

## I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

### **VI. The Three Levels Of Spiritual Maturity, 1 John 2:12-27**

#### **C. The Little Child Level Of Spiritual Maturity**

**(1 John 2:13c, 18-27)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. When John wrote 1 John, he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a number of his readers did not enjoy spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. Such a lack of true fellowship occurs with many believers today, a state that Christ predicted would exist in our era in Revelation 3:14-22. We thus continue our study of 1 John in viewing 1 John 2:13c, 18-27 on the "little child" level of spiritual maturity, and what is required for one to mature out of that level (as follows):

#### **II. The Little Child Level Of Spiritual Maturity, 1 John 2:13c, 18-27.**

- A. John addressed the "little children" (*paidia*) in 1 John 2:13c, 18-27. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 815-817; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 609; John G. Mitchell, Fellowship, 1974, p. 70-75)
- B. He noted that these spiritual "little children" had come to know (perfect tense in *egnokate* from *ginosko*, "know" [by experience]; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 114; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 159-161) God the Father, to experience spiritual fellowship with Him, 1 John 2:13c.
- C. However, where the false idol of the "young man" is the world, the "little child" idolizes people in the Church, what leads to insecurity in him when false teachers leave the Church, declaring unedifying errors as they go!
- D. 1 John 2:18-27 thus directs "little children," or babes in Christ, to overcome spiritual defeat by the actions of godless apostates in the Church by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Word of God (as follows):
  - 1. John first informed the "little children" that not everyone in the Church was of the faith, 1 John 2:18-19:
    - a. He reminded the "little children" that they were living in the latter days when the antichrist about whom they had been taught would come was indeed would arise in the world, 1 John 2:18a.
    - b. Yet, John added that even now, there are many antichrists, showing we are in the last days, 1 Jn. 2:18b.
    - c. John then explained that it was these antichrists who had gone out from the Church because they did not hold to the true faith, that had they held to the faith, they would have stayed in the Church, 1 John 2:19a.
    - d. John then explained that what had been a shock to the "little children" in their seeing apostates leave the Church was allowed of God to occur to give evidence that they were not truly of the faith, 1 John 2:19b.
  - 2. Teaching that not everyone in the Church is truly of the Christian faith leads to feelings of insecurity in "little children" even regarding their own salvation, so John provided stabilizing insight, 1 John 2:20-27:
    - a. First, John wrote that the "little children" had an "anointing" from the Holy One so that they "knew" in an absolute sense (*oida*, *Ibid.*, p. 558-559; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 816) all things, 1 John 2:20. Verse 27 later reveals that this Holy One is the Holy Spirit Who teaches believers all truth. (John 14:26; 16:13)
    - b. Second, John countered three false charges by apostates that tended to unsettle the "little children":
      - i. First, John wrote that "little children" knew (*oida*, *Ibid.*) the apostate's claim that they did not know the truth was false, for by the Holy Spirit they knew the truth, and no lie was of the truth, v. 21.
      - ii. Second, John countered the apostates' errant claim that denied Jesus as Messiah, asserting that the **apostates** were the **liars**, that **they** were **antichrists** who denied the Father and the Son, 1 John 2:22. Those who denied the Son did not have the Father, but were unsaved, 1 John 2:23. If the "little children" would let the truth about Christ that they had been taught by the apostles remain in them, they would also continue to enjoy fellowship with God the Father, 1 John 2:24 with 2:13c.
      - iii. Third, John explained that the apostates' charge that "little children" were not saved if they held to the apostles' teaching on Christ was false, for God's Word promised them eternal life, 1 John 2:25.
    - c. John then urged believers who were "little children" to reject the apostates' false teachings by relying on the Holy Spirit and the apostle's teaching, the Word of God, regarding Jesus Christ, 1 John 2:26-27.

**Lesson:** "Little children" have come to fellowship with God, but they rely on or idolize people in Church for their spiritual welfare, what gets them into trouble if apostates in the Church deny key beliefs and leave the Church, claiming the Church errs and its people are unsaved. "Little children" must thus overcome their self-harming, idolatrous reliance on people in the Church by relying on the Holy Spirit and God's Word by the apostles.

**Application:** If we are "little children," may we shift from relying on people in the Church for our spiritual welfare and rely on the Holy Spirit and Scripture for discernment and adherence to the truth and for fellowship with God.