

## The New Commandment to Love (1 John 2:7-17)

**A** <sup>7</sup> Beloved, **I am not writing** a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. <sup>8</sup> On the other hand, **I am writing** a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

**B** <sup>9</sup> The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. <sup>10</sup> The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

**A'** <sup>12</sup> **I am writing** to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. <sup>13</sup> **I am writing** to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. **I am writing** to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. **I have written** to you, children, because you know the Father. <sup>14</sup> **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.

**B'** <sup>15</sup> Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Analysis of the Text: It appears that verses 7-17 form of an alternating parallelism (A, B, A', B'). In verses 7-8 [A], John speaks of writing to the recipients of his tract. In verses 12-14 [A'], John categorizes those to whom he is writing and has written. In verses 9-11 [B], John encourages love of brothers and sisters. In verses 15-17 [B'] John discourages love of the world.

In verses 7-8, the old commandment and the new commandment are the same commandment: love God and love your neighbor (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). As Jesus says, "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:40). In other words, this precept encapsulates the whole of the moral Law summarized in the Ten Commandments. As WSC 41 teaches, "The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments." The commandment is new because it is now displayed in Christ in this new era. Verses 9-11 contrast light and darkness, love and hatred. The Ten Commandments show how to express love (1 John 5:3). There is a warning here. Verses 12-14 outline the people to whom John directs his tract. They are believers and John assures them that this is the case. Verses 15-17 offer another warning against loving the world. Lust is opposed to love, as is hatred. The lustful, dark world is passing away.

Main Point of Text:

1. What is the text about? Answer: John encourages believers in Asia Minor to live by God's commandment.

2. What does the text tell us about John encouraging believers in Asia Minor to live by God's commandment?

Answer: He urges them to walk in the eternal light of love and to avoid being stumbled by the worldly darkness of hatred, lust, and pride.

3. Main Point of the Text: Join 1 and 2 (Some rewording necessary.)

John encourages believers in Asia Minor to live by God's commandment by walking in the eternal light of love and not stumbling in the worldly darkness of hatred, lust, and pride.

Main Lesson of the Text:

As believers, live by God's commandment; walk in the eternal light of love and avoid stumbling in the worldly darkness of hatred, lust, and pride.

Food for Thought: How does this application fit with John's overall purpose as he relates it in 1 John 5:13? "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."