

1 John 2:7-11 "An Eternal Truth in a New Light" (p. 959)

Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday May 19th, 2024.

1 John 2:7-11. [7] 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. [8] At 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. [9] Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. [10] Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. [11] But 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. (ESV)

There is an interesting feature often prevalent in looking at old photographs. Even when we look at people we don't know, we can often tell a lot about the relationship. We can see if the people are open with each other and how close they are. That closeness, or fellowship, is very rarely faked. If it is, like in a fake smile for a picture, it is very quickly determined as to its genuineness once the camera is taken away.

Fellowship with God (is the essence of being in the Light). Heretics claim it, but their claim is a lie as John proves decisively. He and his readers have it; John proves that statement and even shows how they know beyond a doubt that they have it. But having fellowship with God means also that John and his readers have fellowship “with one another.” (Lenski, R. C. H. (1966). *The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (411). Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House.)

Too often we think of Christian maturity in terms of freedom from sin. Provided that we think of sins of omission rather than commission, that is fair enough. But John wants us to see that spiritual life is characterized by positive acts of love, and that such love will be seen in the fellowship of the church as well as in our attitude to other people generally.. The gospel is about “faith expressing itself through love” (Gal. 5:6), and anything else is counterfeit (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary of the New Testament (133). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

In 1 John 2:7-11 we see the description of the fellowship in love as: 1) The Eternal Truth in the Old Light (1 John 2:7), 2) The Eternal Truth in a New Light (1 John 2:8) 3) The Eternal Truth as a Way of Life (1 John 2:9-11).

Fellowship in love can be seen in:

1) The Eternal Truth in the Old Light (1 John 2:7)

1 John 2:7. [7] 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. (ESV)

Throughout the century's preachers, teachers, and commentators have called John “the apostle of love.” His love to fellow believers to whom he wrote often expressed itself by the familiar term beloved (cf. 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7; 3 John 2). That title was so appropriate in this epistle, which affirms love as the benchmark of true salvation. John's love for his readers prompts the address “beloved”; and he now asks them to remain in the fellowship of mutual love (Lenski, R. C. H. (1966). *The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (412). Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House.). In this context the reference to John's readers as “beloved” is entirely suitable. Before he mentions the commandment of love, he puts it into practice (Smalley, S. S. (2002). *Vol. 51: Word Biblical Commentary : 1,2,3 John*. Word Biblical Commentary (54). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.).

In the Pentateuch, God established the law of love in unmistakable terms: **Leviticus 19:18** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (ESV). The concept **neighbor** included the fellow Israelite and the alien who lived with God's people in the land. In New Testament times, however, **Jesus gave new meaning to the command to love one's neighbor** when he taught the Parable of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:25–37**) and when he told his listeners that the command to love one's neighbor extended even to the enemy (**Matt. 5:43–44**). He **explained the meaning of the command to love one another** by **removing** manmade **obstacles** and by **revealing the divine intent and purpose of this particular command** (Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953-2001). *Vol. 14: New Testament commentary: Exposition of James and the Epistles of John*. New Testament Commentary (260). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.)

Please turn to Romans 13 (p. 892)

In a play on words, extended into **verse 8**, **John wrote that the commandment to love** was **not** a **new commandment** in one sense, **but actually an old commandment**. **It had been taught throughout the biblical text**. His choice of *καινήν* to describe **its newness** focuses attention on it being “new in nature,” a **qualitative newness**, and an **improvement over the old** rather than indicating recent appearance. **The newness is demonstrated in three ways by God**. **First**, **God's “self-giving through Jesus”** shows His love for (His people). **Second**, **Jesus fulfilled the Law**, which is summed up in its own love commands, by obeying it. **Finally**, **Jesus enabled believers to inherit and experience eternal life and express Christlike love through the ministry of the Spirit**. (Derickson, G. W. (2012). *First, Second, and Third John*. (H. W. House, W. H. Harris III, & A. W. Pitts, Eds.) (p. 165). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.)

