

Subject: The Old Commandment That Keeps Us New - 1 John 2:7-17

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 [c]from the beginning. [8](#)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.

[9](#)He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. [10](#)He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. [11](#)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.

[12](#)I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

[13](#)I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.

[14](#)I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.

Do Not Love the World

[15](#)Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16](#)For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. [17](#)And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Introduction:

The Christian life is a journey shaped by a command that is both ancient and ever new. John speaks to a church who's wrestling with confusion, division and spiritual uncertainty. His words cut through the noise with spiritual clarity. He reminds them, us, that the heart of Christian is not something new, but living what has always been true.

✦ SECTION 1 — The Command to Love (vv. 7–11)

v. 7 — “I’m not giving you a new command, but an old one you’ve had from the beginning.”

Commentary:

- John reminds believers that the command to **love one another** is not a new invention.
- It goes back to Jesus’ teaching and even to the heart of the Old Testament.
- The “old command” is foundational: love is not optional; it is the essence of Christian identity.
- This verse anchors the Christian life in continuity with God’s long-standing revelation.

v. 8 — “Yet it *is* new, because the darkness is passing and the true light is shining.”

Commentary:

- The command is “new” because Jesus embodied it in a fresh, perfect way.
- The “true light” refers to Christ’s life and teaching breaking into the world.
- The Christian community is meant to reflect this newness by living differently from the surrounding culture.
- John emphasizes spiritual transformation: love is evidence that the light is taking over.

v. 9 — “If someone claims to be in the light but hates a brother, he is still in darkness.”

Commentary:

- John exposes the contradiction between **profession** and **practice**.
- Hatred is not merely an emotion; it is a posture of the heart that contradicts God’s nature.
- This verse challenges self-deception: one cannot walk with God while walking in hostility.

v. 10 — “Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling.”

Commentary:

- Love produces clarity, stability, and moral direction.
- When we love others, we do not cause them—or ourselves—to stumble.
- Love is not only a feeling but a protective force that keeps the community healthy.

v. 11 — “But whoever hates is in darkness and doesn’t know where he’s going.”

Commentary:

- Hatred blinds.
- John describes a spiritual disorientation: hatred clouds judgment, distorts perception, and leads to destructive choices.
- Darkness is not just the absence of light; it is the presence of confusion and danger.

✦ SECTION 2 — Encouragement to All Believers (vv. 12–14)

John pauses to affirm his readers. He addresses **children, fathers, and young men**—likely symbolic categories representing stages of spiritual maturity.

v. 12 — “Children, your sins are forgiven because of Jesus’ name.”

Commentary:

- Forgiveness is the foundation of Christian identity.
- John begins with reassurance: believers are not striving for acceptance—they already have it.
- This verse centers the gospel: forgiveness is not earned but granted through Christ.

v. 13a — “Fathers, you know Him who is from the beginning.”

Commentary:

- Mature believers have a deep, steady relationship with God.
- Their faith is rooted in long-term experience and knowledge of God’s eternal nature.
- John honors spiritual longevity and wisdom.

v. 13b — “Young men, you have overcome the evil one.”

Commentary:

- This group represents believers in the midst of spiritual battles.
- John affirms their victory—not future, but present—through Christ’s power.
- Spiritual warfare is real, but believers are not powerless.

v. 14 — Repetition of the same themes

Commentary:

- John repeats himself intentionally, reinforcing identity:
 - **Children:** You know the Father.
 - **Fathers:** You know the Eternal One.
 - **Young men:** You are strong, God’s Word lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.
- The Word of God is the source of strength and victory.
- John’s tone is pastoral—he wants believers to feel secure, not condemned.

✦ SECTION 3 — Do Not Love the World (vv. 15–17)

v. 15 — “Do not love the world or the things in the world.”

Commentary:

- “World” here means the system of values opposed to God—not creation or people.
- John warns against misplaced affection.
- Love for the world pushes out love for God; the heart cannot hold both loyalties.
- This is a call to examine desires, priorities, and attachments.

v. 16 — “Everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father.”

Commentary:

- John identifies three categories of temptation:
 - **Desires of the flesh:** cravings for pleasure outside God’s design.
 - **Desires of the eyes:** coveting what we see.
 - **Pride of life:** self-exaltation, status, ego.
- These echo the temptations in Eden and Jesus’ wilderness testing.
- John is not condemning desire itself but **disordered desire**.

v. 17 — “The world is passing away, but whoever does God’s will lives forever.”

Commentary:

- John contrasts temporary and eternal realities.
- Worldly pursuits fade; obedience to God endures.
- This verse calls believers to invest in what lasts.
- Eternal life is not only future—it begins now through alignment with God’s will.

Closing:

- **Love** is the defining mark of those who walk in the light.
- **Spiritual maturity** is diverse, but all believers share forgiveness, knowledge of God, and victory over evil.
- **Worldly desires** compete with devotion to God and must be resisted.
- **Eternal life** belongs to those who align their lives with God’s will.