

1 John 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Analysis

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. John repeats his address to fathers and young men (omitting little children) with slight variations, using past tense "I have written" (ēgrapsa, aorist) perhaps referring to earlier part of the epistle or emphasizing completed instruction. The address to fathers is identical to verse 13, reinforcing their defining characteristic: deep, mature knowledge of Christ who is from the beginning.

The address to young men expands with three characteristics: "ye are strong" (ischyroi este)—spiritual vigor and vitality marks youth in faith. This strength isn't self-generated but flows from the second characteristic: "the word of God abideth in you" (ho logos tou theou en hymin menei). "Abideth" (menei) indicates permanent indwelling—God's word has taken root, remains, and empowers. The present tense emphasizes ongoing reality. This indwelling word produces strength for spiritual warfare.

The third characteristic repeats from verse 13: "ye have overcome the wicked one" (nenikēkate ton ponēron). The connection is significant: victory over Satan comes through God's word abiding in the believer. Jesus demonstrated this in wilderness temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)—He overcame Satan by wielding Scripture: "It is

written." Believers similarly overcome through truth indwelling and empowering them. This refutes both Gnostic reliance on secret knowledge and mystical approaches disconnecting victory from Scripture. Biblical truth abiding in the heart produces spiritual strength and victory.

Historical Context

The connection between God's word abiding and spiritual victory was central to Jewish spirituality. Psalm 119 celebrates God's word as guide, strength, and protection. Joshua was commanded to meditate on the law day and night for success (Joshua 1:8). Jesus personified this—Scripture saturated His thinking and empowered His ministry.

Early Christian discipleship emphasized Scripture memorization and meditation. In an era of limited literacy and few personal copies of Scripture, believers memorized extensive portions. This "abiding word" sustained them through persecution—when Bibles were confiscated, the word remained hidden in hearts. Martyrs often quoted Scripture while dying, demonstrating victory over Satan through indwelling truth.

The Reformation elevated Scripture's authority and accessibility. Sola scriptura declared Scripture alone is final authority. Translating Bible into vernacular languages and promoting literacy enabled ordinary believers to have God's word abide in them. Puritan piety emphasized daily Bible reading, meditation, and Scripture memorization as essential for spiritual vitality and victory. John Owen taught that indwelling sin is mortified by indwelling truth—God's word displaces and defeats sinful patterns.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's word "abide" in you—is it surface knowledge or deep, indwelling truth shaping thoughts and empowering choices?
2. What practices (memorization, meditation, application) help move God's word from external information to internal, abiding reality?
3. How does the indwelling word specifically empower victory over recurring temptations and spiritual warfare you face?

Interlinear Text

ἔγραψα	ὕμῖν	πατέρες	ὅτι	ἐγνώκατε	τὸν				
I have written	unto you	fathers	because	ye have known	G3588				
G1125	G5213	G3962	G3754	G1097					
ἀπ'	ἀρχῆς	ἔγραψα	ὕμῖν	νεανίσκοι	ὅτι				
him that is from	the beginning	I have written	unto you	young men	because				
G575	G746	G1125	G5213	G3495	G3754				
ἰσχυροί	ἐστε	καὶ	ὁ	λόγος	τοῦ	Θεοῦ	ἐν	ὕμῖν	μένει
strong	ye are	and	G3588	the word	G3588	of God	in	unto you	abideth
G2478	G2075	G2532		G3056		G2316	G1722	G5213	G3306
καὶ	νενικήκατε	τὸν	πονηρόν						
and	ye have overcome	G3588	the wicked one						
G2532	G3528		G4190						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:11 (Word): Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

1 John 2:13 (Evil): I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

Colossians 3:16 (Word): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

John 15:7 (Word): If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Ephesians 6:10 (Parallel theme): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

John 5:38 (Word): And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

John 8:31 (Word): Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Revelation 2:7 (References God): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

3 John 1:3 (Parallel theme): For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

2 John 1:2 (Parallel theme): For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.