

Do YOU know God? part III

REMEMBERING OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Pastor Othniel James

Main Scripture: I John 2:12-14

Supporting Scriptures: Ephesians 4:7, 32; Mathew 7:24-27; Philippians 3:7-10; James 1:5; 2 Peter 2:9; Luke 4:8; James 1:3; Romans 6: 13; Ephesians 6:13; 1 Peter 5:8; Proverbs 1:10; Proverbs 4:14

7 tests outlined in I John 2 for knowing God

#1- KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENT

#2- LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

#3- REMEMBERING OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Little children, Fathers, Young Men

Who are these people John writes to and why the change of tense between v12 to v14?

John addresses groups of people within the church, stages within the Christian walk

John places emphasis that spiritual growth is a must in the life of the believer- BELIEVERS MUST GROW

Can you identify that we are developing or growing in Christ? Do you remember when you started out and where you are now? Do you recall how God has matured you over time? Can you see a pattern of growth over time?

If we know God - we are growing

If we are trapped in a stage for many years then we are not growing and if we are not growing we don't know Him

When we are baptized our old self is nailed with Christ on the cross....all things become new; conversion, the renewal of the mind is taking place. If a person is not growing then there is a problem.

Any man who knows God MUST GROW!

To the little children (recently born)- because your sins are forgiven

To the fathers (spiritually mature, pouring into those coming along)- because you have known God and have been faithful from the beginning

To the young men- because you have overcome the wicked one, you are strong and the Word of God abides in you

LITTLE CHILDREN (new born babes)

Sins forgiven, no longer under condemnation; Christ has paid a price for you. John wants us to understand why sins have been forgiven- FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE; because of what Christ did on Calvary, because of the perfect One who poured out His life on Calvary.

New born babes must pay close attention to what Christ did for us. Why? when you are new born the devil will challenge us to believe that our sins are not forgiven. He will try to make us believe that we are still who we were. Our sins are not forgiven because of us but FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE. We can have confidence

Ephesians 1:7, 4:32

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How do we focus on Jesus?- reading the Word. The Word is life. This will help to guard against the enticement of the world. New born babes are close to where we are coming from so every effort must be made to focus on Jesus and guard against the enticement of the world.

(Personal testimony, I got saved at 16 yrs old and I remember who I was in the world...young man attracted to ladies etc... I had a difficulty thinking how I would handle this as a child of God. We have to be practical - buried in Jesus name and filled with the Holy Ghost but its natural for me to be attracted to women. The Lord helped me to find a way- He helped me to identify Fathers and mature Christians in the assembly. I noticed that these persons paid much attention to prayer and fasting. After church I would stay with them in prayer even though I was a new born babe and couldn't pray for more than 5 minutes or so. I would lay down between the benches and when my prayer ended I listened to them in prayer to hear how they spoke to the Lord and this helped me to develop.

Conversion is taking place and we have to give God the opportunity for His Word to form in us.

FATHERS (spiritually mature person)

God is eternal, infinite. So much about God to know and explore. 'Fathers' have knowledge through experience with God, walking faithfully for many years with the Lord. Reminder to the fathers that you have known Him from the beginning...started as a youthful stage and moved on by feeding on the Word of God and learn to fellowship and commune with Jesus all day long; served in the church, in the community, in the ministry. Life of service and dedication to Jesus. Father must never forget where you are coming from, the stages. Have you ever heard individuals in the assembly be critical of younger ones? This happens because we forget where we are coming from. I know the mistakes I made as a newborn but He forgave me FOR CHRIST SAKE. If I kept on looking on those mistakes I would have never grown. I had to look away and look to Christ Jesus and believe in my heart that He forgave me.

Fathers must remember how they gained experience, how they read God's Word and how God opened their understanding. How you realized it was ALL ABOUT JESUS...He poured out a small measure of His wisdom upon us. We must focus that where you are is ALL ABOUT JESUS and that will keep you from PRIDE. Remember the conversion process...this will help us not to become proud.

Matthew 7:24-27

The fools and wise are building but its the foundation that is different.

John 8:31-32

Continue----then are you my disciples indeed

John 17:3

Philippians 3:7-10

Testimony of one that has known Christ. Paul counts the things gained, priced possessions as dung...loss that I may gain Christ. It was so important to make sure I was growing in the knowledge of Christ.

Those who are Fathers can say MY LORD. We will never grown if Jesus is not LORD over our life. It doesn't matter how long you are in church...if Jesus is not placed in a privileged position to dictate the order of our life ...if we cant love Him more than mother, father, sister or any other distraction of this world.. MY LORD, MY SAVIOUR

YOUNG MEN (mature believers)

You have overcome the wicked one. Moved on from new born babes, mature believers in the church. There are no age limits for these stages of development. The more we apply the Word the more conversation takes place. It is the Word that renews the mind and makes us clean. Our minds must be

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renewed. God's grace must teach us how to deny ungodliness. This doesn't come by taking a nap and trying to dream ...you have a good dream but you never read the Word. Not just be hearers of the Word but DOERS of the Word. Carry the Word- your life must be a living epistle. The demons say Jesus and they knew who He was. When a believer who is carrying the Word....when he walks into darkness demons know who He is.

(Personal testimony...woman in Jamaica whose house was under demonic attack; daughter 8 yrs old taken by the spirit of divination. Our Pastor then asked the prayer band to pray..I recall one occasion and as we were praying on the church ground she was acting out ...crazy. We approached the girl and she would identify each one and point out those she didnt like, spiritual people. The devil knows who we are. Others came quite fascinated and as soon as they came the girl would identify the spiritually strong and then to the one who came telling them she was not afraid of them and she would start talking about deeds that person was involved.)

Mature believers must remember who we are...how we have overcome the wicked one. Recall the struggles when we just came to the Lord and how we overcome. Look back and remember how the Lord saved you from a lying tongue, gossiping lips. It was never easy to let go of self ...we didnt do it on our own. Let go of self that was crucified with Christ that was fighting to regain control of the body. That self that wants you to be attracted to worldly pleasure. We learn to put on the armour through fasting, prayer and the Word.

James 1:5

How do we gain wisdom?- Ask of God and He will give it to us unsparingly.

How do we overcome?

The Lord knows how to deliver...2 Peter 2:9; Luke 4:8

They overcome by not yielding Romans 6:13

Overcome by clothing with armour of God Ephesians 6:13

Overcome by being on guard watching for temptation I Peter 5:8

Overcome by not giving in to anger Ephesians 4:24

Overcome by submitting to God, resist the devil HE WILL FLEE James 4:7

Overcome by not giving in to the enticement of others Proverbs 1:10

Overcome by staying away from the path of the wicked Proverbs 4:14

Confirming our Spiritual Growth

Has everything about looking back and seeing how we have grown over time. If no growth has taken place this is the time to stop and take note of what is happening in our life. John says the Word of God lives in you and because of that you overcome. Mature believers must have the Word of God as part of our experience- reading, practicing, living the Word.

Look back... pay attention if our focus remains on Christ Jesus.

Which stage are we at? Am I growing? I am 20 years in the church, have I grown? Can I truly say I am growing or am I just attending church?

If we are not growing then we don't know Him and if we don't know Him He can say He doesn't know us. I don't just want to be a church goer, socializing at church or just because I was born in this but not living FOR Christ, He is not Lord over me...not fully surrendered to Him.

Do I KNOW God? Am I growing?

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