Instructing the Romans concerning brotherly love, Paul quoted the Decalogue and Leviticus 19:18. In Romans 13, he says:

Romans 13:8-10. [8] Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. (ESV) (cf. John 13:34–35; 1 Cor. 14:1; Phil. 1:9; Col. 3:14; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 6:10; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:23; 4:7, 21)

- There is **an inseparable link** between obedience and loving God and one's neighbor; thus, **Paul declares** that “love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Whether they were Jews or Gentiles, **John's readers** back in **1 John 2:7** would **have heard** from the Old Testament about **the concept of loving one another** (1 Sam. 20:17, 41–42; cf. Gen. 45:15; Ps. 133:1–2). The truth that **they were to love one another** was something his readers would **have had from the beginning**. “**Had**” is in the **imperfect tense in Greek** which tense speaks of **continuous state or action in past time** (Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (1 Jn 2:7). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.). **The beginning** in view here is **not** the creation or God's giving of the Law to Moses, but **the beginning of their Christian lives** (cf. 2:24; 3:11; 2 John 6). **This was taught them from the start, not** merely by some recent innovation from John. **The relative clause (“from the beginning”)** defines how long John's readers have **already known it** (Haas, C., Jonge, M. d., & Swellengrebel, J. L. (1994). *A handbook on the letters of John*. UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (44). New York: United Bible Societies.).

The word concerning love which they heard was **the old commandment, the Old Testament teaching on love**, which Jesus had already reiterated (**Matt. 22:34–40**; Mark 12:28–34; cf. Matt. 5:43–48; Luke 6:27–36). In **1 John 2:7**, it seems ... that **John... is anticipating any reaction from his readers** which would treat the new “law of love”

(as a necessary expression of Christian obedience) in a **legalistic way**. “We do **not** receive **eternal life** by being obedient,” **John thus says in effect**; “rather, **once we are Christians, we shall want to be obedient**.” (Smalley, S. S. (2002). *Vol. 51: Word Biblical Commentary : 1,2,3 John*. Word Biblical Commentary (55). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

Quote: Andrew Bonar, referring to God's laws said: “It is **not** the importance of the thing, but **the majesty of the Lawgiver**, that is to be the standard of obedience...**Some**, indeed, might reckon such **minute and arbitrary rules** as these as **trifling**. But **the principle involved in obedience** or **disobedience** was none other than the same principle which was tried in **Eden** at the foot of the **forbidden** tree. **It is really this: Is the Lord to be obeyed in all things** whatsoever He commands? **Is He a holy Lawgiver? Are His creatures bound to give implicit assent to His will?**” (quoted J. Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, p. 23).

Fellowship in love can be seen in:

2) The Eternal Truth in a New Light (1 John 2:8)

1 John 2:8 [8]At 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. (ESV)

John now shows how he’s **using of a seeming contradiction** to clarify how **the old commandment to love is at the same time not new and yet new**. There is **a sense** in which John was **writing a new (kainos) commandment, New (Kainos)** (used in both vv. 7 and 8) **defines something that is fresh in essence and quality** while **not necessarily chronologically new (kairos)**. It remains **new** in that it remains true and is **continually being realized and actualized** in the life of Jesus and his followers in the **new age**. **The newness of the commandment** lies in the fact that **it is being fulfilled in a way that had not happened previously**. To put it differently, **the darkness of the old age**, in which (people) did **not** love in this sort of way, is **disappearing**, and **the light of the new age**, in which Christian love is shown, is already shining. The picture is that of **a world in the darkness of night**, but the first rays of the dawning sun have already begun to shine; more and more areas are becoming light **instead** of dark, and **the light is getting brighter**. **There are still dark places**, completely sunk in shadow, but **there are places where there is bright light**, and it is here that **the disciples are to be found, walking in the light** and themselves shedding light. This is how John expresses the thought of the **two overlapping eras** of the old and new creations. **The light of the world has already dawned in the coming of Jesus (Jn. 8:12; cf. 1:19; 3:19; 9:5; 12:35f., 46)**, but **it shines like a beacon in the continuing darkness...** (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (129). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

