

Preparing for Spiritual Battle: Part 1

1 John 2.12-17

John has ‘laid his cards on the table’: All Christians can have fellowship with God – know Him *intimately*. It isn’t automatic: It will be a spiritual battle, but it’s one every believer can win. John begins by reminding us of two things: Our assets, and our enemy – the world.

- Know Your Assets: Children, Fathers, and Young Men (12-14)

- Children: Our *relationship* to God
- Fathers: Our *familiarity* with God
- Young Men: Our *strength* from God

- Don’t Love the World: It’s Passing Away (15-17)

- Lust of the flesh: *What I want to do*
- Lust of the eyes: *What I want to have*
- Pride of life: *What I want to be*

Bottom line: *Where is your heart?*



1. In 1 John 1.1-2.11, the apostle exhorts his readers (and us) to have fellowship with God – to “walk in the light, as He is in the light” (1.7a). This fellowship is open to all believers when we confess our sin (1.9) – agree with God about our sin. Jesus is our Advocate with God the Father (2.1), and His blood cleanses us from all sin (1.7b)! We maintain fellowship with God by obeying His commandments. John describes this as knowing God intimately (2.3-4) and abiding in Him (2.6). He points specifically to Jesus’ command to “love one another” (John 13.34) as being a key to having fellowship with God. Assuming you sincerely desire to live in fellowship with God, what deceptions or distortions do you think Satan would use in an attempt to derail your spiritual growth? To prepare for spiritual battle, what truths about who we are in Christ would be good to review?
2. In 1 Jn. 2.12-14, John designates his readers three ways. If John was distinguishing different levels of spiritual maturity in his audience, the order in which he lists them – *little children*, *fathers*, and *young men*, makes no sense (we’d expect little children, then young men, then fathers). Instead, John uses these designations (twice) to point to their ‘spiritual assets’ as they face the inevitable attacks of Satan. What does John say is true of believers as *little children* (12, 13c)? How does this correspond with what John wrote in 1.5-2.2? What is true of believers as *fathers* (13a, 14a)? How does this correspond to what John wrote in 2.3-11? What is true of believers as *young men* (13b, 14b)? How does this correspond to what follows in 2.15-27? Bonus: John uses two different Greek words for *little children* here: *τεκνίον* (*teknion*) in v12, and *παῖδιον* (*paidion*) in v13c. Why?
3. In v15, John makes another of his blunt statements: *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. He’s not alone! Read Rom. 8.7; 12.2; James 1.27; 4.4. What are the consuming drives of the world (v16)? How did these ‘lusts’ lead to the Fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3.6)? How were they used by Satan in his temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4.1-11)? What’s the lasting significance of a life tied to the world (17a)? A life tied to God’s will (17b)? *Only one life, ‘twill soon be past; Only what’s done for Christ will last!*

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