

## Doctrinal Summary of Spiritual Development & Maturity: The Spiritual Father

In 1 John 2:14, John identifies the highest maturity level a believer can reach: the spiritual father.

“I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

The word “fathers” is translated from the Koine Greek word πατέρες (“pa-ter-es”) which more literally means, “fathers, being initiators.” It physically refers to those individuals who are able to father a child or who have fathered a child as result of reaching physical maturity for procreation. Spiritually, it refers to the highest maturity to which a believer can develop: a fully developed adult believer in the family of God. They have learned the character of God as an infant, have learned the ways of God as a child, have overcome Satan & Company, and have now come to know who Jesus Christ is as Lord, not just Savior.

The word “know” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐγνώκατε (“eg-noh-ka-teh”) which more literally means, “you all really have performed the completed action in the past with the result continuing on to know something through experience resulting in personal understanding of how academic fact relates to experience.” It identifies a learning process that has culminated in comprehension of what something is and how something works. The learning process required for this type of knowledge is experiential: applying what is academically taught in a relationship with something. Having had personal experience with something by relating to it, there is now an understanding gleaned about what has been related to. Consequently, that understanding continues on, being carried with the individual. The “something” which is known by the spiritual father is “Him who has been from the beginning.” This is a reference to God the Son, the second personality of the Godhead identified in John 1:1-3.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being which has come into being.”

John’s reference to the “Word” is a reference to Jesus Christ. He is identified as being with God in the beginning and being God. He is the creative agent of the Godhead Who accomplished the creation of the universe. John uses the same reference to Jesus Christ in 1 John 1:1, calling Him “the Word of Life” “which was with the father and was manifested to us” when He became man.

The sinner first comes to know about God the Son as Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed Sacrifice of God for the sins of man. Here, the sinner understands Jesus is a man and is also the Christ. It is through Him alone that man has access to the Father (cf. John 14:6). As the believer grows spiritually, the focus from his Heavenly Father shifts toward focusing on God the Son who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (cf. Rev. 19:6), whom God highly exalted because of His sacrificial death on the cross (cf. Phil. 2:9-11).

Having humbled Himself to become man and die for man’s sins, He is exalted by God in front of every soul as being, and having been God. Believers will experience the fullness of this in eternity, but can understand who Jesus Christ is as Lord and God as a result of reaching full maturity during their time on earth.