

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1 John 2:12-14 KJV

INTRODUCTION: Tonight we will be talking about spiritual growth: 1 John 2:12-14. Spiritual life starts at our spiritual birth or conception, just as physical life starts at conception. Jesus told a very religious man: John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:18-19; John 1:12-13; 1 John 2:12. Because we have been born into God's family, not only are we the children of God but our sins have been forgiven for His name's sake: Isaiah 43:25. God forgives us our sins for His own sake: Psalm 103:12. But our birth into God's family is not the end of life but the beginning of our spiritual life. We are now to grow in our spiritual lives: 1 Peter 3:18. God desires for His children to go from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity: Ephesians 4:15. Spiritual maturity is to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. John mentions three stages toward spiritual maturity:

I. SPIRITUAL INFANCY!

First there is the stage of spiritual infancy. 1 John 2:13. All these baby Christians know is that God is their heavenly Father. As babies in Christ we don't know much yet: Colossians 1:12-13. We all start our spiritual lives as little babies but our God does not wish for us to stay little babies very long. It is the responsibility of churches to teach their little spiritual babies the truths of God's Word so they can grow up. Matthew 28:18-20. There are four essential ways that babies grow: 1. Food. 1 Peter 2:2-3. Bible study and memorization is important because you need to grow. 2. Prayer: Babies need air. The air of a Christian is prayer. Philippians 4:4-7. 3. Spiritual exercise: Our physical bodies need a certain amount of exercise in order to grow. 1 Timothy 4:7-8. 4. The right Christian Environment: You need to be in the environment of a victorious Bible-preaching soul winning church. Proverbs 13:20. Some baby Christians never grow up because they are carnal Christians: 1 Corinthians 3:1-2.

II SPIRITUAL ADOLESCENTS!

The second stage of spiritual growth is spiritual adolescents. John writes to the young men and says that young men are characterized by strength and their ability to retain the Word of God in their hearts: 1 John 2:14; Ephesians 6:9. The Bible says Abraham was strong in faith: Romans 4:18-22. The reason these young men were strong is because the Word of God abides in them: 1 John 2:14. Because the Word of God abides in them they will overcome the wicked one: 1 John 2:14. That is their success—they have learned how to overcome the onslaughts of the devil. Yes, you also can learn how to overcome the devil, the world and even your own fleshly desires through the living Word of God: Titus 2:11-15,

III. SPIRITUAL FATHERS!

The third step in spiritual maturity is called spiritual fathers. 1 John 2:13-14. These spiritual fathers have known God a long time. They have matured in their knowledge of God. 1 Corinthians 4:15. Let me ask you, "Who is your spiritual father?" You only have one and that is the person that led you to faith in Christ. Spiritual fathers are characterized by three things that they are able to do. 1.) Procreation: spiritual fathers are capable of procreation: 1 Timothy 1:2. Let me ask you: "Are you a spiritual father?" 2.) Confrontation! A spiritual father is capable of confrontation when needed: 1 Corinthians 4:14. A spiritual father has the responsibility to confront his spiritual children with the truth of God. 3.) Illustration! A spiritual father has the capability to illustrate the life of Christ to his children: 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1.