The **commandment’s newness** is **not found in the words**, but **in the illustration of love, described in the expression, which is true in Him**. Even though **the Old Testament taught the duty to love, never before had perfect love been so plainly manifested as it was in the incarnate Christ** (John 13:1; 15:13; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 8:9; cf. Isa. 40:11; Matt. 4:23–24; 11:28–30; 23:37–39; Luke 19:41). **His deity, his cleansing blood, his expiation, all that is connected with him** are true, real...All that is “**in you**,” connected with you, your cleansing through the Son’s blood, your remission of sins (**1:9**), your walking as he walked, are **true** things, are real... (Lenski, R. C. H. (1966). *The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (413–414). Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House.) That the command is **true (alēthes)** refers (**not so much to the truthfulness of the teaching but to the demonstration of the truth**), to something that is **‘truly expressed’**. And the sense of the whole clause is that the author writes **a new command ‘which finds true expression** in Jesus Christ and in his readers’. So **the newness is not in the command to love, but in the perfect manifestation of love in the person of Christ**. This is one of many ways in which **the Son of God incarnate** revealed the nature of God in a fullness **not before manifest** (cf. John

Please turn to John 13 (p. 846)

The Lord magnificently illustrated this truth in the upper room just hours before His death. His promises that night to the apostles that He would prepare a place in heaven for them (John 14:1–4), that His peace would be with them (John 14:27), that He would send the Holy Spirit to them (John 14:25–26; 15:26; 16:7–15), and that by abiding in Him they would bear much fruit (John 15:1–11) were reflections of His divine love. But He displayed love most graciously in His humbling service to them. John 13:1–17 records what happened:

John 13:1-17. [13:1] Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. [2] During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, [4] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. [5] Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. [6] He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" [7] Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." [8] Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." [9] Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" [10] Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." [11] For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." [12] When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? [13] You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. [14] If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (ESV)

"PLEASE KEEP YOUR PLACE IN JOHN 13"

- **Christ's ministry in the upper room manifested the heart of God**—perfect love, perfect sacrifice (Isa. 53:3–12; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:12), and perfect humility (Luke 22:27).

The new commandment or manifestation of love has come because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. Obviously, **the true Light** is Jesus Christ (**John 8:12**), who has come and **inaugurated His kingdom** (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; John 12:12–15; Heb. 1:8–9; 12:28; cf. Ps. 24:7–10), in which **He (and this new dimension of love) is already shining** (cf. Eph. 3:16–19). **With the inauguration of Messiah's spiritual kingdom, the true Light** began shining and overcoming **the darkness of Satan's kingdom** (Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; cf. Eph. 6:11–16). **The tense is present**, speaking here of action going on in present time (Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (1 Jn 2:8). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

That **the darkness is passing away** expresses **a present middle indicative**. (A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, p. 212). **For those who know God in Christ, the new age has dawned** and **is continuing to dawn** in their hearts and minds (i.e. realized eschatology)

But, the **Spiritual darkness** is **not** a passive reality. **It goes on the offensive.** **Darkness attacks** those living in it so that *they become increasingly trapped in this realm of confusion and blindness*. In a real sense **what we do** is what we become. **How we live** is who we are. **The longer one remains in this realm of darkness**, the more **difficult** it becomes to see the **sin** that is in one's life, and the **less** likely one is to see his need to **confess his sins** so that **fellowship** with God can be restored. **Habitual hatred** leads to more **hatred**, and **the possibility of loving** becomes **less** and **less** likely (Akin, D. L. (2001). *Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (100). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

- **How do we discern areas of spiritual blindness?** Only God can guide us to them and then out of them. **John has exposed one key area** that impacts the church today. Our **lack** of love for other Christians is **sin** that **keeps us from fellowship** with God as well as **God's kind of fellowship** with one another, **even if we feel good** about ourselves. **We need to pause regularly and ask** ourselves if we are guilty of **"hating"** Christians around us, **especially in our local congregation(s)**. (Derickson, G. W. (2012). *First, Second, and Third John*. (H. W. House, W. H. Harris III, & A. W. Pitts, Eds.) (p. 180). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.)

