

“An Old New Commandment”

1 John 2:7

INTRO:

When we come to this section of **First John**, it is vital that we not forget where we have been. Some of what we have covered is echoed in this paragraph. Remember in **ch. 1 (1)** we learned that we who are saved can really have fellowship with the living God and God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have this fellowship by walking in the light as He is in the light. We learned this light is God’s holiness (**vs. 5**). We can walk in practical holiness with God by continually confessing our sins and having them cleansed away by the Lord Jesus Himself.

(2)We also learned John told us all this to encourage us to not sin reminding us of the great price that Christ paid for our forgiveness. **(3)**Then he told us, we can know that we know because of our desire to keep His commandments. In our text today, John cites one of those commandments we must obey. (**1 John 2:7–11**)

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

There are two parts to our study.

I. The First Commandment that We Must Obey (v. 7-8)

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A. Without taking a breath, John moves from our keeping our Lord Christ’s commandments to one specific commandment. It is first an old commandment. (**vs. 7**)

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.”

We are not told what this command is; we are simply told that it is an old commandment that we have heard from the beginning.

1. This begs a couple questions. What is this **“beginning”** John is describing? We do read of a beginning in **1 John 1:1**. If the beginning there is the beginning of all things, is John saying that this command dates from the beginning of God’s creating all things? Could it mean the beginning of the Lord’s earth walk? I am not sure.

2. Since, he is going to talk about loving our brothers and sisters in the Lord in **vs. 10**, this may refer to the discussion in **Matthew 22:36-39**;

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

This is the old commandment to love God and to love one another in the LORD.

B. It is an old commandment and it is at the same time a new commandment.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34).

Others may turn us to other verses in John’s Gospel that say the same thing, but I particularly like this one because it tells us how we must love each other. We must do it as Christ loved us. John will build on this connection between our love for our brothers and sisters in the Lord and our love for the Lord Jesus Himself later in this epistle.

C. So, if we are to have assurance that we know that we know Him, we have to start with this command to love one another.

II. The Consequence of Obedience (v.9-11)

A. John turns to underlining the consequences of our obedience. (**vs. 9-11**)

“He, who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes”

B. Please note that John did not say, ***“A new emotion we should entertain.”*** Too often we preach it this way and worse we practice it this way. John wrote, we know that we know because we keep His commandment. The first commandment is old and new. This demand that we love is a commandment. That tells us right away that we are dealing with something more than an emotion. He speaks of obedience and not just feelings. Even the passage we cite for the old commandment, the question asked was, ***“What is the Great Commandment?”*** The Great Commandment is to love God and then to love one another. My point is a decision to love God and my brothers and sisters in Christ comes first. Emotion follows on its heels.

C. So, what happens if we do or do not obey this commandment? As John loves to do, he gives us first the negative example. Then he writes the positive example and finally closes his thought with the negative again.

1. First the negative,

“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now” (vs. 9).

The one who professes that he is living in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father and does not love his brother is still in darkness. The light and darkness was defined for us in **chapter one**. The light that is shining has to do with the revelation of the holy character of God the Father and God the Son. He who walks in the light walks in fellowship with God. He who walks in darkness lies and does not do the truth. He does not live in reality spiritually. An evidence that this is the case is our disobedience in loving out brothers and sisters in the Lord, we are in darkness. We have no real fellowship, no complete joy, and no real relationship with God Himself.

2. The positive example, ***“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” (verse 10).*** The person who obeys the command to love remains in the light. This is not a passing happening. The decision to love our brothers and sisters as God loved us, is blessed by God and the love grows so that we are continually in fellowship with God His Son and one another, Because we can see with our spiritual sight we will not fall over things in our lives.

3. The negative described one more time.

“But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” (vs. 11).

The person who hates his brothers and sisters in the Lord is in darkness. He is lost or at least uncertain of his spiritual state and prone to stumble and stagger spiritually because he is spiritually blind and cannot see reality.

How are we doing in view of this first commandment? We will learn that the key to all of this is our loving Christ and experiencing His love. This is so vitally important that John will return to this truth at least twice more in this little letter. Remember John tells us, ***“We love because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19***

It is easy to wax eloquent about Christ’s love for us. How about our love for Him expressed in our love for one another?