



“Learning How to Love”
Wk. 4 Discovering Your Status - 1 John 2:12-14
By Pastor Jody May

1 John 2:12-14 ESV

- 12** I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake.
- 13** I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.
I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.
- 14** I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

REVIEW:

LIGHT & LOVE

1st – Light – Truth that stems from Christ and is sustained in Fellowship with each other.

2nd – Love - Treasuring God and how we value each other.

John introduced us to this letter with the simple facts that he is an Apostle, He has seen Jesus and has experienced His life, and because of that you can trust him. (1:1-4)

John then wanted to encourage us to keep Walking in the Light of Christ, His truth, and not be persuaded by those that have left the faith, those that have said they know Christ but choose not to follow His commands. (1:5-2:2)

Then John entreated us to learn how to Walk in the Light by Learning How to Love, as Christ has loved us first, *“whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”* (2:6) and by this way you can discover if your Faith is real. For those that are pursuing a God like love, an



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unconditional love towards one another that right there is your assurance that you know God: 2:10-11: *¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

John has pointed out the liars, he has pointed out how to stay in the truth, and he has pointed out how you can show yourself that you have this Salvation.

At this point though you perhaps have felt like his original recipients; a little nervous. Perhaps you love others but at best it seems really strained at times. **Loving others don't come easy** to you, and while you are working at it you are worried that the lack of desire on your part may mean something about the true nature of your status with God. Are you and Him alright, or are you and Him not alright?

As a pastor I got to tell you that I love it when people are tense about this topic because I know that **God has got you in a good place**. I worry when people are never worried about it, I worry when people never sweat their conduct with other Christians, I worry when people seem prideful in their standing with God and that's because one of the best Christians, I ever knew was worried about their behavior as well:

Romans 7:19-24 ESV

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

What Paul was worried about though is not whether he was saved but he was frustrated with his conduct, he didn't always **act** like a Christian. Paul lived in the assurance of his status as a Christian, but he was frustrated by what his heart produced sometimes.



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As a believer, someone that knows God, someone that strives to love as He does, someone that works at walking in the light, you still get lost sometimes in the world. It’s never a **permanent state** when you know Him, but you can **get off track**. But today John wants the people at the church at Ephesus to understand, if they are still there in the church, then they are still enduring, then they should be assured that they know God, BUT know this not everyone in the church will be as steady, secure in their status, as everyone else.

Everyone is not at the same level of maturity, they are not at the same place in their Spiritual Growth, everyone has **not reached** a mutual **status of development** BUT that does not mean you are LOST, that you are not SAVED, it just means it may take you a while longer get out of the weeds and find your way home.

Here’s the key to today’s text **Main Point:**

You can be Assured no matter where you are in your Spiritual Status, you are saved.

INTRODUCTION:

I learned a valuable lesson long time ago about getting lost, if you will but keep your head and not give up hope you will be ok!

I remembered that no matter where you are at in S. Florida, for a true Floridian, **you are only lost if you want to be**. Because every true Floridian knows how to get home from I-95, and you can find I-95 in Fl. if you know which way is East. (**Illustration of getting off in the weeds and then making it home**)

For all of us in here today, I know we are all over the spectrum in our Spiritual Growth, some are much older and wiser, some of us are not as wise but we are just as brave, and some of us in here are just glad they know Jesus. All of those folks are saved but we all from time to time get a little off track. I just want us all to remember this morning it doesn’t matter if you get stuck in the weeds, if you are a **true citizen of God’s Kingdom**, if you remember the Son, the Father and the HS, and that they are working for you, you will Find your way home!



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SO, I have three areas of **Spiritual Status** and how in each stage there is **assurance** provided by God which will help us to keep going! Three ways in which we are to rest in God for He is faithful, and He is going to get us home contrary to our Spiritual status that we may find ourselves in.

1. As Children we are assured by our family's love.

¹² I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³ ...I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

A. Explanation:

John is using the term “*Little Children*” for a few reasons. First it is a **term of endearment** from John to people he had at one time been a spiritual father to. Secondly, he is reminding everyone in that church you all at one time were new to this thing called Christianity, the church at Ephesus had very humble beginnings and they were all far from God.

Ephesians 2:13 ESV

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

They were far off, occult practitioners, then they were brought near, to be brought near to God means first the condition you are in must be fixed because God can have no part with sin. So, a way was provided by God's firstborn Son:

Ephesians 1:5 ESV

⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

We were brought near was through the act of adoption, that is an essential part of Salvation. We just like they, were chosen for adoption by God, through the price paid by His Son. We are made children of God, we had a birthday, a beginning, meaning at one time we didn't know better and when we were brought into God's home it was with no prior knowledge of God, so we had to



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learn about our adopted Father. And as long as we are here on the earth we will never be done being conformed into our Father’s image:

1 John 3:2-3 ESV

² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

John points out the ongoing nature of being a child of God. Little Children are people in a maturing process that always, always, always, have room to grow, it never stops...