Right now, the light coexists with the **darkness**, but **the Light** and the divine love He bears will **increasingly dispel** the darkness (cf. **1 John 2:17a**), and **eventually rule supremely throughout eternity**. **More and more (unbelievers)** are being brought from the **darkness to the light**; indeed, the **darkness** is thus **passing** away, the **genuine light** is **shining (two progressive present tenses)** (Lenski, R. C. H. (1966). *The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (413). Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House.).

For Believers, as Paul said to the Colossians about Christ: Colossians 1:13 [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (ESV). Therefore, **the Light, that this new commandment** is a reality in believers' lives. For John **"the real light** is **already (ἤδη) shining"**; just as judgment has already begun, and **salvation is an immediate possession** (John 3:16–21; 1). **The Christian can "walk in the light" now**, and share this **light** with others. (Smalley, S. S. (2002). *Vol. 51: Word Biblical Commentary : 1,2,3 John*. Word Biblical Commentary (58). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.).

- **Where in your personal life** has the light of the Gospel **not** yet shined: **What sin** do you cling to? In what **relationships**, does God want you to be His **light**? In which **spheres do you associate**, can **the light** of the Gospel shine though you?

Poem: If the true light is shining in us, that will be expressed in terms of love and compassion towards our fellow believers. **To cite Horatius Bonar: "Beloved, let us love: In love is light, And he who loveth not, Dwelleth in night". To fail to love is to show** that we **dwell in darkness, apart from God** who is both **light** and **love**. (Horatius Bonar: As cited in Barnes, P. (1998). *Knowing Where We Stand: The Message of John's Epistles* (p. 38). Darlington, England: Evangelical Press.)

Finally, fellowship in love can be seen in:

3) The Eternal Truth as a Way of Life (1 John 2:9-11)

1 John 2:9-11. [9] Whoever says **he is in the light** and **hates his brother** is still in darkness. [10] Whoever **loves his brother abides in the light**, and in him there is no cause for **stumbling**. [11] But 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**. (ESV)

It is a **meaningless boast** for someone to say **he is in the Light** (cf. Matt. 7:21–23; James 1:22; 2:14–26; 1 John 1:6); **if he (or she) hates**. This is a **present active participle** which

speaks of a settled ongoing attitude (Utley, R. J. D. (1999). *Vol. Volume 4: The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John*. Study Guide Commentary Series (205). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.). "To **hate**" is here (and in 2:11; 3:15; 4:20) the direct **opposite of "to love."** It does **not focus on feelings of aversion** (as in 3:13, which see), but **on deeds neglecting love, helpfulness, and self-sacrifice** (cp. 3:17); hence, 'does **not love at all,** 'does **not put first,** 'treats as an enemy.' (Haas, C., Jonge, M. d., & Swellengrebel, J. L. (1994). *A handbook on the letters of John*. UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (47). New York: United Bible Societies.)

- This verse speaks to **sins of omission**, things God expects but what we **fail** to do.

Haters do **not** get what they want—**after the brief blast of adrenaline that comes with hating and fighting**, the **hater** is left with **corrosive anger, depression**, and increased **emptiness**, for hatred, of necessity, **drives other people away**. Hatred **doesn't** make your life better; **it makes it bitter**. **People have limits** to their capacity for emotion—**the fuller your tank is with hatred, the less room there is for love** (Jeske, M. A. (2002). *James, Peter, John, Jude*. The People's Bible (217). Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House.).

