

The Last Eyewitness, IV

Good Hate (1 John 2:12-17)

October 19, 2003

THREE STAGES

I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. – 1 John 2:12-13a NIV

You'll notice right off that John has separated his audience into three categories: children, fathers, and young men. This doesn't exclude females, because Greek employs masculine forms to represent mixed groups (like our *mankind* and *guys*).

John is identifying and acknowledging three phases of faith:

1. The first phase (children) This is the young believer who has only a basic concept of the forgiveness of their sins.
 2. The final phase (fathers) This is the elderly believer who can look back over a lifetime of battles and victories.
 3. The fighting phase (young men) These are dynamic believers who are equipped to confront and combat the "evil one".
- These phases are more attitude than age.

At this point in his life, John is most likely in his '80's and is still very much in the "dynamic phase" of his ministry.

- To the children John is saying: You'll *get* there.
- To the father's John is saying: You've *been* there.
- But to the young men John says: You guys *are* there.

I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. – 1 John 2:13b-14 NIV

John now defines what it means to be a "Young Man" by attaching three traits common to the dynamic believer.

THREE TRAITS

1. (How the power is *described*) You are strong

This refers to the strength of our relationship with the Lord.

2. (How the power is *derived*) The Word of God lives in you

He doesn't say, "You *know* the Word" he says, it "*lives* in you!"

- God's thoughts have soaked in past the surface of knowledge.
- Until they breathe in your chest and dwell in your heart.

This happens through five means - (hold up one hand):

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| a) [Bend pinky finger] | We can: Hear it |
| b) [Bend ring finger] | We can: Read it |
| c) [Bend middle finger] | We can: Study it |
| d) [Bend index finger] | We can: Memorize it |
| e) [Bend thumb over] | We can: Meditate on it |

Meditating is the key. Meditating is when we rehash, rehearse, and revisit God's words (like how we do with a good compliment). This is the "thumb" that allows us to grasp what we've heard, read, studied, and memorized. And then ...

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| f) [Punch fist in air] | Then we can: Apply it |
|------------------------|-----------------------|

3. (How the power is *displayed*) You have overcome the evil one

We are told to flee from temptation:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Flee from sexual immorality. | - 1 Corinthians 6:18 NIV |
| Flee from idolatry. | - 1 Corinthians 10:14 NIV |
| Flee from [the love of money] | - 1 Timothy 6:11 NIV |

But we're *not* told to flee from the tempter:

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. - James 4:7 NIV

We can walk away from temptation. But we can't outrun an enemy who wages war within. We must stand and fight ... but how?

Remember when Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness and Satan tried to undermine His communion with God? (*Luke 4:1-13*) Jesus' faith was *strong* (40 days is a long time!) He certainly overcame the tempter ... the devil fled from Him.

But it was His trust and conviction in God's Word that gave Him the ammunition to fire against His tempter.

"It is written: Man does not live on bread alone." (Luke 4:4)
"It is written: Worship God and serve him only." (Luke 4:8)
"It is written: Do not test the Lord your God." (Luke 4:12)

- We can only be tempted to the degree we buy into his lies
- The consequences will be worth the crime (or indulgence)

His lies can only be exposed to the degree that God's thoughts and words *live* in us. But when we expose his lies he flees us.

HATE THE WORLD

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. – 1 John 2:15 NIV

- This command is absolute. John wants us to *hate* the world.

Q: What does he mean exactly? Here's a couple shocking photos of actual protests (from godhatesfags.com). Is this what he means?

As far as the physical world goes - God looked over all He had made and thought it was excellent (*Genesis 1:31*). As far as the human world goes - John's gospel says that God so loved the world (of sinners) that He gave His only Son (*John 3:16*).

Kosmos, translated here as "the world" has a few definitions:

- Universe/earth think *cosmos*
- Makeup think *cosmetics*; from "well-ordered"
- People think (Bill) *Cosby!*

The word "kosmos" can also refer to: A system or domain in which something dominates. Just as the title: "The World of Sports" describes a domain in which sports dominate, John wants us to hate the domain in which sin dominates ... it's a *good hate ... a healthy hate* (like hating the feeling you get when you burn your hand).

For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. – 1 John 2:16 NIV

We are to despise this "Wide World of Sin" where the battles are fought. You'll notice it consists of three main events:

THREE MAIN EVENTS

1. "The cravings of sinful man" (regretful gratification)

[Round 1 in the wilderness] The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." - Luke 4:3 NIV

We all have legitimate drives and desires to satisfy our senses. But, this is the lure to fulfill them in illegitimate ways.

2. "The lust of the eyes" (passion for possessions)

Lusting for things that catch our eye has two arenas:

1. Accumulation (obsession with the things we can have)
2. Covetousness (obsession with the things we can't have)

[Round 2 in the wilderness] The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. - Luke 4:5 NIV

The devil said: It can all be yours ... just worship me a little.

3. "Boasting of what he has and does" (our stuff and status)

[Round 3 in the wilderness] The devil ... had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" - Luke 4:9-11 NIV

This is the pull to base our value on what we have and what we've done instead of on what God has and who He is.

These are the three main events - sins domain of unbridled pleasures, possessions, and pride. John says we gotta choose one or the other: "kosmos" or God of the cosmos ... can't love both.

[But remember] The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. - 1 John 2:17 NIV

He writes to the children who've been rescued from deceitful desires and found forgiveness and new life in the name of Jesus. He writes to the fathers who've lost their appetite for worldly pleasure and treasure which holds no power in the hour of death.

But mostly, he writes to you - the dynamic believer - who finds strength in God's thoughts, His Word, and His eternal purpose.