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A0428 -- July 11, 2004 -- 1 John 2:6-8 -- Life of a Disciple

By way of review, last week we looked at 1 John 2:3-5. 1 John 2:3-5 is an advance on the basic doctrine of fellowship (1 John 1:5-2:2). New or immature believers begin by recognizing sin and acknowledging sin as they learn the commands of God. Intimate knowledge is one step higher; it is an advance to deeper and more meaningful fellowship with God. It takes some time to get to this point because one has to learn the word of God and then keep the word of God. When these two conditions are met the spiritual environment is ready for Christ to disclose Himself to the obedient disciple so that the disciple can comprehend the depth of God's love and character (1 John 2:3). The believer who claims to know Him but does not keep the commandments of God is a liar and the truth is not in him in a dynamic or controlling way (1 John 2:4). The one who does keep the commandments and enjoys the deep realization of the love of God has entered the abiding stage of Christian fruit-bearing (1 John 2:5).

THE ABIDING DISCIPLE (1 John 2:6)

⁶ ο` λε,γwn evn αυτω/| me,nein ovfei,lei kaqw.j evkei/noj periepa,thsen kai. αυτω.j
Ἰου[twj]ᾶ peripatei/nΑ

6 He who says he abides (meno) in Him ought also to walk (peripateo) just as He walked.

If anyone claims to be abiding in Christ this can be verified by whether he has a Christ-like lifestyle. Here John introduces one of his favorite words, "abide". It is the Greek word *menō* and it means "to remain, to stay". This word is used 102 times in the NT and 69 of those uses are by John. It is equivalent to John's use of *in Him* in the prior verse. For John to be *in Him* is to *abide in Him*. Since verse 5 taught us that we can know that we are *in Him* by the perfecting of God's love then in verse 6 it follows that we *ought also to walk just as He walked*. A disciple is to become like his teacher (Matt. 10:24-25). A disciple in the ancient world was anyone who paid money to be taught by someone. It was expensive

to be educated in the ancient world. Not everyone had the kind of money needed to be educated. Nor did everyone who started their education have enough money to finish it. There were disciples of all the famous names in Greek philosophy. For example, there were disciples of Plato and Aristotle for example (Platonism and Aristotelianism). Some of these are mentioned in Scripture, such as the disciples of Epicurus, the atheists of Paul's day (e.g., the Epicureans of Acts 17 whom Paul confronted). A disciple would sit under the instruction of their master and learn a philosophy or way of thinking. There were also Disciples of Christ. Turn to **Luke 14:26-33**. As with all discipling in the ancient world it cost money. Here we are told how much it cost to be a disciple of Christ? Do you want to be a disciple of Christ? If you do then I'm giving you this passage today for you to consider the cost.

²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

You've got to count the cost! Don't just say, oh I'm going to be a disciple of Christ. It's not easy. You've got to put Him first, you've got to admit He is right, you've got to put yourself under His authority, you've got to consider ahead of time whether you will finish the training, you've got to consider everything in your life to be His possession and nothing to be yours. It takes countless hours of study and instruction. Remember Paul and the Ephesians? Paul would spend from sunrise to 12 noon working on tents. But from 12 noon to 6pm (supper time) people didn't work because it was too hot. So, Paul went and talked to a man named Tyrannus. Tyrannus had a school that was vacant in the afternoons and so during the hot hours of the day, from noon to 6pm Paul spent his time teaching in the school of Tyrannus. He did this for 2 years every day, that's right, he taught 5-6 hours a day! Bible doctrine after bible doctrine so that after 2 years Paul could conclude that "he did not shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God" to the Ephesians. That's right! Paul taught the whole counsel of God to the Ephesians in the space of 2 ½ years. Now you see how he got such a large following and at the same time got people really angry, "ALL ASIA" heard

