

The Newness Command

1 John 2:7-17

MPS Abiding in God's love empowers one to truly walk in His light.

OBJ Every person should abide in God's love because of Three Ways true love from God works lead us in His light.

READ 1 John 2:7-17

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But whoever 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.

¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children, because you know the Father.

¹⁴I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

*¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. **1 John 2:7-17***

John continues to show Christians how God intends for us to walk in His light as we are completely immersed in His love. This has been God's design from the very beginning, because, as John later states, God is love. But at the same time, this is a new command! **How can it be both an old and a new command?** John's answer to this is simple: **God's command to love, which is as eternal as His nature, is new with increasing power every time one walks in His light.**

TRANS But understanding John's thought progression will help us greatly.

The letter begins with the message that was heard, seen, and touched, as manifested in Jesus Christ. That message is this: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." He then casts this vision for the life of a Christ-follower as one of a "life without sin" and reminds of how this works by the One who is our advocate, propitiation, righteousness, and truth. By this we learn that all the light of God is made known to us in Jesus Christ. Once this high vision of life with God is set forth, John concludes with the practical application that anyone who "says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." **Christ-followers aim in all of life is to abide in Jesus so that they walk as He walked.**

When John begins verse 7, he writes, "Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning." The command is the one he has just stated, "whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." We are commanded to walk in God's light, but we do not walk in it on our own. No matter how well we think we can do this on our own, only God's love empowers us to walk in His light. And the more God's love consumes a person the greater His light will guide that person. You can't live in God's light if you are not filled by His love. But when you are being filled with God's love, you will walk in His light, and in increasing measure, degree, and extent. **John implores Christians to consume their lives with God's love by abiding in Jesus so that they can know they are truly walking in His light.**

Abiding in God's love empowers one to truly walk in His light.

The old command that was from the beginning, to love God, is manifested in newness every time one truly walks in God's



light. We can only walk in God's light as we abide in Jesus Christ to be filled with God's love.

OBJ Three Ways true love from God works to lead us in His light, and implore you to abide in Christ.

1. True love sources one to walk in God's light. .7-11

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But whoever 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.

The command of God is eternal, as He is, and is both old and new. What John means is that what is true of God, that has always been true of God, is still as true as ever. When you trust in Him, He is faithful to lead and guide you in His light. God's love is anchored in His eternal being and revealed anew with each passing day and season of life. As His love takes greater hold within it brings more of His light to bear on life. **Therefore, the newness of God's old commandment is that the more one abide in His love to walk in His light, the more darkness that passes away because of the light that shines.**

To understand this eternal truth, John provides a test to discern whether one is truly walking in God's light or not. The way one discerns whether they are in God's love or not is to consider what is produced in our heart through our obedience. One can claim to be in God's light, and even carry out some actions, but when hate for a brother remains, no matter how much like God's light our life may seem, we remain in darkness.(9) There is a form of light that we can produce from our life that looks like God's light, just as the Scripture tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.(2 Corinthians 11:14) But when you walk without God's love, you walk in deception because you remain in darkness.

The contrast is set and shows what each one produces. The one who loves, not holds an emotion but loves as God has loved, is the one who abides in light. And in this person is no cause for stumbling. This doesn't mean that they are perfect, but that the reality of the gospel is working in them so nothing within them would make them stumble, or be deceived. In contrast, the one who hates his brother is in darkness. Notice that this is not merely an action produced but refers to the place they reside, "*in darkness*". This person is not remembering the gospel, only performing an action. And what is produced for this person is that they do not know where they are going because they are blinded and deceived by the darkness, susceptible to any and every stumbling. What is produced from a life reveals where that life abides, or where it is sourced from. The one who holds against others, hate, what God has not held against them, in the gospel, is not walking in His light but is deceived because they abide in darkness. **The one who abides in God's love abides in God's light, and lives at peace because there is nothing in them that can cause them to stumble.**

APPL We need to make one Note of application here. Love is not defined as emotion, but defined in two ways by John. First, love is a commitment, or faithfulness, in sacrifice. John 15:13 states, "*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*" Consider Jesus, who is God's love manifested for us, and His role as John sets forth in 2:1-6 for love's definition. He is our propitiation, righteousness, advocate with the Father, and commandment of truth. Love produces emotion but is never only an emotion. When emotion gets substituted for love, deception rules the day, because darkness begins to fall, when no new light is being poured out. Darkness ONLY leaves when light enters. **WHY is this important?** When emotion defines love, self becomes the center, instead of Jesus Christ, and feelings determine discernment, instead of Truth, so that God gets exposed as incapable, unfaithful, and unworthy when emotion wanes.

