

1 John 2:12-14

A Generational Church

The book of 1 John was written by the Apostle John in his later years of life – in his 80's

A)He writes as a grandpa – who is so in love with Jesus and wants everyone to experience the life and Joy in Jesus he does.

B)After giving instruction on why he is writing – Experience fullness of Joy in Fellowship with Jesus

1)To avoid walking in sin and darkness

C)John pauses to introduces his audience –

¹²I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

¹³I 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.

¹⁴I 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. PRAY

Years ago I was having lunch with a young guy in our church who had recently moved from LA area.

A)In LA he went to a very popular church – that was known for being a church full of young people – average age was like 28

B)It was also known as the “cool Church” – Lots of cool and famous people in the LA area – went to that church.

C)So I was little surprised when this young man told me that he was really liking CV

1)he said - One thing he really liked about it – is that CV Is a generational church.

I had never heard that term before and I asked him what he meant by that?

A)He responded – CV has all the ages there – Young, Older and everything in between.

B)But it wasn't just the physical age he was referencing –

1)it was the spiritual age of the people in this church family.

C)He said this to me: In my old church I was in a life group – I am 25 and my life group leader was 23.

1)Younger than me with very little life experience with Jesus or with life in General.

D)He said but here I sit down and talk with guys who have been walking with Jesus for over 20 yrs –

1)AWESOME.

E)I have come to appreciate that aspect of our church as well. – A generational church.

Well that is exactly what John is referring to as he begins this section in 1 John 2

A)He is introducing his audience - writing to a Generational church – physically and spiritually.

B)He divides the church into 3 levels of spiritual development

C)Children, Young Men and Fathers

Children are – New believers

A)Young men are growing believers

B)Fathers are reproducing or disciple making believers

C)We could also put it this way: Children are those who have come to Christ

1)Young men are those who are growing in Christ

D)Fathers are those who are influencing others for Christ.

Consider Children- 2 things that John says marks the New Believer

A)#1 They know their sins have been forgiven

B)I love new believers – they are the life of the church. Baptisms

C)When saved? Today – right now – so awesome.

I love being around new believers – because they are so excited about God!

A)So excited about the Word – never studied the Bible before and it is coming alive to them.

B)Often can't get enough – talking with one guy –
I keep giving him books of the Bible to read –
1)Devouring the word. –

C)There is a Rawness and a realness to them – they might cuss when they pray-
1)prayers are real but not refined

D)They sometimes quote a passage wrong or take it out of context – but that is ok – they are learning.

E)Tattoos – Christian Tattoos -

All they Known is they were lost and now found.

A)They were guilty because of their sin and now they are forgiven

B)David wrote in Psalm 32:1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty.

C)They were in bondage and now they have been set free – they are just so excited –
1)passion in their worship.

D)Those who know they have been forgiven by God – can be real with God!

I want you to NOTE the role that the Word of God plays in each one of these groups of believers.

A)Starting with the Children the New Believers –

B)New Believers are those who have come to faith through the Word.

C)The Apostle Peter wrote: “You have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.” 1 Peter 1:23

D)So The Word of God is like a seed that gets implanted in the heart. –

E)That Word is alive it is living – the Holy Spirit of God is working on the heart of person –
1)Convict them of sin / need of a Savior

The Holy Spirit is drawing that person Paul the apostle wrote in Romans 1:16 ¹⁶ “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.”

A)The Word of God is able to penetrate the hard heart, the skeptical heart, the deceived heart, 1)and the unbelieving heart.

B)The 2nd step – Is after penetrating the heart the Word of God actually produces faith in the person who hears

C)Again Paul declared in Romans 10:17 “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

So something happens in the heart of the Skeptic – the Doubter, the Unbeliever

A)when they are exposed to the word of God being preached

B)The Word starts to penetrate – their eyes are opened –

1)They begin to Realize - I am a doubter – I am a sinner – I need a savior

C)In that Moment Faith is being birthed in them

Sometimes I can see this happening in real time –

A)I start preaching – and I notice someone NEVER seen before.