the word of the LORD in the space of 2 ½ years. Now, are you willing to undergo that type of training? Are you willing to sacrifice everything for Christ? Now, given that American culture has pushed families to the point where the man has to work 80 hours a week just to support a family. Given that on one income family we think we can hardly survive so we resort to sending our wives out into the workplace to make ends meet. In the meantime, what's happening to our children? I'll tell you what's happening. They're being trained by secular humanists and then we wonder why they turn into rabid dogs, running wild and everything else. Now, what are you going to do about this? Your children are the most important ministry you have. You will never, I don't care what line of work you are in, you will never influence anyone more than your own children. And yet we have no time for our children because we're trying to keep up with the Jones'. Count that cost....how much is it costing you and your family because you're too busy to study the word of God? You're not loving your children by giving them extra candy and play things. In 1900 kids were lucky if they got an apple for Christmas. Now we have hundreds of presents under the tree at Christmas. A book like the Bible in the 1700's and 1800's was priceless. To be able to read God's word. You know that's why Sunday School began. Robert Raikes started Sunday School in 1780 to teach Bible reading and basic life skills. In the 1790's He saw the homeless children, living in the gutters of Europe and he said, we've got to teach these kids to read, and I'm going to use the Bible to do this. So, it became known as Sunday School because they met on Sunday and taught these children to read from the Bible. Therefore, it was their School. That's right, no Sunday School for kids before 1780's. Think about this, for the first five thousand seven hundred and eighty years of history there was no such thing as Sunday School. It's only been around for 220 years. Our country is in its infancy and yet it's older than Sunday School. You wonder "how did our children ever come to faith in Jesus without Sunday school?" Answer: the family led them to faith in Christ. See, the family is the first school...it's the first school campus. It's where you learn your first words...and it was where children were taught the Bible by their own parents. Every parent was a Sunday School teacher and their children were their disciples. According to Jesus if you want to be His disciple you have to hate your Father and Mother and Brothers and Sisters and yes, even your own life. That's how much it costs to be a disciple of Christ. Now, Luke is not telling us to hate your father, mother, etc., in the sense of treating them badly at all. What he's saying is that nothing--and I mean you've got to decide that nothing--can come between you and the Master...nothing can take precedence over your study of the word of God. Your education comes first and it takes place only as you sit at the feet of the Master. Hearing and learning his thoughts so you can finish the race, so you can train your children to be Christian soldiers rather than Christian pacifists. Passive weak Christians, there's millions of them out there; they don't stand up for anything. They're weak, cultural Christian pacifists. They wouldn't know Jesus if He

bonked them on the head! Now, before you say, I'm not going to be that kind of Christian anymore, Jesus says, I want you to count the cost because I want you to be able to finish the race and complete the task. It's a task. It doesn't come easy. It's work. It requires sacrifice. It requires putting yourself and your loved one's aside and putting Him and His word first day after day after day. If you do, if you count the cost and you decide to be a disciple of Christ, I can guarantee you the dividends are beyond comprehension. You will grow tremendously and your marriage and family life will grow too. I can guarantee it!

So, if the level of your Christian walk is beyond babyhood, beyond the simple command of fellowship then I encourage you to move on toward abiding. To abide in Him we first have to hear and learn the word. We've got to know God in a deeper way. We want to press on to know him and abide in. Jesus taught his disciples for 3 ½ years before he even introduced the concept of abiding in John 15, the vine and the branches.

Hodges says, "A Christ-like walk, the highest attainment open to a disciple, is *not* reached the moment one is born again. It requires time for instruction so that one's heart is prepared to act on what he has learned. This heightened experience is marked by obedience to the Lord's commandments (verses 3-4), by the experience of knowing Him (verses 3-4), and by the experience of God's perfected love (verse 5). Such a disciple abides in Him. That is, he lives, or dwells, in his Lord, just as a branch lives, or dwells, in a vine. So long as this connection is maintained, the experience of "abiding" in Christ continues."ⁱ But how did Christ live? What makes us Christ-like? The following verses deal with this issue.

THE OLD COMMANDMENT (1 John 2:7)

⁷ VAgaphtoi,(ouvk evntolh.n kainh.n gra,fw u`mi/n avllV evntolh.n palaia.n h]n ei;cete avpV avrch/j\ h` evntolh. h` palaia, evstin o` lo,goj o]n hvkou,sate

7 Beloved (agapetos), I do not write to you a new (kainos) commandment but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word that you heard.

Beloved... John begins with the Greek word *agapetos*, a word referring to a fellow believer. Since John has been talking about the abiding Christ-like believer he is not giving them some new commandment. Instead, he is telling them ***an old commandment that his readers have had from the beginning***. But when is John referring to with the word ***beginning***? Most people think the phrase ***from the beginning*** is a technical term always referring to *creation* but that is far from true. That is true of many references but the context determines

