

Introduction: I confess to loving books; and that, until I was twenty-seven years old, I had my most success in a classroom. However, I now realize that neither books nor a classroom are enough to acquire knowledge. *** Through four excellent mentors I acquired on the job experience to become a good actuary. This happened both by spending time observing my mentors in action and by doing assigned projects under their guidance. *** In the early years of our country, as boys entered their teenage years, they were apprenticed to an expert in a particular occupation to learn by experience from a master in that occupation. True knowledge comes from doing something over and over to learn by experience. Mastering a trade requires learning from mistakes while slowly mastering excellence in that trade. *** The biblical words for knowledge emphasize the importance of experience under the tutelage of a Master to gain the required knowledge. This is exactly how knowledge was obtained by apprenticeship. An excellent illustration of such knowledge from The Gospels are these words from Jesus' last prayer before going to The Cross: But this is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only True God, and The One Thou sent: Jesus Christ (John 17:3). *** To know God is to experience His presence every moment of life. This knowledge deepens gratitude to Him for all He has done for people and has given them IN His Son. The final result of knowledge is a deeper and more intimate relationship with God as both The Father of strong and gentle LOVE and Jesus as The Brother of sacrificial LOVE. *** With this background, let us now dig deeper into our Bible passages this morning.

I. John writes to multi-generational churches bringing out a diversity of good qualities. (1 John 2:12-14)

A. First, he commends them for where they all are now. (*Verses 12-13*)

1. I am writing to you all little children because had been forgiven to you all the sins on account of The Name of Him. (*Verse 12*)

Now: In the first three lines of this paragraph John is describing the current status of three generations in these churches.

Pre-K: This age group would correspond to what we would now call pre-kindergarten.

Sins forgiven: They have received the first gift of grace to all IN Jesus by faith: their sins are forgiven by Jesus (Savior – His Name). 'Little children' is also used by teachers as a term of affection to new disciples.

In this case, these 'toddlers' could be of any age from three to ninety-three.

2. I am writing to you all fathers because you all had known The One from beginning. (*Verse 13a*)

Fathers: Fathers would be middle aged men or, spiritually, those who have been used by God to lead people into a saving relationship with Him through Jesus.

Know eternal one: 'Fathers' have a relationship with the eternal God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, through knowing Him in every experience in their lives in every moment of their lives. This knowledge began some time ago and has continued to grow right up to the present time (2 Peter 3:18).

Fathers know the eternal Jesus

3. I am writing to you all young men because you all had overcome the evil one. (*Verse 13b*)

Young men: These would be young adults from about ages eighteen to thirty.

Victorious: These people had obtained victory (*nīk-ā-dō*) over the evil one – the accuser and adversary, and they are still victorious.

B. Then, he reminds them of what he previously wrote to them. (*Verse 14*)

1. I wrote to you all children because you all had known The Father. (*Verse 14a*)

Previous letter: In the next three lines of this paragraph John is describing the status of the generations in these churches as he had described them in a previous letter (not in the Bible).

K to ten: He had addressed slightly older children, what we would call kindergarten to the beginning of middle school.

Know Father: Children of this age, people who have been disciples of Jesus for about five years have moved beyond knowing their sins are forgiven by The Name of The Savior to beginning to have an experiential knowledge of God as their forever perfect and true Father.

2. I wrote to you all fathers because you all had known The One from beginning. (*Verse 14b*)

Fathers: Except for the tense of the verb, this description of spiritual fathers has not changed from the original letter to the current letter. This is because Jesus, The Savior, is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

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3. I wrote to you all young men because strong you all are being and The Word of The God in you all is remaining and you all had overcome the evil one. (*Verse 14c*)

Two more: Previously, John had also commended the young adults in the faith for both their strength and that they had absorbed God's Word so it continues to remain in them.

Summary: Putting it all together, children of God in Jesus know their sins are forgiven IN Jesus and have begun to know God by experience as their Father. They correspond to children before reaching puberty. Young adults have energy producing action with results: they have strong faith in The Savior and they have God's Word remaining in them to motivate them to victory over the evil one. Finally, mature middle aged disciples of Jesus are fathers who have come to know by experience the eternal Three-IN-One God.

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II. John issues a strong warning of three internal flaws that could lead them astray; giving them a solution built on David's testimony that confession results in forgiveness. (1 John 2:15-17; Psalm 32:1-8)

A. John warns of wrong desires, visions and pride before giving a promise to those doing God's will. (*1 John 2:15-17*)

1. Not you all must be loving the world, neither the things in the world; if any man may be loving the world, not is being the LOVE of The Father in him. (*Verse 15*)

Command: No disciple of Jesus, who is growing in knowledge of the eternal Savior God, must ever love the world or the things in it. The world is all that opposes God and distracts people from following God with all they have and are!

