**1 John 2:12-17 (KJV)** 12  I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.   
13  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.   
14  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.   
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1. John encourages his readers to remember their victories and examine their spiritual growth.
   1. The message is repeated almost word for word.
      1. In the first presentation, the word “write” is present tense.
      2. In the second presentation, the word “write” is aorist tense (translated wrote or have written).
   2. The message is addressed to three audiences.
      1. “Little children”
         1. In verse 12, the Greek word is τέκνια literally means “little born ones.”
         2. It is a term of endearment generally used to show kinship and is translated “little children” or “dear sons and daughters.”
            1. It is masculine in the Greek.
            2. It is used in the same sense as we use a masculine form many times to refer to “men and women.”
         3. “Little children” is παιδια refers to a young, immature child.
            1. One could translate it as “little children under instruction.”
            2. It stresses the ideas of subordination and discipline more than the idea of kinship.
      2. “Fathers”
         1. The Greek word is πατέ/ρες**.**
         2. It can refer to father, grandfather, mature men, or mature men and women.
      3. “Young men”
         1. The Greek word is neani/skoi**.**
         2. It has reference to youth under forty.
2. Why did John repeat himself?
   1. Repetition is often used to place emphasis on a thought or idea.
   2. This particular repetition has a poetic flow which would have been appreciated by his readers or hearers.
   3. For emphasis: John is driving home the point that believers must grow in Christ.
      1. They must confirm their growth in Christ, confirm their great relationship with God.
      2. It must be done over and over again.[[1]](#footnote-1)
3. What is special, if anything, about the three different groups addressed?
   1. John could have been addressing his recipients as a general group.
      1. Using the terms “little children” could have been a means of endearment to all.
      2. The terms “fathers” and “young men” could have referred to subgroups of young adults and more mature adults. It would have included men and women.
   2. John could have been addressing different levels of maturity within the church family.
      1. “Little children” could refer to recently converted, spiritually immature believers who were just beginning to grow in Christ.
      2. “Fathers” could refer to older and more spiritually mature believers who had a deeper, richer knowledge of God.
      3. “Young men” could refer those believers who were younger in years and/or in their faith, but had faced spiritual battles against Satan and had been victorious.
4. Why did John use two different words to indicate “little children?”
   1. There is, as previously noted, a slight difference between the two terms used for “little children.”
      1. the Greek word is τέκνια literally means “little born ones.” Implying kinship.
      2. παιδια refers to a young, immature child, implying one a student/teacher relationship.
   2. It is probable that John used both as terms of endearment and variety to provide interest and intimacy to those who would receive the letter.
5. What is the meaning and understanding of the word translated “because” in the statement form “I write unto you … because….“?
   1. It is translated from the Greek word “ὅτι,” a conjunction used to introduce an objective clause.
      1. It can be translated “because,” indicating a causal relationship. (because they were John’s spiritual family – his converts, they should listen to his teaching.)
      2. It can be translated “that” which indicates a simple declaration of fact, (because they were believers, they should listen.)
   2. John possibly intended to convey the double meaning, implying that the recipients of the letter were believers, and that they should respond to his teaching as believers.
6. A concluding remark taken from [Commentary on the Books of 1, 2, 3 John](https://ref.ly/logosres/rhbc83jn?ref=Bible.1Jn2.12-14&off=7182&ctx=tation+of+the+text.%0a~The+fifth+exegetical):
   1. “As noted previously, vv. 12–14 are difficult and filled with ideas that are closely interwoven. For this reason, they present the interpreter with several interesting questions. The basic meaning of the paragraph, however, is clear. John’s goal is to remind his followers of the spiritual victory that they have already attained. In these three verses he makes such statements as “your sins are forgiven,” “ye have known him that is from the beginning,” and “ye art strong, and the word of God abideth in you.” These are words of assurance. These believers have no reason to doubt the genuineness of their relationship with God; they should not allow themselves to be carried away by any false teaching.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (1996). [*1 Peter–Jude*](https://ref.ly/logosres/posbkjv81pe1?ref=Bible.1Jn2.12-14&off=2055&ctx=en+to+you%E2%80%9D+(v.+14)%3f+~For+emphasis%3a+John+i) (p. 241). Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Marberry, T. L., Shaw Craig. (2010). [Commentary on the Books of 1, 2, 3 John](https://ref.ly/logosres/rhbc83jn?ref=Bible.1Jn2.12-14&off=7182&ctx=tation+of+the+text.%0a~The+fifth+exegetical). In R. E. Picirilli (Ed.), *1, 2, 3 John & Revelation* (First Edition, p. 42). Nashville, TN: Randall House. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)