Children in a spiritual status way, are people, according to John, that understand they would not be a child in the best family in the universe unless their big brother got involved - (v.12) *because they are forgiven for His name’s sake*: no place at God’s table, no protection nor provision without their big brother saving them. Even when we were whinny and bratty, He chose to love us, He took our punishment on His back and bled on the cross for our sins so that our adoption papers could get signed and cleared.

People who realize they have been saved by a big brother **unconditionally**, then grow an **uncontrollable love**. They will follow Him anywhere, they want to be like Him. When you **see** you come from **the best** you want to stay with **the best**. Little Children, love their big brother, they will follow Him anywhere. **A child’s ability to stay connected with its’ family doesn’t come from the strength of that child it comes from the strength of the guardians, a child just reacts to those that care for them.**

More good news here - Because we know the big brother then we know the dad.

John 14:9 ESV

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has **seen me** has **seen** the Father...

John said in v. 2:13 we **know the Father**, we **know Him** in the personal way an heir to His Kingdom, a person freed from the world, a child that has intimate knowledge of the Father. The Prophet Jeremiah predicted this would happen,



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and we as Gentiles celebrate this, for our adoption came not through a physical means but a spiritual one **(New Covenant):**

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ESV

The New Covenant

³¹“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘**Know the LORD,**’ **for they shall all know me,** from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Knowing God, means you are forgiven, and your sin is no more, and you know it because God has placed it in your heart, that’s what Paul says is the gift of Faith. God put a saving knowledge in His children so we would recognize Him, follow Him, be dependent on Him, and that is where our assurance of faith comes from!

B. Illustration:

It doesn’t matter how lost I get my dad could always get me back home! **(Illustration, my dad built it so there was no way he couldn’t get me home!).** What was necessary is my willingness to call him, and my will to call him was because I knew Him and I knew no matter what I had done, dad was going to get me home, because I always knew as a May, my father would rather die than let me go.

C. Argumentation:

What’s keeping you in the weeds today, what has got you confused and a little off track. Siblings, I know our dad and you do to, call Him, for His name sake He will not lose you. If that is you, if you are not too prideful to call upon your



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Father then please know He will answer and He has a plan to start getting you to stay out of the weeds.

2. As **Youngins** we are **assured** by God’s **discipline**.

13 I am writing to you, **young men**,
because you have **overcome** the evil one.

14 I write to you, **young men**,
because you are **strong**,
and the **word** of God **abides** in you,
and you have **overcome** the **evil one**.

A. Illustration:

John recognizes that everyone is brought up in Christ as a child, and we will never lose those Gospel truths and feelings that children of God have, **BUT** there is still the **need** to **mature** and **grow** as Christians. In Christianity we call that **SANCTIFICATION**. That is the process in which we are **transformed**, we are made Holy, we are worked into the image of Christ, and it requires the work of God and our submission for it to happen.

The **Status** of being a young man/**Youngin** in the text, is a metaphor for a person that has been matured some, that is learning to stand on their own, that is desiring to stand for God, and not get taken for a ride by the world. That type of spiritual maturity, that type of sanctification, only comes through training, an action taken up by God.

Hebrews 12:7-10 ESV

⁷ It is for **discipline** that you have to **endure**. God is treating you as **sons**. For what son is there whom his father does not **discipline**? ⁸ If you are left without **discipline**, in which **all have participated**, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.



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There are several truths from this passage that must happen in order for us to be the type of people, **to Status progress**, that will overcome Satan/*evil one*.

Discipline (***trained***) happens for all of God’s children and if you are not it means you are not a child of God.

Discipline is something that must be endured, ***stand firm***, meaning it’s not always pleasant, it goes against your nature (*like eating vegetables*).

Discipline is the desire of God so that we should be made holy, that IS ***sanctification***.

Discipline, even when we don’t like it is always done for our ***good!***

In the church at Ephesus John wanted the congregants to see, that those that not only stayed and weren’t lured away, but those that spoke out, those that resisted the lure of Gnosticism and the adulterous pleasures it would bring, be assured you are being saved!

(Fl. Illustration again) The day I made it home in the dark, without calling my dad, is because my dad forced me to drive and discover the world in which I lived. I was trained and expected to get home, and not only that, **I would have to get others home as well**. Because of that training I got all my friends home safe that night. That is the Christian life, if we don’t assume a stance that this is for my good and the good of others then something bad may happen...

