

1 John 2:7-11

“Something Old and Something New”

1John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. ⁸ Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. ⁹ He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. ¹⁰ He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. ¹¹ But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

1. **Loving one another is a consistent command** – V.7 - no new commandment

John begins this section by calling those to whom he writes, “brethren.” This is the Greek word “adelphos” and it means a male born from the same womb, a brother but it can also mean a sister. This word is addressing those who have been born again by the grace of Jesus Christ. If you have been saved, you are related, you are family, you are brother and sister in Jesus Christ. John is writing to the Church, to the saved, to the brethren.

He also begins by stating that what he is writing is nothing new. It is nothing that they haven’t heard of before but notes that they have heard of this commandment since the “beginning.” The word beginning most likely refers to their conversion when they would have heard the Gospel of their salvation and submitted their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and committed themselves to Him. This commandment is old in the sense that it has always been the command of God and that is very simply to love one another.

All the way back in Leviticus 19:18 the scripture says, “**Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD.**” This is the command that runs throughout the entirety of scripture. In no place do we find justification for malice, ill-will, or unforgiveness for a child of God. One who has been born from above should love selflessly in submission to the LORD their God. This commandment is old, this commandment is consistent, and this commandment is what we have known since our conversion to Christ. It isn’t shocking but is expected.

2. **Loving one another is a current command** – V.8 - again, a new command

In a seemingly contradictory statement, John continues on by writing, “again, a new command I write unto you.” Now John which was it? Old or new? The answer is both! The command was old in the sense that its always been the command which we have been aware of since our conversion, but it is new in the sense that God renews it every day and the command is as fresh today as it was the day we first heard it and believed. It is a current command. Loving your neighbor yesterday is not sufficient for what is needed today. *“for though doctrinal Christianity is always old, experimental Christianity is always new”* (Robert Candlish).

John writes about the clearest example and expression of love that has ever been known and that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. He writes, “which thing is true in Him.” Even though we read the Old Testament command to love our neighbor as ourselves, no one had ever obeyed that perfectly, but Christ did! John actually records for us one of the most beautiful pictures of this love in John 15:

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. ¹⁰ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. ¹² This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. ¹⁶ Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that ye love one another.

“A disciple was to love others not just as he loved himself but in the same measure as Christ had loved him, with selfless self-sacrifice even unto death.” John R. W. Stott, *The Letter of John: An*

Introduction and Commentary, TNTC 19; IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 97.

John writes that this is true in “him and in you!” How is it true in you? Because the darkness has passed away and the true light is now shining. In other words, it is true in you because the light of the Gospel has shined in your heart, the sun of righteousness has dawned in you, and scattered sins darkness! Old things have passed away and behold all things have become new.

3. **Loving one another is a classifying command** – V.9-11 - love for the people of God shows you to be “in” the light. Hatred for God’s people reveals you to be in the dark. I

say cluing because this is the evidence of where we stand...we are either in the light or in the darkness. Christians love one another. Unbelievers hate or have no love for believers.

Finally, John writes that this command is a classifying command. This command is a distinguishing command in that your response to it reveals where you are spiritually.

There are only two categories in which you can be classified, and in this text John describes it as abiding in the light and walking in the darkness. The command is to love the children of God, the response is either obedience or disobedience, and that classifies you as either a true believer walking in the light of Jesus Christ as revealed by the Spirit in God's Word, or as a mere professor, one who claims religion but has not transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is the effect of true faith in the gospel isn't it? This is the evidence that the new heart Jesus' blood purchased for you on Calvary is beating! What does it mean to love the brethren? What does it mean to hate the brethren? What does it mean to walk in the light or the darkness?

To love one another means that we have a warm regard for one another, it means we cherish one another, and it means we have Christ like affection for God's children. To hate someone means that you have no love for them. To hate means that you have a strong aversion to someone. It means that you detest them. Aversion means that you have a strong feeling of repugnance toward someone with a desire to avoid or turn from them. It is a settled dislike. It is when you avoid them, or don't care there because they are. It's when we would rather see them get what is coming to them than see them be blessed by

God. It's when we would rather give them what is coming to them than be a blessing to them.

If you feel that way about someone the scripture calls you to love them. I have no idea what has been done to you. You may have been deeply hurt by someone and that has developed into hatred. The scripture says that hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sin! God calls us to: ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Now walk in the light and forgive that person! Rick Safriet said that the person walking in the dark is the one walking in contrast to the light. "This is a person who says, I know I'm told to love but I don't. In fact, I hate. That is darkness. That is walking and living contrary to Christ." If that is you, John says you are like a blind man trying to walk down the road. You have no idea where you are walking spiritually because you have been blinded by sin and you are in your sin even now! This is the attitude that says I see that Bible says I am to love and forgive and be gracious but I don't care, I hate them for what they did to me!

When dealing with forgiveness we must remember that it is for Christ's sake, not ours. We must be willing to say Lord, despite how I feel about this person, despite what they did to me, by your grace and with your help, I wipe their slate clean! I look for no compensation. I look for no apology to make things right. As God accepts me for your sake, I accept them! Now, if you see that and instead choose to continue hating, John

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writes and says you are lost. You have no saving faith. Repent today and love the
brothers and sisters!