B)He looks like a Skeptic – sort of scowl on his face – arms crossed –

1)what do you got for me preacher – attitude.

C)Now some of you have been around a long time – and you look like that every week –

1) I can't figure out why? 😊

But sometimes I will watch this happen to a person – the arms get uncrossed – fidgety – Convicted

A)Face starts to soften – then it happens – the light comes on

B)That person is going to get saved today! – Amazing

C)So step one the Word of God penetrates / Step two Faith is being birthed –

Step 3 there is a Response

A) They are ready to act on the Word and respond to the Word and embrace Jesus

B) Again Paul the apostle put it this way. –⁹ if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

C) The Heart is where believing Happens – and the mouth is where confession takes place.

1) We give those opportunities

John Mentions two Benefits of that here in our Text.

A) The First is you know your sins are forgiven – guilt is removed – made clean in Jesus

B) #2 You come into relationship with God as your Father –

C) He says this about the new believers in V.13b – You know the Father

¹² “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

Amazing thing go from being an enemy of God to becoming a Child of God.

A) Paul put it this way: Prior to coming to Christ we were alien and strangers – upon responding –

B) We become members of the Household of God

C) 1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we are now called his Children – Behold – Awestruck

1) Father is Abba – Daddy

So the New believers Know they are Forgiven and they know God as their father.

A) John next mentions the Fathers – but I want us to consider the young men first – come back to fathers

B) I want you to note that Fathers is mentioned in the middle of the Children and the Young men

1) in both descriptions

C) I believe that is on purpose by the Holy Spirit – talk about why in a minute

D) The Young men – the growing believers – John Mentions two things about them as well

#1 They have overcome the wicked one V.13

#2 How they have overcome the wicked one V.14 –

The Word of God abides in them

A) This is the mark of those who are growing, who are strong, who are moving into maturity.

B) They are overcomers – learning how to stand strong in the Lord.

C) Young men refers both men and women who are growing in the Lord –

1) Zealous for Jesus - taking steps of faith to be used by the Lord

D) Let's take the world for Jesus – do great things for Jesus mentality

Anytime you step out to be used one thing that you can count on is opposition from the enemy.

A) Happens without fail – Someone responds to the Call to serve in some capacity. – Immediate Attack

B) Immediately the enemy is seeking to wreak havoc in your life – kids are acting up –

1) husband and wives start fighting

C) What is going on? Everything was great until we volunteered to serve.

D) Now you are a Threat – The Devil and his demons don't like that – Target on your back

Many at that point are tempted to quit – I can't take this – not serving

A) Big Mistake – that is exactly what the enemy wants you to do.

B) How you get lethargic and complacent – the Devil loves complacent Christians

C) Those who are growing in the Lord – recognize the attack of the enemy – learned to overcome

Notice what John says about the Young Men – those who are growing in Christ –

A) Overcome the wicked one because the word of God abides in them.

B) This is their connection to the Word of God – The Word Abides in them -

- 1) They have learned the importance of standing strong in the Lord and in the power of his might –
- 2) By having on the armor of God

C) Starts with the Belt of Truth – Truth of God’s Word – truth of who they are in Jesus –

- 1) All the other pieces of the armor are connected to the truth – the Word of God.

Paul wrote: the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:4 CSB

A) Our Chief weapon is the Sword of the Spirit – The Word of God

B) Jesus spoke these words highlighting the necessity of Abiding in the Word

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Branches connected to the Vine

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. Key to fruitfulness

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. Key to everything - Nothing

What does it mean to abide in Jesus?

⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

C) Abiding in the Word -

D) Those who are growing and maturing – are ABIDING in the Word.

