

1 John 2:7-14

2/19/19

John's letter is at the same time convicting and encouraging. I find verses 7-11 of 1 John 2 especially convicting. There are times, places, and people that I choose not to love. We often hear that "love is not a feeling, it is a choice". I agree with that. While love certainly involves emotions at some level, the kind of love that the Bible talks about is more about choosing to love actively.

John makes a significant correlation between love and hate, and light and darkness. As I have been thinking about that, refusing to love does darken my soul. I don't have to be actively "hating" in the way that we often think about it. I simply have to not actively choose to love. That in essence "turns the lights out" on my relationship with the Lord and my other relationships. It allows me to become self-absorbed very quickly.

I quoted David Jackman from his commentary yesterday

The more a Christian gets wrapped up in him (or her) self, concentrating on the cultivating of his own character, or the preservation of his own virtue, the less clearly he will see the light. He has become self-centered, and it will not be long before self-love takes over. The greatest enemy of real love is self-love. That is the root of hatred. What Robert L. Candlish said over a century ago remains true, 'A selfish religionist is sure to become either morbid or stupid. It is by sympathy and brotherhood that the fire of personal Christianity is fanned.'

It is convicting that even supposed pursuit of God can quickly become self-love. Only as we actively pursue loving others is our love for God enhanced.

The encouraging part of this section is what John says to those to whom he is writing. In the midst of very challenging statements, he stops to remind his readers who they are in verses 12-14. They are forgiven, known, and overcomers. What a statement! It is also written in a way that seemingly they could and would remember and repeat.

What is the relationship between those statements and loving each other? The basis of loving others is understanding who Jesus is and what He has done for us. We love because we are loved. In chapter 3, John is going to deal with this idea even deeper.

Perhaps a great question to ask ourselves is, "Do we love each other?" Along with that, what does that say about our walking in light and living in truth?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How does the Bible define love and hate?

