

I JOHN: A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

VI. Discerning Spiritual Young Men And Their Needs

(1 John 2:13b, 14b, 15-17)

I. Introduction

- A. John wrote 1 John to counter heretical views (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 881), so the epistle provides discernment, and is thus “filled with contrasts – light and darkness (1:6-7; 2:8-11); love of world and love of God (2:15-17); children of God and children of the devil (3:4-10); the Spirit of God and the spirit of Antichrist (4:7-12, 16-21).” (Ryrie Study Bible KJV, 1978, “Introduction to the First Letter of John: Contents,” p. 1770)
- B. We view the epistle for much needed spiritual discernment in our era, and study John’s teaching on discerning spiritual young men and their needs in 1 John 2:13b, 14b, 15-17 for our insight, application and edification:

II. Discerning Spiritual Young Men And Their Needs, 1 John 2:13b, 14b, 15-17.

- A. John’s introduction of believers in the intermediate level of maturity, the “young men,” reveals the steps they have taken to reach the goals that John presented for believers in the immature “little children” level:
1. The apostle noted that these “young men” had overcome the “wicked one,” that is, Satan, 1 John 2:13b.
 2. The way they had achieved this feat was by (a) heeding God’s Word to distinguish the antichrists from true believers (1 John 2:23-24) (b) and by relying on the Holy Spirit for discernment (1 John 2:20, 27).
 3. In the process of practicing these functions, (a) they had come to use Scripture to the extent that they had actually identified the working of Satan who is behind the antichrists (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 with 1 John 4:1-3), and (b) they had become “strong,” relying on the Holy Spirit not only for discernment, but also for God’s power for effectively living the Christian life and serving the Lord, 1 John 2:14b.
 4. Also, in 1 John 2:14b, John added that God’s Word abode in the “young men” so that they had overcome Satan with Scripture like Jesus had overcome Satan with Scripture in His temptation, Matthew 4:1-11.
- B. However, the “young men” had an enemy that they still needed to overcome to become “fathers,” that enemy being the world, and overcoming the world involved a battle of one’s love (as follows), 1 John 2:15-17:
1. The command “Love not . . .” in 1 John 2:15a is a present imperative with the negative particle *me* (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 815; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 2) that should be translated, “**Stop** loving . . .,” to **stop** an action that is **already in progress** (Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N. T., 1957, p. 301) Accordingly, spiritual “young men” are currently in love with the world, and they need to learn to withhold their love from it!
 2. The importance of ceasing to love this world is noted in 1 John 2:15: if we love the world, the love of God the Father is not in us! The “love of the Father” is clarified in 1 John 2:16b to be a subjective genitive to refer to the **Father’s kind of love**. John added that all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of this “earthly life” (*bios*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 816; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 141) is not of the Father, but is of this present world, 1 John 2:16c.
 3. The “world” and all that is in it is **anything** that appeals to the sinful drives of the body, the sinful drives of aesthetic appeal and the sinful gratification of the pride of this earthly life. It may be a lust in regard to the secular realm, but it may also be a sinful lust in regard to one’s experience in Christian circles!
 4. John then provided a strong statement in 1 John 2:17 to motivate “young men” to stop loving the world:
 - a. The world system and its lusts “passeth” (KJV) away, the Greek word for “passeth” is *paragetai*, a verb in the present tense (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 301) to show that the world and its lusts are **now** in the **process** of passing away, 1 John 2:17a. Loving the world is thus not only a futile act, but it becomes in time a depressing one since the world and its lusts are always passing away!
 - b. To the contrary, he who “is doing” (*poion*, present participle, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 334) the will of God “is remaining” (*menei*, present tense, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 263) forever, 1 John 2:17b. Doing God’s will produces eternal value and stability so that the believer’s deeds last forever in blessed contrast to the futile, fading world and its lusts.

Lesson: *Spiritual “young men” rely on the Holy Spirit and Scripture to identify antichrists and overcome Satan who is behind antichrists, and young men are thus spiritually strong by the Holy Spirit for effective life and service. However, they must stop loving the world and its lusts, for that kind of love is not the Father’s love, but a love of what passes away where doing God’s will causes one to have eternal value in what he does.*

Application: *If we are “young men,” may we stop loving the passing world and do God’s will with its eternal value.*