

I John 2:12-17
The Church in the World

Introduction:

We have to see that John the Apostle is giving us several tests we need to pass in order that we may have genuine assurance that we are Christians. In **2:3-6** we took the moral test by keeping Christ's commandments. **2:7-11** we took the social test by loving our brother and sister in Christ. **2:12-14** we need to take the test of experience, where we are in our Christian development. **2:15-17** we need to take the test of worldliness, where if we love the world's outlook on life, the love of the Father is not in us.

I. Christians At Various Stages of Spiritual Growth – v.12-14

A. Children:

1. Three categories of development: Children, Fathers, and Young Men. Interesting verb usage – present and past tenses (v. 12-14)
2. God is called “Father” – Eph. 2:19; I Pet. 1:1; 2:11
3. The relationship before God has entirely changed – Rom. 8:15-16; I Cor. 13:11
4. Spiritual growth is not measured by the calendar – I Cor. 3:1-7; Heb. 4:12-14
5. Spiritual growth is not measured by the amount of theological or Biblical facts you know – Rom. 2:19-21

B. Fathers:

1. They know God from the beginning – “know” (GK-ginosko) “knowledge gained by experience, perception or keen insight” – (I John 1:1; John 1:1)
2. Spiritual fathers will not be around forever – II Tim. 2:1-3; II Tim. 4:1-5 (Joel Beeke)

C. Young Men:

1. John says these young men are strong. (engaged in church service)
2. John says these young men are strong not by their own ingenuity – v.14; Psalm 119:9
3. John says these young men are strong because “they have overcome the evil one” Rev. 12:11

II. Christians Confronting the World – v.15-17

A. What world is John referring to? Cosmos a complex word: John 1:10; I Tim. 2:9; I John 2:2; See I John 5:19; 3:1

B. Negatively: Why are we not to love the world system?

1. Because the world is *incompatible* with loving God the Father – Matt. 6:24
2. Because the world is *oblivious* to God – Psalm 10:4
3. Because the world is *transitory* – v.17

Conclusion:

1. *God has given us this world system in providence in order that we might be thankful and serve Him in it. – II Cor. 4:4-7*
2. *God has given us this world system in providence in order that we may not set our hope here but that we may anticipate the second coming of Christ. II Pet. 3:10-13; I John 3:2,3*