Second, love is faithfulness in obedience; Christ's obedience for us, and our obedience by faith IN Him. When the wrong definition of love is held, faithfulness is excused because God is not worthy or worth it. **Make sure your understanding of love is in accordance with Scriptures!**

Light reveals to guide and provides peace and confidence for one's way. Darkness blinds and deceives so that one does not and cannot know where they are going, which makes them susceptible to any and every opportunity to stumble. Walking in God's light is not determined by how well you perform FOR God, but how much you abide in Christ to be filled by God's



love. Only God's love empowers one to abide in His light, and the extent to which you are filled with His love will determine the measure to which you walk in His light.

John implores Christ-followers to focus on filling their life with God's love because ONLY God's love determines whether one truly walks in His light. Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matthew 6:33) because the focus of your life determines what you become. What you behold most is what you follow as "first" to become most like. And what is the love John has reminded us of; Jesus Christ, our advocate, propitiation, righteousness, and truth. Any love, particularly based on a feeling, and not fully trusting in the finished work and power of God through Jesus Christ, is darkness that deceives. Abiding in God's true love sources one to walk in His light.

TRANS True love not only sources one to walk in God's light, but John also shows what God's true love produces in us.

2. True love matures by walking in the light. .12-14

¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children, because you know the Father. ¹⁴I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

We best understand the power of God's love by how it matures a person. Love's power is revealed in the way John addresses his reader in the threefold manner or "children, father, young men", his titles of familial affection that reveal a progressing maturity. In favor of understanding John's references as spiritual maturity John Stott writes, "The author divides his readers into three groups, whom he names dear children, fathers and young men, and addresses each group twice. He is indicating not their physical ages, as some have thought, but stages in their spiritual development, for God's family, like every human family, has members of differing maturity."¹ True love changes in its expression because it matures the person who lives in it.

Consider what each stage represents in God's love. "Children" learn that their sins are forgiven and they are brought into a relationship with God the Father. This is the most fundamental understanding of the gospel, that where sin separated us from God, in Jesus Christ we have been reconciled to Him. The true sense of our reconciliation is captured in His roles above, propitiation, righteousness, advocate, and truth. Next, John addresses "Father", not in reference to God but in one's spiritual maturity, to demonstrate a faith in the fullness of God's eternal nature and sovereign being. A mature Christian is not one with all the answers, but one that understands and processes life by faith in this foundational trust in God's nature and being. Finally, John addresses "young men", that stage of growth where one strives to advance. Here is where one learns to overcome the evil one by the Word of God abiding within. What a powerful vision of growth and maturity in God's love for us all that begins NOT with how you feel about yourself, or even God, but begins with what you have come to know about God and His love for you through the gospel of Jesus Christ!

The more you abide in God's love through Jesus Christ, the more your walk in the light changes you to become like Jesus. You've walked the path of darkness, "stumbled" on things because you could not see, felt the hurt, confusion, and deception of sin. But when the light of the glory of God in Christ Jesus shone in your heart, love poured out to light the way of this new life with God! And ever since, the light of God has shone to light the way. The more you understand the gospel and apply it to walk in obedience to Jesus by faith, the more you come to know God and to trust Him more completely. True love matures by walking in God's light.

3. True Love refuses to love the things of the world. .15-17

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

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Finally, John issues a severe warning that connects God's love with His light. When we love the world and the things of this

¹ John R. W. Stott, [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 100.



world, we do not have the Father's love in us. The things of this world are identified by our desires, of the flesh, of the eyes, and of the pride of life. When these things are first to us, God's love is not in us. We must recognize where these desires attack to tempt us, so to identify and reject them, or they will set up with in us and take over. These things are not from God, and they will not co-exist within alongside God. When we tolerate them to fill us, we become like them, passing away. **True love from God actually teaches us what to hate, that which causes us to walk in darkness and pass away.**

Whether you walk in God's light or darkness is determined by what you love first and most. Abiding in God's love is key to walking in God's light so to be changed into the likeness of the Son, Jesus Christ. And you can't abide in Christ when you are pre-occupied by, more interested in, or consumed with the things of this world. **True love refuses to love the things of the world.**

Abiding in God's love empowers one to truly walk in His light.

