

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

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

B. Discerning Spiritual Intermediate Maturity As A Believer ("Young Men")

(1 John 2:13b, 14b-17)

I. Introduction

- A. As we before learned, a believer may be immature so that he discerns and avoids only **some** but **not all** hurtful evils in the world; that leads to painful battles in his walk, Hebrews 5:13-15 with 1 John 2:13.
- B. Thus, it is important to be able to evaluate our maturity level to adjust and avoid such hurtful battles.
- C. John discloses three levels of maturity in 1 John 2:13-27, writing to the moderately mature "young men" in 1 John 2:14b-17. We now view that maturity level to evaluate ourselves and adjust as is necessary:

II. Discerning Spiritual Intermediate Maturity As A Believer ("Young Men"), 1 John 2:13b, 14b-17.

- A. In the two couplets where John describes the moderately mature, "young men" believers, he reveals in what way and realm they have gained a degree of spiritual growth as follows, 1 John 2:13b, 14b:
 1. Both couplets at verses 13b and 14e state the moderately mature, "young men" have overcome Satan.
 2. Then, 1 John 2:14b,c,d reveals just **how** that has occurred for them as follows:
 - a. Moderately mature believers have come to rely on God's spiritual provisions to be "strong", 2:14b: (a) the reference to being "strong" recalls Paul's call in 2 Timothy 2:1 to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (b) As this admonition is introduced by the word, "Therefore," this achievement is described back in 2 Timothy 1:1-18. (c) Well, 2 Timothy 1:1-18 shows the need for Timothy to **rely** on **God's** office (1:1a), **God's** will (1:1b), **God's** authority (1:3a), **God's** spiritual gifting for service (1:6), **God's** Holy Spirit and power (1:7-8), **God's** calling and eternal purpose (1:9), **God's** Gospel of salvation (1:10), **God's** exemplary patterns for ministry in godly human forerunners in the ministry (1:13) and **God's** preservation of true beliefs (1:13-14) for effectiveness in life and service.
 - b. In depending on these divine provisions so as to be spiritually strong and as John implies in 1 John 2:14c, moderately mature believers see the value of Scripture that tells them of these provisions.
 - c. Consequently, as these believers have come to apply Scripture truth in God's spiritual power, they have come to discern the wiles of Satan so as to obey and trust God to handle them in their behalf; thus, through God, they have gained victory over Satan's wiles in their lives, 1 John 2:14d!
 - d. In view of the 1 John 2:18-27 information on the "little children", we know moderately mature believers come to rely on God's Spirit and Word to discern false teaching by impostors; they thus are no longer "burned" by others, for they depend on God and not other people for fulfillment!
- B. Nevertheless, "young men" are susceptible to the **lures** of the lusts of the eyes, the flesh and the pride of this earthly life, 1 John 2:15, J. G. Mitchell, Fellowship: Three Letters From John, p. 65-70 as follows:
 1. Since moderately mature believers rely on the Holy Spirit and God's Word for life and service, the **lusts** of the **world** they face are predominantly in the very realm of God's calling for them, 2:14b-16.
 2. Thus, "young men" can easily unbiblically gratify their aesthetic and bodily lusts and personal pride even in the realm of a spiritual ministry that God assigns them; they and other immature believers around them may not realize this until they come "unglued" when trials expose their hidden weakness!
 3. Victory over the world for the moderately mature thus comes by realizing these two major truths:
 - a. God is not a part of the realm of unbiblical lust gratification even if they occur in the realm of our Christian service assignment from the Lord, so we must depart from such indulgence if we would truly fellowship with our Heavenly Father, 1 John 2:16.
 - b. Gratifying these worldly lusts disappoints in the end, for it fails to produce eternal, lasting value to our lives and service that is found only in heeding God in place of gratifying such lusts, 2:16-17!

Lesson: *Where mature believers (as we learned before) rely only on Christ for fulfillment, moderately mature believers have yet to wean themselves from gratifying their UNBIBLICAL drives for aesthetic and bodily function and personal pride issues, and that **THOUGH** they rely on the Holy Spirit and the Word of God for victory over Satan and **THOUGH** they cease leaning on other people for fulfillment.*

Application: *If we see we are "young men," may we opt to forsake gratifying the UNBIBLICAL lures of personal pride and aesthetic and bodily realms to find fulfillment only in fully heeding Scripture.*