what beginning is in view. The only time *from the beginning* is used of *creation* in 1 John is 1 John 3:8 where it says “*the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.*” However, *from the beginning* used here in 2:7 does not refer to creation. Nor does it refer exactly to the same beginning spoken of in 1 John 1:1. In 1 John 1:1 *from the beginning* refers to the *beginning of Christ’s ministry* as in Mark 1:1. However, in 2:7, 2:24, and 3:11 John is not referring to the beginning of Christ’s ministry or to the beginning of creation but to the *beginning of the Christian experience of his readers*. Therefore, the old commandment that John is talking about is the same in content as the original commandment they received when they first believed in Christ. Nothing is new about it in this sense; there is no new content. But what commandment is it that these believers have had *from the beginning*, from when they first believed in Christ? The *old commandment* is referring to a commandment Jesus gave His apostles in John 13:34. Turn to **John 13:34** “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*” When Jesus gave the commandment, it was a new (*kainos* = new in quality vs. *neos* = new in time) commandment to the apostles. It was given in the OT in Leviticus 19:28 but here it is given with a freshness, a new quality because it was demonstrated by Christ Himself. This commandment should be one of the primary basic teachings given to all new believers in Christ. And John is saying that these believers had this commandment from the beginning of their Christian experience. It was therefore an *old commandment* since they had had it for so long. So, the *old commandment* is reciprocal love between believers that follows the model of how Jesus loved His apostles.

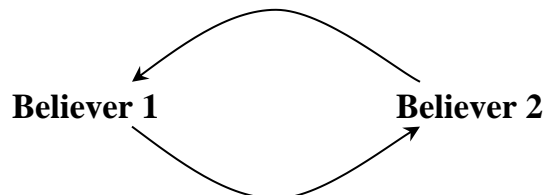


Diagram of Reciprocal Love: Believer 1 loves Believer 2 and Believer 2 returns that love to Believer 1. This is what Christ called us to do. His love for His apostles is the model.

We are to love one another as Christ loved His apostles. This is walking as He walked. Now, why is John emphasizing that he is not writing a *new commandment* to them? Why does he have to emphasize that the commandment is not new? Probably because of the Revisionists; the false teachers who departed from the apostles in Jerusalem. Remember the Revisionists that we looked at in the early weeks of our study of 1 John. Don’t forget that 1 John is written to a group of Christians that need to be warned against a group of false teachers. John makes this clear in 1 John 2:18-19. “*Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.*” ¹⁹ *They went out from us, but they were not*

really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.” These Revisionists left the apostles and went out spreading false teaching. In this case they were probably trying to change the *content* or *meaning* of the **old commandment**. John says, “don’t buy it, they are false teachers.” This is not only an ancient problem but also a modern problem. Apostasy results from failure to know Bible doctrine and a failure to be able to detect false teaching. Dr. Campbell, graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1953 wrote his dissertation on “apostasy”. Did you know that he concluded that of every subject in the NT, “apostasy is the second most mentioned? Did you hear that? Apostasy from the truth is the second most mentioned topic in the NT. You know, the church really doesn’t pay close attention to false teaching. That’s one reason I spent 4 weeks on the extent of the atonement. Because it is crucial, absolutely crucial that you know the false views, the deceptions; that you can spot it. It’s not always easy and I’m going to show you why deceptions are not easy to spot. Satan is the master of deception. Deceptions are never blatantly obvious errors; they wouldn’t be deceptions if they were. Instead, deceptions always mix truth with error (e.g., Gen. 3:1-7). Christians are so undiscerning today. They quite frankly don’t have a clue what is going on in the culture, the seminaries (what I like to call cemeteries), or in the churches. Our pastors come from these seminaries and they bring all sorts of false teachings into churches. They want to bring the culture into the churches to try to reach more people for Jesus. But how much more often are they only confirming what the unbelievers already believed because the churches become indistinguishable from the culture. These pastors are devoted to human organizations and secularism rather than God’s word. This is resulting in rapid apostasy in America. In fact, it’s already taken place. America is gone spiritually. We have become a spiritually dead cemetery. Now, why is that? How did we get deceived? There are two major ways deception takes place.

First, people add new ideas to the old established teachings. They continue to teach the old teachings but they just add new ideas. This ultimately changes the original message. Human nature wants to be unique; we want to get recognition for some new idea. Historically it has been very difficult for students to not go beyond their teachers. Historically the students want to push what their teachers taught just a little further. This is not always bad but when it goes beyond Scripture it is bad. The result is the adding of new ideas to old teachings. Perhaps the Revisionists were adding something to the old commandment and John is countering that saying “there is nothing more”. If the Revisionists departed from Jerusalem then they could make the strong claim of being with the apostles themselves and that this additional teaching came from the apostles. John is saying directly to his readers that this is not true. Nothing has been added to the old

commandment. The commandment stands as you originally heard it when you first believed in Christ.

