

An "Old, Yet New" Commandment

1 John 2:7-11 HCSB Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command, but an old command that you have had from the beginning. The old command is the message you have heard. **8** Yet I am writing you a new command, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. **9** The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother is in the darkness until now. **10** The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. **11** But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Introduction

1. In our study of 1st John, we have seen thus far...
 - a. That John's aim is that we may have fellowship with the Father and the Son, so our joy may be full - 1 John 1:1-4
 - b. That fellowship with the Father is contingent upon:
 - 1) Walking in the light - 1 John 1:5-7
 - 2) Confessing our sins - 1 John 1:8-10
 - 3) Making use of our "advocate" and "propitiation", Jesus Christ the Righteous - 1 John 2:1-2
 - c. And that fellowship with the Son (Jesus) depends upon our:
 - 1) Keeping His commandments - 1 John 2:3-5a
 - 2) Walking as He walked - 1 John 2:5b-6
 - Otherwise, it is not true that we "abide in Him", nor truly "know Him"
2. Having stressed the importance of keeping the commandments of Jesus if we are to have fellowship with Him and the Father...
 - a. John proceeds to discuss one commandment in particular - 1 John 2:7-11
 - b. He discusses what can be called "An Old, Yet New Commandment"

I. The commandment itself

A. It is an old commandment (8)

1. He does not write about something totally new to them
2. But something they had heard "from the beginning" (i.e., from the beginning of the gospel)

B. It is a new commandment (9)

1. That is, it is ever fresh; though old in time, it is never stale
2. It is a commandment that is ever true in Jesus, and it is true in His disciples
3. It is both true and new because...
 - a. "the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining"
 - b. With the coming of the Messiah (Jesus), light has begun to penetrate the darkness –
 - **Isaiah 9:2 HCSB** The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of darkness, a light has dawned.
 - **Matthew 4:13-17 HCSB** He left Nazareth behind and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. **14** This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: **15 Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the sea road, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles! 16 The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the shadowland of death, light has dawned. 17** From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!"

- **John 1:4-9 HCSB** Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. **5** That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it. **6** There was a man named John who was sent from God. **7** He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. **9** The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
- **John 8:12 HCSB** Then Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

C. It is the command to love one another

1. How do we know this?
 - a. It is implied by verses 9-11
 - b. It is stated clearly in
 - **1 John 3:11 HCSB** For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another,
 - **1 John 4:21 HCSB** And we have this command from Him: the one who loves God must also love his brother.
 - c. This command was "from the beginning" (of the gospel)
 - **John 13:34 HCSB** "I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another.
 - **John 15:12,17 HCSB** This is My command: love one another as I have loved you. **17** This is what I command you: love one another.
2. What does it mean to "love one another"?
 - a. It may be helpful to first review the different Greek words for "love"
 - 1) "storge" - describes love of family
 - 2) "eros" - carnal, sexual love
 - 3) "phileo" - love for dear friends
 - 4) "agape" - active goodwill toward others; in other words, not only desiring what is best, healthiest for the person but actually working towards that end.
 - b. It is "agape" love that we are commanded to have in this text
 - 1) It is also the same kind of love commanded in John 13:34-35
 - 2) It is that concern to meet the needs of others that is best exemplified in the life and death of Jesus.
 - **1 John 3:16-17 HCSB** This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers. **17** If anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother in need but shuts off his compassion from him-- how can God's love reside in him?
 - c. Therefore, to "love one another" is to consider the needs of one another, and to actively work toward meeting those needs (i.e., follow Jesus' example!)

Having identified what commandment is being discussed; consider what John says about...

II. The effect of not keeping this commandment

A. One is in darkness (9)

1. When a person claims to walk in the light, but hates his brother, he is still in darkness!
2. Indeed, he has always been in darkness!
 - a. Cf. "is in darkness until now"
 - b. Despite what they may claim, they have not yet passed from darkness to light!
 - c. Or as expressed later, they have not yet passed from death to life!

- **1 John 3:14 HCSB** We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.

B. One does not know where he is going (11)

1. He may "think" he has fellowship with God - that he is saved, but he is blind!
2. He fails to realize the absurdity of his claim to know and love God
- **1 John 4:20 HCSB** If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
3. Blinded by darkness (hate), he cannot see that he is on the road to hell!

Does this not illustrate the importance of keeping this "old, yet new" commandment? Its importance is further illustrated as we consider...

III. The effect of keeping this commandment

A. One abides in the light (10a)

1. Meaning that they are in full fellowship with the Father! –
- 1 John 1:7a HCSB** But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
2. They have full fellowship with other faithful believers!
- **1 John 1:7b HCSB** But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
3. And they enjoy the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus! -
- **1 John 1:7c HCSB** But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- So unless we love one another, fellowship and forgiveness is not possible!

B. There is no cause for stumbling (10b)

1. Abiding in the light, he can see clearly as he walks
2. Fellowship with God makes it possible to "know where he is going" (unlike the one who hates his brother and is in darkness)
3. This does not imply sinlessness
 - a. **1 John 1:8, 10 HCSB** If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 10 If we say, "We have not sinned," we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
 - b. But as one walks in the light (in fellowship with God), he knows what to do when he sins, and in what direction he should be headed
 - **1 John 1:9 HCSB** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Conclusion

1. This "old, yet new" commandment is very important:
 - a. If we are not keeping it, we are still in darkness!
 - b. If we are in darkness...
 - 1) We are not walking in the light!
 - 2) We are not having fellowship with God, and the blood of Jesus does not cleanse us from our sins!
 - 3) We cannot have that "fullness of joy" of which John wrote in 1 John 1:4

2. It is only appropriate, then, to close this lesson with the admonition of John found later in his epistle...

- **1 John 4:7-8 HCSB** Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

3. For those not yet Christians, I encourage you to seriously consider the next two verses:

- **1 John 4:9-10 HCSB** God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Jesus is not only the "propitiation" for our sins, but is available for the whole world.

- **1 John 2:2 HCSB** He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.

Have you appropriated this wonderful offer from God?