

God has been filtering us through matters in 1 John concerning fellowship with each other and God, sinful behaviors, the blessing of assurance of salvation, a perfect love relationship with Him, and brotherly love. In these verses today, John writes concerning **three main stages of spiritual growth** as we mature in Christ: Little Children, Young Men, and Fathers. Humans are fashioned in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-28): three-part beings with a body, soul, and spirit. As our bodies and souls mature, so should our spirit as we _____ it. Today may we hear what God will say about our spiritual growth through this precious Book!

Stages of Spiritual Growth and Maturity (part 2) – 1 John 2:12-14

1. Little Children (Review) – v. 12-13

- The **little children** stage is the early phase of being _____ again and somewhat unlearned in deeper matters of the faith – Matt. 18:1-6; Lk. 18:16; Jonah 4:11.

Your sins are forgiven you...ye have known the Father (v. 12-13; John 14:6-9)

- Growing out of the **little children** stage requires _____ and discipline – Pr. 22:6; 1 Cor. 13:11.

2. Young Men (Review) – v. 13-14

- **Young men** are those who have _____ strong and God's Word is powerful in and through them – Judges 13-16; 1 Sam. 14; Ps. 119:9; Prov. 20:29.

Ye have overcome the wicked one (2X)...ye are strong...word of God abideth in you (v. 13-14)

- Growing out of the **young man** phase occurs by bearing _____ fruit (*father*) – John 15:16; Lk. 6:43.

3. Fathers – v. 13-14

- God gives physical and spiritual fathers His very _____ (*not His role*) as fathers and father figures play key roles in younger spiritual lives – Matt. 23:9-10; Ex. 20:12; Rom. 8:15.

*Ye have known **him that is from the beginning** (2X)*

- There is a general lack of spiritual growth to this father stage in our culture with far more instructors than actual father figures – 1 Cor. 4:15-16; Mal. 4:5-6; Ps. 27:10.

Encourage...Bring them _____ (Deut. 1:38, 3:28; Pr. 22:6) =

_____ (Prov. 4:1-4) =

Admonish (Prov. 3:12) =

- Father figures are critical in God's plan and can receive great joy in fathering – Prov. 17:6; 3 John 1:4.

Exhorting, Comforting, _____ (1 Thess. 2:11) =

_____ (Ps. 103:13) =

_____ (Deut. 1:31) =

- Young men who were _____ moving to the father stage – 2 Tim. 3:7; Prov. 20:29.

Samson (Judges 13-16) =

Absalom (2 Sam. 15; 18:5, 12, 29, 32) =

Jonathan (1 Sam. 18-20; 2 Sam. 1) =

David (1 Sam. 25) =

The rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-22) =

- Young men who were successful in becoming good _____ fathers.

Abraham (Gen. 22:5, 19; Rom. 4:1, 12, 16) =

Joseph (Gen. 41:12; 50:18-26) =

Joshua (Ex. 33:11; Num. 11:27-29; Josh. 6:22-23) =

Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-12; 6:17) =

Boaz (Judges 21:25; Ruth 1:1; 2:9, 15, 21) =

Jesus (Luke 2:46-52; John 10:30) =

- Some other observations about the spiritual **father** stage:

4. Aged – Jer. 6:11; John 21:15-19

- **Godly** aged men and women have great _____, but limited time to influence others – 2 Sam. 19:32; Job 12:20, 29:7-8.

- The aged have a great _____ to pass on what they understand before they leave...to finish well – Titus 2:1-3; Phm. 1:9; Acts 21:15-16.