E) Because of that they are able to overcome the wicked one.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. Psalm 119:9

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Psalm 119:11

“This book will keep you from sin, but sin will keep you from this book.” John Bunyan

So the Young men / Young women in the Church are those who are growing in the Lord

A) Because they are abiding in the Word – the Word is becoming a part of their lives

B) Waging good warfare through the Word – building up spiritual Muscles

C) Now let’s consider Fathers – Mothers

D) Those who are reproducing and disciple making believers

Listen church family – being old doesn’t make you a mother or father

A) No it is Having kids makes you a mother/ father

B) Same is true spiritually speaking – Being older in the Lord doesn’t make you a Spiritual mom or dad –

C) Being old in the Lord doesn’t make you mature.

Having Spiritual children – others you have led to Christ or are influencing for Jesus –

A) That is what makes you a spiritual mother or father

B) New believers have the easiest advantage in leading others to Jesus –

1) Because - they still have non-Christian Friends

C) But we should all continue to look for opportunities to lead others to Christ

D) JUST 1 CLASS – In March 6 Wednesday nights that will impact your life

1) Lead someone to Christ in 2025 – Disciple them

Calling to Make Disciples!

A) Those who are mature in the Lord – Mothers and Fathers – are making Disciples

B) They have people they are influencing for Christ

C) Spurgeon put it this way: The fathers of the church are men of heart who naturally care for the souls of others

It is upon the father that the weight of the household falls, he goes forth in the morning to his daily labor,

and he returns at night with the fruit of his toil for the support of the household. It is not for himself that he lives, but for that dear family which is gathered about him. CHS

D)Spiritual Fathers and Mothers are committed to helping others grow in the Lord

The Writer of Hebrews said to the group of believers he was writing to – said this:

A)By now you should be teachers – influencing others -

B)But you are still feeding on the elementary things of the faith

Those who are mature: Who influence others are those who take the Word and apply it

A)Spiritual Fathers and Mothers are those whose lives have been built on the Word

B)Jesus told the Parable of the Builders – The Wise man women – Built on the Rock – those who hear the Word and put it into practice

C)Believers who have a strong Foundation!

D)Note the Description John gives to them twice - Those who have Known Him who is from the Beginning

That is a Phrase that is pregnant with meaning –

A)First to Known = Ginosko – Known more than intellectually – theologically –

B)Known relationally – they have walked with Jesus

C)Known Him who is from the Beginning Speaks of Knowing God in his Power, Majesty- Creator

1)Spoke the Universe into Existence

D)Not just Creator but also Sustainer – he holds everything together by the Word of his power

E)Confidence in the Power of God

They know God in His Sovereignty – He is on the Throne

A)Fathers have learned to Rest in that Reality – Stable – not easily tossed or turned or shook up

B)They believe in God is Sovereign – all knowing – all powerful –

1)Never leaves or forsakes

C)They Know Him – walked with him – so They are in tune with the heartbeat of God

How do you get to know somebody?

A)By living with him day by day.

B)My wife Denise and I have been married for 38 yrs

1)I have discovered that my wife knows me and I know her.

C)I know what she is thinking just by the way she looks at me.

1)There is the look that says – I am in trouble ☺

D)There is the look that says – she is so proud of me.

1)Look that says – losing patience –

E)there is the look that says don't say another word!

F)There is that look that says – I really love you right now.

When two people have been together a long time they start to take on each other's mannerisms and sayings

A)That is what Paul says of those who walk with Jesus – we start to become like him

B)We are being transformed into his Image – Spiritual Fathers and Mothers are Christ-like –

1)That is their Chief Characteristic – they possess a great in great measure the disposition of Jesus

Notice: Fathers are in the middle of the Children and the Young men in both descriptions

A)Why does the Holy Spirit put Fathers in the middle in both sets of verses

B)Fathers are the Bridge that help Children grow into young men and women.

C)Fathers/ mothers bring encouragement to Young Christians – Cheerleaders – nurturing

D)takes patience to let them grow and mature –

1)fall pick up – champions of grace

And Spiritual Fathers and mothers give Direction to the Young men and women who are Zealous

A) We have that life experience walking with Jesus
Been through the battles

B) Come out the other side – we have our wounds but we have been victorious

C) So we have this experience in the Lord in Battle and in Ministry to pass on to the young men/women

But this is where we need to be careful

A) See there can be a tendency in those who us who have walked with the Lord a while –

B) We can be too practical – We have experience – we have seen what works and what doesn't
1) we have our own failures to look back on

C) So when a Zealous growing Christian gets an idea of how they want to serve the Lord
1) Our first response can be a word of caution -

D) Or worse a negative response – that isn't going to work – we tried that already.

