

STUDY GUIDE

To Walk As Jesus Walked

1 John 2:7–11

Big Idea

To walk as Jesus walked is to love as Jesus loved. Love — God's own self-giving, sacrificial "agape" — is the acid test of genuine conversion. John shows that Christ's love-command is both the old commandment (rooted in the Law) and a new commandment (fully embodied and exemplified in Jesus), and then gives us tests to examine whether that love is real in us.

Key Terms

Love	<i>agapē</i>	Divine, sacrificial, self-giving love — not sentiment or emotion, but committed devotion to another's good.
True / Genuine	<i>alēthinos</i>	Genuine, authentic — used of the commandment being perfectly and truly demonstrated in Jesus.
Hate	<i>miseō</i>	To abhor, detest, or hold a strong aversion toward someone, resulting in separation.
Stumbling	<i>skandalon</i>	A cause of offense; metaphor for a snare or temptation to sin.
Malicious (gossip)	<i>diabolos</i>	The word used elsewhere for "the Devil"; slanderous, accusing speech.

I. The Commandment Explained (vv. 7–8)

A. The old commandment retained (v. 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." (2:7)

- The "old commandment" points back to the Law, where love for God and neighbor is the towering theme (Matt. 22:37–40).
- Love is not a new idea — it is trans-covenantal, the very soul of divine truth, and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:14).

B. The new commandment revealed (v. 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." (2:8)

- It is "new" because Jesus came and exemplified love in the flesh — genuine (*alēthinos*) love, perfectly demonstrated in Him (John 13:34).
- This love is also "true in you" — shed abroad in believers' hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).
- Darkness is not annihilated but is being overcome; the true Light (Christ) is already shining and His kingdom is advancing.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does John call the command both "old" and "new" in the same breath? What is he saying about continuity between the Old and New Covenants?

2. How does Jesus' life and death give content and definition to the word "love" (agapē), beyond mere sentiment or feeling?
3. In what sense is this commandment "true in you"? What role does the Holy Spirit play in enabling this kind of love (Rom. 5:5)?
4. How does the image of light "already shining" and darkness "passing away" shape the way we should think about the church's mission in a dark world?

II. The Commandment Applied (vv. 9–11)

A. Hate is the evidence of darkness (vv. 9, 11)

"The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now... But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness..." (2:9, 11)

- Hate (miseō) is a strong aversion that produces separation — it need not be "acted upon" to be real guilt in the heart (cf. Matt. 5:21–22).
- John later equates hate with murder (1 John 3:15) and says one cannot love God while hating a brother (1 John 4:20).
- Gossip is hate expressed through the tongue; Scripture calls it "malicious" (diabolos) — devil-like speech (1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3; John 8:44).

B. Love is the evidence of light (v. 10)

"The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause of stumbling in him." (2:10)

- Love is the fruit and evidence of new birth (Gal. 5:22; 1 John 4:7).
- Love is especially directed toward believers, though not exclusively (Gal. 6:10).
- Love is rugged, active, and resolved — it prevails in conflict and even extends to enemies (1 Cor. 13; Luke 6:32–36).

C. The only cure for blindness (v. 11)

"But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes." (2:11)

- Those who hate are blinded — not by light, but by the darkness itself; they cannot see where they are going.
- Love cannot be self-manufactured; it must be given by God. Only coming to Jesus, the Light of the world, cures this blindness (John 8:12; Col. 1:13).

Discussion Questions

5. John says it's possible to hate someone in the heart without ever "acting on it." Why does he still count this as darkness? Compare Matthew 5:21–22.
6. Why does John treat unresolved offense and gossip so seriously — even calling gossip "devilish" speech? Have you seen this play out in a church community?
7. What is the "test of love" doing for us here? Is it meant to produce anxiety about our salvation, or confidence? Why?
8. John says hate blinds a person to "where he is going." What does spiritual blindness caused by unresolved bitterness look like in practical, everyday terms?
9. If you are aware of a hardened, unforgiven offense in your own heart right now, what does this passage call you to do about it?

Personal Application

- Identify one relationship where offense, coldness, or unforgiveness has taken root. Name it honestly before God.
- Take one concrete step toward reconciliation or forgiveness this week, rather than merely feeling resolved to do so.
- Ask the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) to pour out love in you where you feel it lacking, rather than trying to manufacture it yourself.
- Memorize 1 John 2:10 as a personal test to return to when conflict arises.

Memory Verse

"The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause of stumbling in him." — 1 John 2:10

Closing Thought

To walk as Jesus walked is to love as Jesus loved. The walk of love is easily spoken of, but it is walked out through difficulty — and it is proved genuine when it is exercised in unlovely moments.