
11. What encouragement does God want you to gain from this passage?