A *second* way deception takes place is through people who give new meanings to words. A few Christian groups (primarily seminaries) are committed to very precise doctrinal statements. Those who seek to re-interpret these precise doctrinal statements by giving the words new meanings are what we call “Progressives”. They do this to deceive people into thinking they are the same good old boys but at the same time so they can promote their “new theology”. This is very satanic. This is Postmodernism being applied to language; postmodernism says that language is simply a social construct and can be manipulated to promote the individual’s agenda. This is pure deception. Words have specific meanings in given contexts. You cannot simply read your meaning into another author’s words. Many unbelievers and most believers today are deceived into this type of thinking. When you hear someone saying, “oh, the Bible has many interpretations” or “we can’t really know what the Bible means” you’re hearing this postmodern deception. Last December, at the 2003 Pre-Trib Conference in Dallas, TX, Dr. Earl Radmacher delivered a paper entitled “The Nature and Result of Literal Interpretation”. I want to read you a short excerpt from his paper about language:

Thirty plus years ago I accepted a series of random classes to teach at several colleges in the greater San Jose area. In each situation I always started with the subject matter of the course at hand and took the thinking back to biblical principles. After the classes there were always several students who would want to discuss their interests further. One such student, after expressing his appreciation for the lecture, asked if he could get an appointment with me to rap. I was glad for the opportunity and agreed upon a time and place. We were both on time and immediately got into a heavy discussion which necessitated bringing quotations from other authorities to our aid.

When I called forth help from the Apostle Paul, however, he objected saying, "Well, there are many different interpretations of that." Now even though I had only been teaching hermeneutics for a few years then, it still brought up my ire when someone departed from common sense, to use such lame and irresponsible argumentation. Thus, I responded, "Wait just a minute. You asked me to get together to wrap and I don't see any presents to wrap or any wrapping paper or ribbon with which to wrap them. Now I don't know how we are going to wrap without presents or wrapping paper.

He looked at me like I had lost my mind saying, "Well, that's not what I meant," to which I responded, "But there are many different meanings to what you said. Now let's wrap!" Totally frustrated, he said, "We can't even continue this discussion." "You are exactly right," I responded. "We cannot continue until I am willing to understand what you meant by what you said. There are not many meanings to what you said. Only one! And if I refuse to find out your meaning for what you said, intelligent communication comes to a halt. We cannot go on further until I am willing to understand the single sense you have in mind by what you have said. And I am simply insisting that you allow the Apostle Paul the same privilege that you are expecting. There are not many different interpretations. There may be forty suggested interpretations for that verse but I guarantee you that thirty-nine of them are wrong and maybe all forty. There is one, and only one, interpretation of any passage of scripture."

And, dear friends, that is the bottom line in understanding any communication. And there is no more abused principle in the history of interpretation of the Word of God than the principle of the single sense.ⁱⁱ

Dr. Radmacher just hit the nail on the head! There is only one interpretation of any given passage in Scripture or any other document for that matter (e.g., the US Constitution) and people abuse this principle all the time simply to promote their agenda. Until you are willing to understand what is meant by the original author you will never communicate. You will constantly be putting your own twist on the document or the Bible and you will never come to know God. John is warning his readers here that the Revisionists may be trying to give new meanings to the words contained in the **old commandment** to love one another, but that they should ignore them because the **old commandment** has the same content as it did before. Nothing has changed. They did not need the **old commandment** to be re-interpreted. Therefore, to walk as Jesus walked is to walk in love toward fellow believers. This is true yesterday, today, and forever

THE OLD COMMANDMENT IS NEW IN ONE SENSE (1 John 2:8)

⁸ **pa,lin evntolh.n kainh.n gra,fw u`mi/n(o[evstin avlhqe.j evn aurtw/| kai. evn u`mi/n(o[ti h` skoti,a para,getai kai. to. fw/j to. avlhqino.n h;dh fai,nei**

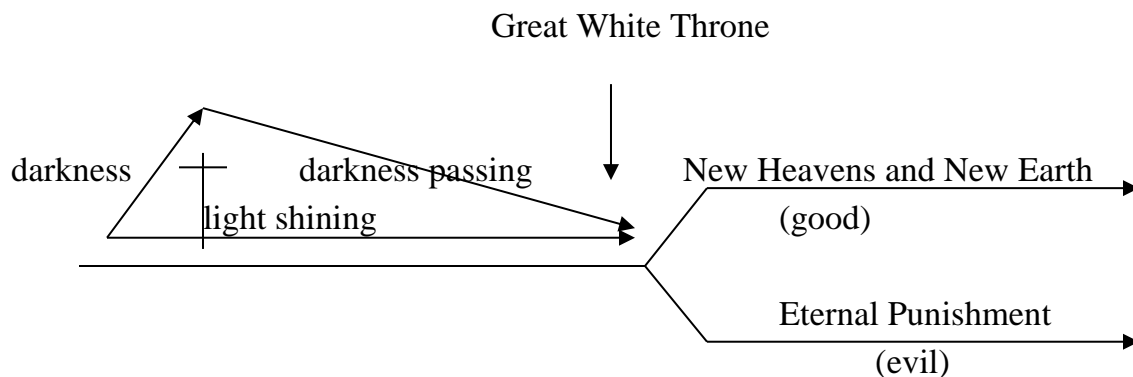
8 On the other hand a new (kainos) commandment I write to you, that the truth (alethes) is in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing by and the genuine light already shines.

