

1 JOHN: DEFEATING MISLEADING SPIRITUAL ERROR TRULY TO COMMUNE WITH GOD
Part V: Discerning To Overcome Hurtful Battlegrounds Toward Hurt-Immune Maturity
(1 John 2:12-27)

I. Introduction

- A. When we believers realize we do not heed Scripture in some way and so confess it to God, He not only cleanses us from that sin, but also purifies us from all other sins we may not know we had, 1 John 1:9.
- B. Now, the fact that we may be ignorant of such other unrighteousnesses reveals fellowship with God is like one's "health status," **not** his maturity! Such maturity comes from time spent in fellowship with God when, via applying His Word in various situations, we learn to discern less obvious evils, Heb. 5:13-14.
- C. As evil yields trouble and hurt (Psa. 1:4-6), a believer who either does not mature or who levels off at an intermediate maturity level will come to be hurt by the evil he naively either tolerates or even embraces!
- D. Thus, after writing in 1 John 1:8-2:11 about maintaining fellowship, or "current health status" with God, John moved to reveal how we can **mature** in Christ, explaining how we can come to overcome the hurt that comes upon us as we unwittingly either tolerate or even embrace various evils in immaturity:

II. Discerning To Overcome Hurtful Battlegrounds Toward Hurt-Immune Maturity, 1 John 2:12-27.

- A. John introduced the subject of three maturity levels for the believer in his walk in 1 John 2:12-13:
 - 1. The Greek word for the KJV's "little children" in v. 12 is *teknia*, meaning an offspring in a **general** sense (child or adult), U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966 ed., p. 815; Arndt & Gin., Grk.-Eng. Lex. N. T., 815f.
 - 2. However, the Greek N. T. word for "little children" in verses 13 and 18 is *paidia*, which, in this context, means an immature child who lacks experience, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 815-816; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Ging., p. 609-610, 815-816; John G. Mitchell, Fellowship: Three Letters From John, p. 70.
 - 3. John eventually returns to using the word, *teknia* in 1 John 2:28, addressing true believers in general without a focus on the levels of their maturity, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 817.
 - 4. Thus, in 1 John 2:12, John introduced his discussion to true believers in general; but, in verses 13 to 27, he broke his discussion down to address [in two sets of triads] first the mature "fathers," then the "young men" of intermediate spiritual maturity and last the immature "little children": (a) in the first triad at verse 13, he briefly addressed first the fathers, then the young men and finally the little children, and (b) in the second triad, he detailed his address first to the mature (v. 14a), then to those of intermediate maturity (vs. 14b-17) and finally to the immature (vs. 18-27), *Ibid.*, Mitchell, p. 63-75.
- B. Hence, in **very abbreviated** form (**on which we will elaborate in the next three lessons**), John exposed the **MAIN** hurtful battlegrounds where believers must overcome for fulfilling spiritual maturity, 2:13-27:
 - 1. Immature believers ("little children") depend upon other believers around them for fulfillment only to suffer disillusionment and hurt when some of those (idols in the form of) people turn out to be impostors of the faith, creating havoc for the immature, 1 John 2:18-19. "Baby" believers must then discern truth from error by the Spirit and Scripture to avoid leaning on such false teachers and their errors only to be thus eventually "burned" by being "let down" by them, 1 John 2:20-27; 2:14b implied.
 - 2. Believers of intermediate maturity ("young men") have learned to use the Spirit's discernment with Scripture not to lean on (idols in the form of) people around them so that they live above false teachers and teachings (1 John 2:14b); yet, they must learn to avoid (the idol of the world via) indulging in the lusts of their eyes, the lusts of their body and the pride of their earthly life that is so anti-God, transitory and thus "burns" them by failing to fulfill them after they have "bought into" its values, 2:14b-17.
 - 3. Mature believers ("fathers") have come to rely **only** on "Him Who was from the beginning," on **Christ** (1 John 1:1-2) Who alone (like no such false idol) provides stable, long-term, joyful fulfillment. They thus live above inner hurt as they stay in fellowship with God, 1 John 2:13a, 14a and 1 John 1:1-2.

Lesson: *Every believer is at one of three MAJOR levels of spiritual maturity, a fact that affects whether he experiences spiritual trials and defeats and hurts or not, and just which ones: (1) immature believers are often naively dependent on evil people as well as the vain world for happiness, (2) intermediate level believers have overcome depending on false teachers but are vulnerable to the world (3) where mature believers have learned to seek only in Christ all they need for sustained, steady, joyful fulfillment!*

Application: *May we come to look ONLY to Christ for long-term, joyful fulfillment in Christian living!*