Consequence: The consequence for all disobeying this command is not having the LOVE of Father God in them.

2. Because all that (is) in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; not it is being from The Father, but from the world it is being. (*Verse 16*)

Three internal flaws: All people can be led astray from full devotion to God by any one, or more, of these flaws in the soul: a strong desire to indulge the body in any way including excessive food, exercise, clothing – any comfort at all; a strong desire to have a wrong vision fulfilled including material wealth, a beautiful home, great objects of art; and, pride that leads to wanting position, power and domination over people.

Not of Father-God: As all of these internal driving desires are opposed to giving love, none of them is from Father God. All these desires are of the adversary and accuser.

3. And the world is being made to pass away, and the lust of it; but, the one doing the desire (will) of God, this one is remaining into eternity. (*Verse 17*)

Contrast and choice: Everything that opposes God will eventually be brought down by God and removed by Him.

Promise: Everyone desiring what God desires will continue with and IN God until forever.

Let us all desire a deeper experiential knowledge of God, to be spiritual fathers, to do His will into eternal life.

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- B. David speaks of true happiness from being forgiven as a result of confession, and he trusts in Yahweh's instruction. (*Psalms 32:1-8*)

1. Happy, being forgiven transgression / being covered sin // Happy man, will not count Yahweh to him iniquity / and not in his spirit deceit. (*Verses 1-2*)

Happy: The word bless describes what God does for people by pure grace. Happy is used for what God does in response to something good in people – even if the good is by grace. In this case, God found no deceit in the man.

Three benefits: The happy man has his rebellious transgression forgiven, his shortcoming covered, and his perversion stricken from God's account book (see Revelation 20:11-15).

2. When I held my peace, wasted away my bones / in my groaning all day // Because day and night it will be heavy on me Thy hand / was reversed my moisture in the drought of summer – arise. (*Verses 3-4*)

Consequence: This was probably when David thought he could get away with using war to murder his faithful soldier Uriah. But as David avoided honest confession to God he was suffering in body and soul, and he knew it would continue.

Petition: In this situation, it would be appropriate to translate the Hebrew word 'selah' as a petition for God to 'arise' in His grace so David may be forgiven.

3. My sin I will make known / and my iniquity I did not cover over // I said I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh / and Thou, Thou have forgiven the iniquity of my sin – exalt. (*Verse 5*)

Response: When David gave in to God's gracious unsettling of his soul and confessed his transgressions (breaking two of the 'big ten' – both adultery and murder) God graciously forgave him, and he exalted God – pausing in gratitude for such great grace. May we also confess our transgressions to God, and confess Him as the gracious One!

All who confess their sins and Jesus are forgiven

4. Above this, he will pray, every saint to Thee in time of finding / truly, in flood waters great, him they will not reach // Thou (are) a hiding place, from trouble Thou will preserve me / song of deliverance Thou will surround me – exultation. (*Verses 6-7*)

Pray in floods: As we saw last week, everyone will have floods of some kind threaten to drown him or her at some point in his or her life.

Yahweh delivers: The good news is that we can expect Yahweh to deliver us in some way, even if He does so by taking us home to Him early. All healings on earth are temporary as we will all die. Going home is the 'final healing'.

Praise: When we are given the same faith as David we will gladly burst into songs of praise to God, regardless of floods.

5. 'I will give insight to thee and instruct thee in the way thou will walk / I will guide thee with my eye'. (*Verse 8*)

Instructed IN Christ: The speaker is now God, and He gives David three promises. These were all fulfilled one thousand years later when Jesus came and completed His mission on earth. He came to fulfill Torah (instruction – Matthew 5:17).

Insight, instruction and guidance are all IN Jesus. Paul said that whoever will confess Jesus as Lord and believe in his or her heart that God raised Him from the dead – that one will be saved (Romans 10:9-10).

So, all who confess their sins to God, and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives, these people are forgiven and saved!

All who confess their sins and Jesus are forgiven

Conclusion: All generations in a church reflect different qualities of what God created people to be: from child-like faith in The Name of The Savior to be forgiven through Him, to the vigor and strength of young adults, to the knowledge of God of fathers. All of these are necessary to overcome internal flaws that can pull people away from God.

He gives great happiness to those who confess to be forgiven by the faith of God's instruction in Jesus.

Fathers know the eternal Jesus