The **hatred** in **1 John 2:9** is most **grievous**, for it is **against** one's **brother**. The Greek term was used by Jews and non-Jews to indicate a member of one's religious group, here a member of the Christian congregation. Accordingly, it means **"fellow Christian"**. In the Johannine writings **brother** is still a living metaphor. **Christians** are each other's **brothers**, because they all are **"children of God"** (5:2), **have the same characteristics** (3:9f), **follow Christ's commandments** (2:7; 2 John 1:5), and are called **"my brothers"** by Jesus himself (John 20:17). (Haas, C., Jonge, M. d., & Swellengrebel, J. L. (1994). *A handbook on the letters of John*. UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (47). New York: United Bible Societies.)

This **doesn't** mean that there are **not** some people whose **manners and habits will be objectionable to you**. But to **hate** them **reveals that you are still in the darkness**. **Hatred of a fellow believer is evidence that a person is not in the light** (McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (1 Jn 2:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.).

- There are **no shades of gray** when it comes to John's discussion of an individual's relationship with God. **One is either in the light or in darkness**. **One either loves his brother or hates him**. **When someone is in the light, he is enabled to love**. **The one who is in darkness has no capacity to love**, for, as we will see, (their) **eyes have been blinded by the darkness** (Akin, D. L. (2001). *Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (98). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

Contrary to popular opinion, Christian love is not "blind." **When we practice true Christian love, we find life getting brighter and brighter**. **Hatred is what darkens life!** **When true Christian love flows out of our hearts, we will have greater understanding and perception in spiritual things** (Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Jn 2:9). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.).

According to **1 John 2:10**, **Whoever loves his brother abides in the Light and in him there is no cause for stumbling**. It is significant that he does **not** write: "Whoever **says that he loves** his brother lives in the light." **(John) is concerned with action, not with words which may not correspond to reality**. (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (132). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

The reference to **"abiding/being in the light"** **may have been introduced on account of claims which were being made among John's Gnostic readership about "knowing God"** and therefore being **"enlightened"**. The author leaves us in **no doubt** concerning **the true nature of "abiding/being in the light"**. **Already he has spoken of "living in the light"** in terms of seeking to conform, both spiritually and morally, to the character and demands of God. **Since God is light, we are to live (habitually) in the light** (1:7) (Smalley, S. S. (2002). *Vol. 51: Word Biblical Commentary : 1,2,3 John*. Word Biblical Commentary (59). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.).

Those who love and obey God's Word and express selfless love to fellow believers are truly transformed; they are not going to cause others to fall. In the New Testament, stumbling (σκάνδαλον/skandalon) refers to sinning (cf. Matt. 5:29–30; 13:41; 18:6, 8–9; Luke 17:2; John 16:1; 1 Cor. 8:13; Rev. 2:14). The stumbling particularly referred to a skandalon, which is the crooked trigger stick of a trap to which the bait is affixed and by which the trap is sprung. The verb σκανδαλίζειν means to catch in such a trap. The noun and the verb denote only the fatal, deadly entrapment of the victim. When this word is used metaphorically it means bringing spiritual death (Lenski, R. C. H. (1966). *The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (415). Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House.).

Please turn back to John 13 (p. 847)

John used the term here to explain that the person who truly loves others—as a reflection of his love for Christ—will not cause them to sin, as we have already seen in Rom. 13:8–10. There is a love that proves salvation. If you are still in John 13, look at Christ's instruction on this:

John 13:34-35. [34]A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (ESV)

- **Poem: The challenge in loving one another is moving from the doctrine to the practice:** "To dwell in love with the saints above, O! that will be glory! To dwell below with the saints we know—Ah! that's a different story!" (Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953-2001). *Vol. 14: New Testament commentary : Exposition of James and the Epistles of John*. New Testament Commentary (263). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.)

