

# 1 JOHN: DEFEATING MISLEADING SPIRITUAL ERROR TRULY TO COMMUNE WITH GOD

## Part V: Discerning To Overcome Hurtful Backgrounds Toward Hurt-Immune Maturity

### A. Discerning Spiritual Maturity As A Believer ("Fathers")

(1 John 2:13a, 14a with John 14:21-23 et al.)

#### I. Introduction

- A. As we previously learned, a believer may be immature so that he discerns and avoids only **SOME** but **not all** hurtful evils in the world, leading to painful battles in his walk, Hebrews 5:13-14 with 1 John 2:13.
- B. Thus, it is important to be able to evaluate our maturity so as to adjust and avoid such hurtful battles.
- C. John discloses 3 levels of growth in 1 John 2:13-27, beginning with the mature "fathers" in 1 John 2:13a, 14a. We thus view what the mature believer is like so we may evaluate ourselves and adjust accordingly:

#### II. Discerning Spiritual Maturity As A Believer ("Fathers"), 1 John 2:13a, 14a with Jn. 14:21-23 et al.

- A. In **both** "couplets" John employs that describe the three maturity levels, he uses the **same description** for the "fathers," i.e., that they "have known him that is from the beginning," 1 John 2:13a, 14a KJV.
- B. This reveals mature believers permanently fellowship with Christ Who "is from the beginning (1:1-2)":
  1. The verb "have known" is better rendered "come to know" experientially, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966 ed., p. 815; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Engl. Lex. of the N. T., p. 159-161.
  2. As the verb is in the perfect tense (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; The Analytical Grk. Lex. (Zond.), p. 114), spiritually mature "fathers" have come as a lasting way of life to experience Christ in everyday living!
- C. Such a way of life has come by the intentional choice of believers at this level of maturity to obey God above making either the world's lusts or other people their "idol" for security and fulfillment (as follows):
  1. Jesus had revealed in John 14:21-23 that if the believer completely obeyed His Word (walking in the light of God's revelation, cf. 1 John 1:5, 7 as described in our 2nd lesson in this series), He and God the Father would reveal themselves in wonderful and personal ways in the everyday life of that believer.
  2. Now, in contrast to the "little children" who we briefly learned tend to make an idol out of people in the Church around them only to be "burned" when some of these idols turn out to be impostors, then in contrast to the "young men" who know enough Scripture not to depend on other people to get burned but who fall for the lusts of the world only to be "burned" by its own lack of fulfillment, the mature "fathers" have learned to fellowship with Christ as their **sole** Source of fulfillment (2:18-27, 15-17).
  3. Thus, such mature "fathers" have fullness of joy about which John wrote in 1 John 1:3-4 as they see God's rewarding involvement in their daily lives (John 14:21-23)!
- D. Examining 1 John shows us just some of the many blessings that accompany the experience of the mature:
  1. Spiritually mature "fathers" regularly fellowship with other godly believers and the Lord, 1 John 1:7.
  2. They regularly examine themselves and confess sins for restoration to fellowship with God, 1 Jn. 1:9.
  3. Such "fathers" have God's love perfected in them as it is expressed toward God and others, 2:5-9.
  4. Mature believers do not cause others to sin, but rather influence them unto righteousness, 1 John 2:10.
  5. They discern the correct pathways in life, functioning above confusion re: knowing God's will, 2:11.
  6. Mature "fathers" consistently gain answers to prayer, knowing and praying in God's will, 3:22; 5:14-16.
  7. Mature believers live above false guilt that torments since God's love in them casts out doubt, 4:17-18.
  8. They find obeying God's commands in the Spirit's power a blessing, not a legalistic chore, 1 John 5:3.
  9. Such "fathers" have great experiential assurance of their salvation status, 1 John 5:10-13.
  10. They realize that Satan cannot touch their spirits, and that the entire world system is under Satan's control, so this keeps them from even wanting to be tempted by the world's lusts, 1 John 5:18-20.
  11. Indeed, they keep themselves from the "idols" of other people and the world unlike the immature, 5:21.

***Lesson:*** Mature believers have come to say "NO!" to relying on other people for spiritual fulfillment and "NO!" to indulging in the lusts of the eyes, the flesh and the pride of this earthly life for spiritual fulfillment; rather, they fully and solely heed Scripture, cf. Psalm 1:1-3. Thus, they joyfully find God interacting with them in their everyday experiences with a host of fulfilling rewards of blessing!

***Application:*** (1) If from this lesson we see we are "fathers," rejoice and KEEP leaning on Christ. (2) If NOT, let us choose to BYPASS the hurtful battlegrounds of making idols out of other people or the world and simply heed all of God's Word with a whole heart in the Spirit's power for fulfillment!