

"In Christ": The Only Way to Grow Up I John 2:12-14

When John writes to those who are "in Christ", He addresses some as "little children", some as "young men", and others as "fathers". Every congregation ought to have such a mixture of believers - complete, yet in process; fully equipped, yet coming into their own; perfectly saved, yet being perfected; delivered from what is false, yet maturing into what is true.

What is it that "LITTLE CHILDREN" know? Being saved "from" sins and "from" hell, that they are forgiven and have a heavenly Father. Christ is now present with them and because of the work of the cross "for" them, they are alive to receiving so many blessings from God - cleansing, heaven, peace, joy, and so on! This is a wonderful place to be (for a while)! But sadly, whole churches stop here, thinking this is all there is to the Christian life here on earth. And when "families" are led by children... well, you get the point!

What is it that "YOUNG MEN" know? That they are not only saved "from", but also "for". They are saved for service - to God and others. Christ becomes prominent and because of the work of the cross "in" them, they are new creations - internally dead to the "old", alive to the "new". They are alive to what is now possible because the crucified, risen Christ abides in them - they can "fight the good fight", overcome the evil one, the word of God makes them strong - they love serving God in His strength and giving blessings to others. Many think this is the goal, the end, the "deeper life" or victorious Christian living. And, although it is moving on past being "little children", and is entirely appropriate for a season, there is more.

What is it that the "FATHERS" know? They "know Him who has been from the beginning." They are learning to be at home in the eternal perspective of God... in all things! They are living life with the "single eye", appearances no longer trap them as being reality. Christ is more than present, more than prominent... He has the pre-eminence - first place in everything. The work of the cross, as joyously liberating as it still is, gives way to the "way of the cross" - they are alive to dying over doing, sacrifice over service, the spiritual over the natural. This is about being a blessing more than getting or giving blessings.

Paul says in I Corinthians 4:15 that there are "not many fathers"... yet every congregation, every Christian family needs a few. One who is willing and ready to say, "be imitators of me". (I Cor 4:16) What about you and me?

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 **GREETINGS** 

April and May—the time of year that gardeners seem to love. Seeds, upturned soil, fertilizer, early blooms. It reminds me of “The Psalm of a Gardner”, by Joseph Bayly.

Lord of the compost heap
you take garbage
and turn it into soil
for seeds to root
and grow
with wildest increase
flowers to bloom
with brilliant beauty.
Take all the garbage
of my life
Lord of the compost heap
turn it into
soil good soil
and then plant seed
to bring forth
fruit and beauty
in profusion.





May you bear fruit and beauty from the unlikeliest places this month!

Steve

 **CALENDAR** 

<u>MAY</u>	
1,15,22,29	CCF
6-8	Waymart, PA (607-239-5006)
10	Alachua Study
*24	Ocala Study *Note change*
<u>JUNE</u>	
17-19	Detroit, MI (wedding)
<u>JULY</u>	
3-8	Bar Harbor, ME

 **PRAISE and PRAYER** 

 For Spiritual Fathers
 For Growing Up in Christ
 For Spiritual Fathers
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