Finally, in 1 John 2:11 John returns to the case of the (one) who hates his brother. He has already commented that such a person is still in the darkness. Now he repeats the point but with greater emphasis, using ideas arising out of verse 10. John emphatically reiterates, that anyone who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks [follows a normal course of life] in the darkness. This person does not know where they are going [cf. John 12:35] because the darkness has blinded their eyes. They are like those who are completely blind and grope around to determine where they are (cf. Gen. 19:11; Acts 13:11–12) (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (132). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

Such loveless people are clearly outside the kingdom of Light (cf. Matt. 5:21–22; 1 John 3:15) and void of spiritual life. John as we earlier saw in 1 John 1:5-6 described such claimants earlier as liars: 1 John 1:5-6 [5] This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. [6] If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (ESV). Light and love go together. If we love people, we take care to avoid sinning against them, or causing them to stumble. We want to encourage them and build them up. But lack of love distorts our perspective and blinds our vision. We begin to feel at home in the darkness. We become used to groping our way through life, constantly stumbling and being ensnared by all kinds of problems. Such people are often unaware of how dark it is and how short-sighted they have become. Animals such as pit ponies, which are kept underground, eventually lose their sight. The light that is ignored soon ceases to strike us. The conscience that is habitually silenced soon ceases to speak. If we lack love, we are in the darkness. (Jackman, D. (1988). *The message of John's letters: living in the love of God* (pp. 54–55). Leicester, England; Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.)

While a person may feel comparatively safe in one place in the darkness, once he tries to move around and find his way to a better place he will quickly land in trouble. It is good advice to mountaineers lost in a mist without a compass to stay where they are until the mist clears or help comes, rather than to wander around without any sense

of direction. "Walk" is thus being used in a fairly literal sense. This is confirmed by the second statement: the man does not know where he is going (cf. Jn. 12:35), i.e. he does not know what to do, or how to find his way to salvation. He cannot find lasting satisfaction in life because he is blind. Having chosen to live in the darkness, he now finds that his eyes can no longer see the light; in other words, having yielded to sin, he finds that his heart has become so hardened that he cannot respond to the call of God and he falls into further sin. This is the divinely permitted result of sin (Jn. 12:40) (Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (132–133). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

To have fellowship, either in darkness or in light, is to walk, which suggests practical steps. The "Eternal truth in a New Light" is to walk in love. But what is love after all? It is not just a certain benign feeling. It is not a smile. It is an attitude that determines what one does... What will happen if those who profess the life of Christ actually love one another? Francis Schaeffer has several suggestions. First, it will mean that when a Christian has failed to love his brother and has therefore acted wrongly toward him, he will go to him and say he is sorry. That sounds easy, but it is not, as anyone who has tried it knows. Nevertheless, this more than anything else expresses love and restores that oneness which Jesus said should flow from the fact that Christians do love one another and by which their profession is verified before the world. Second, because the offense is often the other way, we are to show our love by forgiveness. Third, we must show love by practical demonstration, even when it is costly. Love cost the Samaritan in Christ's parable. It cost him time and money. Love cost the shepherd who endured hardship to hunt for his sheep. Love cost Mary of Bethany who, out of her love, broke the box of priceless ointment over the feet of Jesus. Love will be costly to all who practice it. But what is purchased thereby will be of great value, though intangible; for it will be proof of the presence of the life of God both to the individual Christian and to the watching world (Boice, J. M. (2004). *The Epistles of John : An expository commentary* (55–56). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.).

(Format Note: Outline & Some base commentary from MacArthur, J. (2007). *1, 2, 3 John: MacArthur NT Commentary* (61–68). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.)

Prayer

Closing Hymn -

Prayer Room Invitation

069 Benediction

May He who is full of kindness and compassion, who is slow to anger, vast in love; **Whose works of love** are of surpassing measure; **Keep you** in the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **AMEN** (cf. *Ephesians 4:3*. Hymn Reference *God, my King, Thy Might Confessing*, Richard Mant (1776–1848); TH p. 5)