B. Application:

There are people in this room that you have stopped hiding in the church and now you are beginning to defend her and that is where we all have to go! It will also mean in the years ahead as our culture consumes more churches and turns them into watered down versions of the church with unfulfilling gospel proclamations you will have to be prepared to say something. AND it can’t just be we should get along (***unity***), it might have to be, “Here is where you are wrong, and why you need do desist.”

Right now, I need for us all to be prepared for some discipline. What are you willing to pick up this year, **read and study**, and be uncomfortable with? You may not like all the talk on Social Justice but that does not mean God is not calling you to study it and know for yourself. The expectation for everyone in this room is to grow.



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The Apostles’ desire was for everyone to stand and defend the family.

1 Corinthians 16:13 ESV

¹³ Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done in love.

Taking up the mantle and resisting the world is realizing your **assurance** in that **God is making you strong**, and you will be able to stand the day you are called to do so, in the strength of Christ. Then for those that have begun to do that, have begun the process of standing firm and are growing through growing pains, gaining in status, for the sake of the Gospel there is yet another benefit.

3. As Grown-ups we are assured by relationship with God.

**¹³ I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.**

**¹⁴ I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.**

A. Explanation:

Father’s, elder Christians, Grown-ups know Him who is from the beginning. They are people that are not just in love with God, that aren’t just fired up and sanding firm, but they are people that are actively involved with God in a relationship. There’s a give and take, there’s delight, there’s challenge, there’s trust, and there is an unshaken spirit to them. It started when they were a ‘Youngin’ and they have developed a practice that has brought them this maturity:

Romans 12:2 ESV

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.



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God taught them through discipline to take that which they are thinking and sift it through God’s Word, and like picking a walnut out of the shell, they only keep that which is good, acceptable, and perfect.

B. Application:

I have some HW for you all tonight, with your families before you go to sleep. I want you to read vs. **9-21 of Romans 12** and discover what a mature follower of Christ looks like, share it, ask for someone to tell you where you are lacking in that list.

Here’s the summation of that list, you no longer **sweat what the world is laying out**, because you know it’s all part of the plan. We are not saying do not pray for or desire good things but we are saying is that for the mature believer joy is not based on what the world dishes out, **but joy is based on your relationship with God**. Contentment comes from a life of experiences and discovering that God has never left you and if anything, **He** has become more **real** to you. So that like Paul you too can say:

Philippians 4:11-13 ESV

¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Paul is confident in his Salvation but he is not always content with his behavior and that discontent should challenge you to keep sifting and eating the meat of God’s Word. In that way we can have peace and still be striving because we are:

CONCLUSION:

**Assured that no matter where we are in our
Spiritual Status, we are saved!**

RESPONSE:



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Children: Today, all of us in here should be enjoying our Christianity by living as a child of God. He has captured our hearts, we follow Him, and we uncontrollably love Him! That’s great but many of us in here, you stopped at this point, and you will not take off the training wheels, you are still getting tossed back and forth in this life on the waves (Eph. 4:14), you get off track a lot! I challenge you today, since you are not doing life by yourself, you have a family around you, will you go that extra step and next time God begins to discipline you will you let Him please! **When the child begins to grow up that is when a child can start gaining some responsibility around the home, we want that for you.**

Youngins: Some of you are starting to step out and have a voice a you are getting angry about that which is false about God. I want you to channel that passion into not only learning about what makes you passionate but put that passion into developing all areas of your life for God’s glory. Don’t just read on one subject, don’t just settle for developing one aspect of your life, don’t just focus on being a good _____... Focus on the fact that God wants ALL of you to develop, so that in your community people know your name, because of how you reflect Christ in all areas of life! Youngins, put yourself under a Father figure, be submissive, and you will learn much.

Grown-ups: I am going to ask you one thing. Pick out someone in this room, pray for them, and begin to move into their lives, and begin to teach them not just doctrine and theology but how it works out in one’s life. If you are a mature believer in God then you are called to share with the youngins and children how they to can get there.

By accepting these challenges today may we all work out our Assurances safely realizing no matter where we are in our development process we are still saved by Grace.

Prayer

Communion

Benediction



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Go in the name of the Father, that has lovingly planned out our process of discipline trust Him this week.

Go in the name of the Son, that demonstrated a perfected life of obedience and gave the righteousness He earned to you.

Go in the name and power of the HS, that lets you know even when you get off in the weeds you are only as lost as you want to be for you are always in God’s Kingdom.