E) That is the worst thing that we can do!

Imagine Peter being in a boat with a Young Disciple who says – I think Jesus wants me to get out of the boat and walk on water.

A) Now Peter – who failed at that could answer in two ways.

B) One way would be – not a good idea – not going to work – really hard – end up all wet – I know

C) Great intentions – save the young disciple from embarrassment – getting all wet

D) Too be honest – I used to respond that way a lot to a younger person's venture of faith
1) All the reasons – NOT A GOOD IDEA

E) Because of my own experience of the experience of someone else who tried and failed

A more accurate response from Peter would be –

A) Ok – that is awesome – big step – here is the Key make sure you don't take your eyes off of Jesus

B) Tempted to focus on the Wind and Waves – don't stay fixed on Jesus – his power – keep you

I believe we might be on the verge of Revival in our nation – moving among the young people

A) Moving on College Campuses – 1,000's being baptized – Exciting

B) Much talk about young people leaving the faith – there is a move – young people coming back to faith

C) If we are fortunate to see God pour out his spirit again -like in the early 70's

1) We have to realize it is going to look different

We who have been around a while must resist the temptation to say – not the Lord – not the same

A) It will pass us by – or we might stifle what God wants to do in our church in this season.

B) Ministry goal is the same – Make Disciples – Methods can Change

C) Holy Spirit is like the Wind – blows where he wants –

D) Sailing: Navigate the boat in such a way to catch the wind – that is what we are seeking to do

Where is the wind of the Spirit blowing?

A) Never contradict the Word – but it might look different from – last time

B) There is a scene in Ezra 3 that is similar to this –

C) Ezra was this priest who led a group of Israelites from captivity in Babylon – back to Jerusalem

1) For the purpose of rebuilding the temple and re-establishing worship

D) The temple had laid in ruins for 70 yrs.

E) Ezra led a group back – many of whom were born in Babylon – hadn't even seen the first temple

1) Young men – Zeal to rebuild it – See God do a fresh thing

In Ezra Chapter 3 they laid the foundation of the temple.

A) The people sang – Responsively – Response times Responding to what God was doing

B)So they sang responsively and shouted for Joy because the foundation was laid.

C)However the Foundation of this new temple was a lot smaller than the temple that was destroyed

When the Older priest and Levites who used to minister in the Old temple – saw it

A)Saw that this New Temple which was being build was smaller – they wept and mourned

B)What a contrast – that picture is

C)The text tells us the Shout of Joy – drown out the weeping of the older Priest and Levites

D)How sad: Instead of rejoicing that a temple was being rebuilt – and worship of Godrestored

E)These Spiritual Fathers were mourning that what was happening wasn't the same

Let that be a warning to all of us who are Spiritual Fathers and Mothers here at Calvary Vista

A)Instead we need to rejoice in what God is doing – how he is working –

B)Stirring those who are younger in the Lord

C)Be Champions of Faith and Grace – AMEN?

So those of you who are Children – New believers we love you so glad you are here.

A)We want to help you grow – we want to walk with you -see you become disciples

B)Young Men/Women – Growing believers Zealous for the Lord - YOU ARE AWESOME

C)You excite us – we love your hearts – your creativity – welcome your ideas

D)Be patient with us – catch on –

We want CV to be a place where you can grow and blossom and be used.

A)But don't expect us to just hand over the keys to the Car – Bank account

B)Be patient with us who are older to see God move and work – all growing together

C)Those of you who are Fathers and mothers – We need you to not check out

D)We need you to be engaged – we need you to look to encourage New believers

1)Cheer on Young Believers

That only happens – they know that you care

A)Willing to listen- engage

B)Families with our Youth

C)We will continue to be a Generational Church