Ok, don't get lost with what John is saying here. He told us in verse 7 that the **old commandment** hasn't changed in content...that remains the same. However, John now says that from another perspective the **old commandment** to love one another is a **new commandment**. The word for **new** is *kainos*. The Greek language has two words for **new**; *neos* and *kainos*. *neos* means "new in time", whereas *kainos* means "new in freshness". John chose to use *kainos* rather than *neos*. This commandment is not new in time, nor was it new in content. Instead, when the **old commandment** is applied by believers it is a fresh/new demonstration of the **old commandment**. The **commandment** was **old** in time going all the way back to Leviticus 19:28, then Jesus gave it again in John 13:34, saying it was a **new commandment** (again, *kainos*), it was being given in a fresh/new way by Jesus Himself because He demonstrated how to love one another. Jesus was the model of loving one another. They didn't have that in the OT. John is saying here that the **old commandment** is also being demonstrated in a fresh way when believers love one another. It is a **thing which is true in Him and in you**. Because His seed abides in us it is a truth that is fresh every day in you as it was true in Christ when He lives through you.

Why is this so important to John? John wants these believers to reflect the **old commandment** of loving one another by making the commandment fresh every day in their lives. If they bought into the false teaching of the Revisionists, they would either add something to the **old commandment** or re-interpret the **old commandment** so that the content would be changed and they would no longer be "loving one another" as Jesus commanded and demonstrated. This would be terrible because then the truth would not be manifested in believers' lives in a fresh and new way each day. What John is connecting ever so carefully is doctrine with application. John never separates the two. Doctrine is not the theory and application the practical. Instead, doctrine determines practice. What you believe determines how you will live. In other words, you've got to have the proper understanding of the commandments if you are to follow the commandments.

Why is the truth **in Him and in you**? John says, **because the darkness is passing by and the genuine light already shines**. What **darkness is passing by**? The darkness refers to the moral state of the world. The world is in **darkness**. The prince of this darkness, Satan, has been judged already (John 16:8-11). Since the prince of darkness has been judged then all who are in the darkness until now will also be judged (Acts 17:31). If you are here today and you have not acknowledged your sin and realized that Christ died for you and that all you have to do is believe in the person of Jesus Christ then you remain in a state of moral and spiritual darkness. The call today is for you to believe this good news and to cross over from darkness to light. What does it mean that the **darkness is passing by**? The word for

passing by is *parago*. It is used down in verse 17 of this same chapter of the world passing away (also see Matt. 9:9, 27; 20:30; Mk. 1:16; 2:14; 15:21; Jn. 9:1; 1 Co. 7:31; 1 Jn. 2:8, 17). If the darkness refers to moral and spiritual darkness of the world then it can be said that it is slowly but surely passing away. The moral darkness of the world is temporary, not permanent. And John adds that the *true/genuine light already shines*. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). Those individuals who believe in Christ receive a new regenerate nature at the moment they believe. John says it this way, *His seed abides in you* (1 John 3:6, 9). The regenerate nature of the believer partakes of the impeccability of its source which is the Lord Jesus Christ. The regenerate nature therefore cannot sin. When we live according to our regenerate nature the light of the future New Heavens and New Earth is shining forth through us. The moral darkness of the world is gradually passing away but when believers love one another as Christ demonstrated the light of God is shining forth through us. The true light came in the person of Jesus Christ who revealed the character of God and His love for the world and His own. When Christians keep the commandment of loving one another, following the model of the Savior's love, the light of the New Heavens and New Earth, which light finds its source in Jesus Christ Himself shines through us. The New Heavens and New Earth have already dawned in a sense in the person of Jesus Christ and in believers who love one another during the present age of moral and spiritual darkness.



ⁱ Hodges, Zane, *The Epistles of John* (Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 83.

ⁱⁱ Radmacher, Earl, *The Nature and Result of Literal Interpretation* (Paper delivered at Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Society, 2003) 1.

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