



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## 1 JOHN 2:7-11- ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? TEST TWO: LOVE! (PART 1)

COLORADO

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*God took the initiative to open and transform our hearts, from darkness to light. It is He Who began a good work in our heart and it is God Who will continue to perfect and bring that work to a completion one day at a time. (Philippians 1:6) Because of God's work in our lives, only the one who is a true believer, can have a love for God and then reciprocate that love. We are able to truly love God and love others because of His work in us. And the one who truly loves God will keep His Word. Therefore, personal holiness and obedience is not the basis for our salvation, it certainly is the clearest assurance of our salvation. It reveals the transforming, perfecting, sanctifying work of God in every true believer to conform us to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:28-29) The cross of Christ is powerful to save and sanctify.<sup>1</sup>*

### I. ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? TEST TWO: LOVE! (PART ONE)

#### 1 JOHN 2:7-8

*(7) "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. (8) 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." 1 John 2:7-8*

In our preceding verses (1 John 2:3-6), John has admonished believers to obedience. Obedience is the first test that reveals a true and genuine faith. Now in these next set of verses (1 John 2:7-11), John says that alongside obedience, a second mark of true faith is a love for God's people. Walking in the light revealed by Christ will not only do what is right in obedience to God and refraining from sin, but keeping the greatest commandment to love as Jesus expressed in John 13:34-35.<sup>2</sup>

By love, Christians know that they actually are Christians. The believer has truly been made alive by Christ when he or she finds themselves loving others for whom Christ died. This is the test of love. Does the one who professes to love God, love others as well. Although love is mentioned only once by name in this set of verses, it is clear that's what John refers to as the "new commandment" (1 John 2:7-8) of John 13. John's thinking is this- if a person knows God, he will obey God's commands, and if he keeps God's commandments, he will love God and God's people as Christ taught.<sup>3</sup>

#### A. "AN OLD COMMANDMENT"- 1 JOHN 2:7

John is known as the Apostle of love. His love for fellow believers is often expressed by his affectionate term, "Beloved". John writes, motivated by a deep and persistent love for his

readers, desiring their true welfare. And John introduces this test of love revealing genuine faith beginning with "Beloved" which expresses his love for them as he calls them to love.

First, John explains, "I am not writing something new" (1 John 2:7). John says that the commandment to love was not a new commandment. This was actually an old commandment. Deuteronomy 6:5, says we are commanded to love God. And in Leviticus 19:18 we are commanded to love one another. These concepts were well known to all Jews. God established the law of love unmistakably. So John writes to make clear that love is not a new commandment, it is the same as the old commandment written in the Old Testament. Jesus Himself said that the greatest commandment was recorded in Deuteronomy 6:5 to love God and the second greatest was Leviticus 19:18 to love man.

Romans 13:8-10 quotes from Leviticus 19:18, revealing an inseparable link between obedience and loving God and one another. This is the kind of love that fulfills the law. It is this kind of sacrificial love demonstrated by Jesus Christ that brings a new depth and quality to loving one another. In Him we see authentic brotherly love lived. It is not a new love, but an old commandment to love.

In fact, John says, this old commandment to love "you have had from the beginning". John says you have been taught this from the start when you came to know Christ. John assures his readers this is not a new commandment he brings them, but one they have known and been taught since becoming a Christian. It is the "old commandment which you have heard." This is old in terms of long in duration, and not a recent idea.

Just as obedience was a test to the reality of their conversion, so is love, the new and old commandment. Old as given by Moses from God and new as exemplified by Christ when He walked this earth.

#### B. "A NEW COMMANDMENT"- 1 JOHN 2:8

"On the other hand", John writes, just to keep us on our toes. "I am writing a new commandment to you". (1 John 2:8) He appears to contradict his previous statement from verse 7. But what does the word "new" refer to?

"new" Greek "*kainos*" defines something that is fresh in essence and quality while not necessarily chronologically new.

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, [SSB 1525 SHERMAN, RM #603- ACROSS COLFAX FROM CAPITOL](#)

# Colorado

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The newness of this commandment isn't found in words, but rather in the illustration of the command to love. In John 13:34, Christ Himself talks of a new commandment to love one another, which was also the old commandment as well. Surely, John was thinking back to when he heard Christ teach this truth of love and live it before his very eyes. In John 13:34-35, Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." So John calls them to remember what they have known from the beginning of their faith.

Then John writes, "which is true in Him", referring to Jesus Christ. The commandment's newness was not found in new words written down, but rather in a Person and the illustration of His life lived in love. Perfect love was so plainly revealed in the incarnate Christ. The newness was not in the command to love, but rather the perfect manifestation of love in the Person of Christ. He exemplified love. Philippians 2:6-8 reveals Christ as that perfect love, perfect sacrifice and perfect humility.

"true" Greek "alethes" not true as opposed to false, but rather meaning what is real and genuine.

True love is not only seen in Jesus Christ, but in real and genuine believers as well. John writes, "and in you". This love for God and one another is evident and true in the lives of genuine believers in which the Holy Spirit has taken up residence to produce fruit. (Galatians 5:22-23) And most importantly is love. Romans 5:5 says that the love of God has been poured out within our hearts. This old and new commandment to love is finding its true expression in the true believer, just as it was evident in Jesus Christ. We are walking advertisement for the gospel by our love for one another. It is a distinguishing mark for a Christian, inaugurated by Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Then John writes, "because the darkness is passing away".

"passing away" Greek "parago" coming to an end.

The end of this present evil age is coming to an end, drawing near. The realm that sin predominates is passing away. God's redeeming love has already initiated the process of eliminating moral darkness. This will ultimately be accomplished at our Lord Jesus Christ's return.

"And the true light is already shining" John exhorts in this verse. What a statement of encouragement in this dark world. The true light is Christ (John 8:13), Who is shining, (Colossians 1:13-14), because believers are being rescued from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His Son.<sup>5</sup> "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14) This tells us that the "Light is shining", evident by love being a genuine reality in the life of believers.

John will have further comments about love, but let us stop and think about some words given for us to think and evaluate ourselves in light of what Scripture says. "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves. Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you- unless indeed you fail the test?" (2 Corinthians 13:5) Are you a genuine believer?

- ✚ Is your life characterized by obedience to Jesus Christ because of the good work He has done in your life?
- ✚ Is the distinguishing mark of your life love, which is only possible because of the Holy Spirit at work in you?

Spend some time thinking about these two tests of genuine faith. Remember, we will never perfectly obey or love, just progressing and growing as Christ's perfecting work continues in each of us. (Philippians 1:6)

<sup>1</sup> O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let's Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg.15.

<sup>3</sup> Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 64.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 60.