

## 1 John 2:7-11

### Love One Another

One of the reasons why some people mock and reject Christianity is that far too many, who call themselves Christians, are hypocrites. They say one thing about themselves as believers, but then act in ways that are contrary to the faith. We tend to think that this is a modern trend. But hypocrisy has plagued Christianity since the first century.

As I mentioned earlier in our study of 1 John there were “so called” Christians in the first century known as Gnostics. They twisted Scriptures and ignored others and many lived immoral and unloving lives. The work of Satan is to always twist and distort the truth, just as he did in Genesis 3.<sup>1</sup> It was the ministry of the apostle John to confront the deceivers and to restore the believers back to sound doctrine. Sound, biblical doctrine is crucial for genuine Christian living.<sup>2</sup> This is because what we believe determines how we think and live.

Last Sunday, as we ended 1 John, chapter 1, we learned that you can tell a real Christian from a fake. A genuine believer, says John, keeps and delights in keeping the Word of God. The believer who is the real deal is not perfect, but her or she is focused on pleasing God. Now, after stating that general fact, God's Word brings us to a very important, specific doctrine. Christians are to love one another. Let's read 1 John 2:7-11 and then we'll get into the details.

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. <sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup> He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 3:1-4; 1 Timothy 4:1

<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:42-47

is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.  
(1 John 2:7-11)

Here is a doctrine or a teaching that is vital to Christianity. We learned earlier that the heart of Christianity is having fellowship with God and Christ and other believers. When we fail to love one another we break that fellowship and we are robbed of many blessings. Let's read verses 7 and 8 again.

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. <sup>8</sup> 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.  
(1 John 2:7, 8)

People often wonder what John means when he wrote that the commandment to love is both old and new. First, the commandment to love is old, because it is found in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses taught saying,

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!  
<sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.  
(Deuteronomy 6:4, 5)

This love for God should then spread to all of God's people. Therefore, Leviticus 19:18 declares, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus Christ confirmed the teaching of Moses and said, "There is no other commandment greater than these."<sup>3</sup> But in the New Testament that old commandment becomes new, because Jesus Christ presented a new standard for how we are to love one another. He said,

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have for one another.  
(John 13:34, 35)

Our love for one another is to be a genuine, caring, serving and self-sacrificing kind of love. It is the love that God, our Father has, that Jesus Christ

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<sup>3</sup> Mark 12:31

demonstrated and that is in our hearts through the gift of the holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> When we are born again, we are spiritually born into a new family, where love is the motivation for all that we do. John wrote that this love of God was seen in Jesus Christ and it can be and should be seen in us too.

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.  
(1 John 2:8)

When John wrote that the new commandment to love is “true in Him,” that is in Christ “and in you,” he means that the love of God we see in Christ was genuine; he loved like he was supposed to love—he carried it out. Jesus Christ thus fulfilled the law of God. But wait, there’s more, said John, this love is also real and true and genuine in you! Having received new life from God, now that you are a partaker of the divine nature,<sup>5</sup> you can love like Christ loves. We can truly love one another in the way that God originally intended for people to love.

The Beatles sang, “All you need is love.” And the world says, “Let’s all love one another and get along.” But the world can’t love the way God intends, because you first must have true fellowship with God. His life and love must be in you. And it is through the gift of the Spirit.

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit [which] was given to us.  
(Romans 5:5)

God’s love for us has been poured out into our hearts to the point that it overflows our hearts to be shared with others. This love is evidence that we belong to Him. We must understand that Jesus Christ has brought into this world a new order of life that changes everything.

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.  
(1 John 2:8)

What is this new order of life that Christ brought into the world? Here’s the answer: “the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.”

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<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 31:29-34; Ezekiel 36:24-26; Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22

<sup>5</sup> 2 Peter 1:4

How is the darkness passing away? First, it is passing away in you. 2 Corinthians 5:17 reveals that,

if anyone *is* in Christ, *he* is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

And Ephesians 5:8 declares,

For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

You've heard that little song, "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine." So let it shine, baby! Colossians 1:13 tells us that God

has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love

This is wonderful! But there are still people held by the power of darkness. Hardly anyone in the world knows or believes this. Indeed many Christians seem squeamish to say it. They think, "Oh, my friends and co-workers and neighbors are nice. They are not in darkness." Well, my brothers and sisters, either God's Word is right or you are right. The Bible says if people are not in Christ then they are in spiritual darkness. And it is our job to shine the light of truth so that people can be set free, like we were set free. Peter wrote,

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once were not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.  
(1 Peter 2:9, 10)

How do we proclaim the praises of God who called us out of darkness? We speak the truth in love and we love people in practical ways. And especially we love one another. Remember what Jesus Christ said: he said that people will know that we are his disciples by our love for one another. Let's return to 1 John.

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.  
(1 John 2:9)

The original Greek text conveys the idea of habitually hating another. The one who is caught in darkness is someone whose life-style is one of loathing, contempt, scorn, disdain and hate.

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.  
(1 John 2:10)

There is no beating around the bush. We proclaim and portray exactly who and what we are by our thinking and behavior. We are either in darkness or in the light. I can do no better than to show you what it means to be in darkness than to show you Scripture.

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.  
(Titus:3:3)

To be in darkness is to be foolish. Scripture says, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God."<sup>6</sup> To be in darkness is to be disobedient to God. It is to be deceived, serving various lusts. To be in the dark is to be full of envy and hate. Now, you may say, "Well, that's not really true of the world. I know people who are not followers of Christ and they are not foolish or deceived or disobedient and hateful." Again, I say, either you are right or God's Word is right.

The world hides itself; there is a superficial charm. But stop and look at what people do. Listen to what they say. There is selfishness and greed and jealousy and envy and malice and hate.

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.  
(1 John 2:10)

The person who walks in darkness is an occasion of stumbling for his or her self and for others. They are always finding fault in others; finding problems and troubles. They feel insulted when there really are no insults. Something is always upsetting them. If you see this in your life ask God for forgiveness. And then begin to walk in the light and in love.

As Christians there should be a divine purpose ruling over our lives. How we think and what we do should not be dictated by troubles or circumstances

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 14:1

or other people. Our lives should be governed by God's Word and love. Then we won't stumble or cause other people to stumble.

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> 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.  
(1 John 2:10, 11)

How terrible to walk in darkness, not knowing where you are going in life, because darkness has blinded your eyes! As followers of Christ we should love one another deeply and in practical ways. And we should look out into the world and take notice of those who do not yet have fellowship with God. These are people just like we were before our eyes were opened. We should have compassion and love people just as God loved us. And here is how we are to love.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part. <sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as

a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. <sup>13</sup> And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

You and I were saved and made new in Christ to have fellowship with God and to love others just as God in Christ loves us. Let's be about our Father's business.