

FIRST JOHN

The Stages of Spiritual Growth // 1 John 2:12-14

Tests of Assurance

1. The Behavioral Test (v. 3-6)–Obedience

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2. The Social Test (v. 7-11)–Love

Tests of Assurance

1. The **Behavioral** Test (v. 3-6)—Obedience
2. The **Social** Test (v. 7-11)—Love

John may have written verses 12-14 to
encourage those who may have been troubled
by his previous statements.

FIRST JOHN

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1. Spiritual **Children** (v. 12; 13c)
2. Spiritual **Young Men** (v. 13b; 14b)
3. Spiritual **Fathers** (v. 13a; 14a)

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John uses three different terms to give us three different stages of spiritual development.

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Every healthy church has ALL three stages represented within their congregation.

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Every healthy church has ALL three stages represented within their congregation.

“God’s family, like every human family, has members of different maturity.”

John Stott

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The Truth about Spiritual Growth:

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The Truth about Spiritual Growth:

- Spiritual growth should happen.

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- Spiritual growth takes time.
- Spiritual growth takes intentionality.

The Stages of Spiritual Growth

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"...little **children**..."

Verse 12

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We become a part of God's family
when we are born again—Jn. 3

The Stages of Spiritual Growth

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"forgiven"
(perfect tense)

An action that happened in the past
with results continuing on into the **present**.

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Our forgiveness in Christ is **permanent!**

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*"As far as the east is from the west, so far God has removed
our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12*

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"For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:34

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WHY are we forgiven?

It's because God wanted to display
the character of his love and grace and mercy.

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"children"

Verse 13

Greek (*paidia*) = little child; little one; toddler

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A distinguishing mark of a young Christian is they rejoice in their new **relationship** with their heavenly Father.

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 - "...you have overcome the **evil one**..."
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 - "...the **word of God** abides in you..."

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You cannot grow apart from the **Word of God**.

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 - "...you **know** him who is from the beginning..."

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The spiritually mature are **composites** of both spiritual children and spiritual adolescents.

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Spiritual fathers/mothers are those who **reproduce** themselves spiritually through the process of **discipleship**.

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