

THAT YOU MAY
KNOW

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

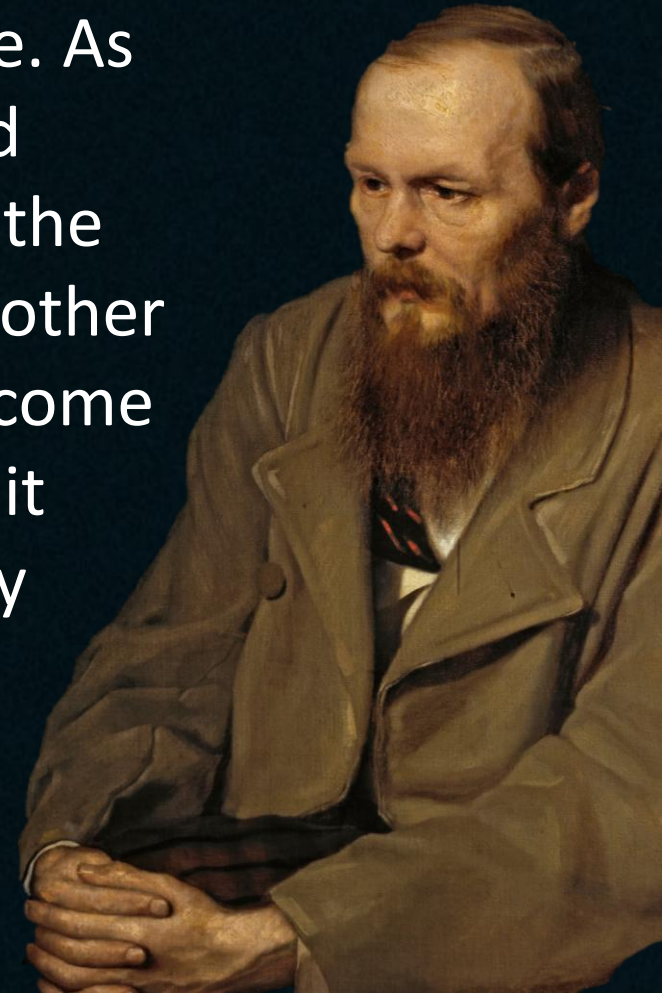
“Assurance and
the Love of One’s
Brother”

1 John 2:7–11

October 29, 2025 | Men of the Word | Grace Community Church

“The more I love humanity in general the less I love man in particular. In my dreams, I often make plans for the service of humanity, and perhaps I might actually face crucifixion if it were suddenly necessary. Yet I am incapable of living in the same room with anyone for two days together. I know from experience. As soon as anyone is near me, his personality disturbs me and restricts my freedom. In twenty-four hours I begin to hate the best of men: one because he’s too long over his dinner, another because he has a cold and keeps on blowing his nose. I become hostile to people the moment they come close to me. But it has always happened that the more I hate men individually the more I love humanity.”

—Zosima, in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s, *The Brothers Karamazov*



“Assurance and the Love of One’s Brother”

“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. 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. The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 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 has blinded his eyes.”

—1 John 2:7–11

I. The Command's Consistent Nature

1 John 2:7



*"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."*

“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).

- **“Beloved”** – the first of six occurrences (also 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11); a term of affection, indicating both *John’s pastoral love* and *God’s salvific love* for the original audience.
 - Before commending love to his readers, John expresses it himself.
- **“Not . . . a new commandment”** – not something *novel*; in an era where false teachers were inventing new doctrines, John emphasizes that his teaching did not originate in his own imagination.
- **“Commandment”** – in the previous paragraph (vv. 3–6), John spoke of “commandments” (*pl.*); now he narrows them to the main one (*sing.*).

“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 diagram consists of two yellow rectangular boxes. The first box contains the text 'an old commandment' and the second box contains 'the old commandment is the word'. A yellow arrow points from the first box to the second box. Additionally, there are two yellow circles with numbers: circle 1 is positioned above the first box, and circle 2 is positioned above the second box. A yellow arrow also points from circle 1 to circle 2.

- **“An old commandment”** – this *non-novel* commandment that John has in mind *predates* the time of his writing; he describes it in two ways.
 - 1) **“Which you have had from the beginning”** – could refer to ~~the beginning of creation~~ (inherent in human existence); to ~~the ministry of Jesus Christ~~ (see 1:1–3); or to the beginning of their new life in Christ.
 - 2) **“Which you have heard”** – refers to the definitive *hearing* and *receiving* of the commandment at the moment of their salvation; it came on the heels of the proclamation of the gospel.

This commandment was not *novel*—as if invented in a moment of spontaneous imagination.

This commandment has not *evolved*—it is the *same* as the first time it was proclaimed.

This commandment was not *inconsistent*—it came hand-in-hand with the gospel itself.

II. The Command's Unique Origination

1 John 2:8



*"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."*

“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).

- **“On the other hand”** – John introduces a *qualification*—not a contradiction; though the command was not *new* relative to John’s writing, it was *new* relative to the history of redemption.
- **“A new commandment”** – refers to a *qualitative change* to something that was in place previously; John here directly *echoes* Jesus’ teaching.
 - **John 13:34–35** – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

“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).

- How was Jesus’ commandment (John 13:34) a *qualitatively new* one?
 - **Leviticus 19:18** – “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”
- The “old” commandment was written in the Mosaic Law and required conformity on the basis of the Law itself—not according to the *heart*.
- The principle behind Leviticus 19:18 remains true, but in the gospel, the principle is a result of inward, spiritual transformation.

- **1 Corinthians 13:13** – “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
- **Galatians 5:13–14** – “For you were called to freedom [from the Law], brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”
- **Galatians 5:22** – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
- **1 Thessalonians 4:9** – “Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”

“On the other hand, I am ¹ writing a ² 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).

- John describes this *qualitatively new* commandment introduced by Jesus in two ways:

1) “**True in Him**” – this commandment finds its genuine (and ultimate) expression in Jesus (everything from washing feet to sacrificing His life).

2) “**True . . . in you**” – it even finds its genuine expression in John’s audience; he acknowledges them as truly saved—after all, they are the “beloved” (v. 7).



“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).

- **“The darkness is passing away”** – the domain of sin and all moral rebellion against *the God of Light*; it is *losing the battle*.
 - **1 John 1:5** – “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” (See also 1 John 1:6; 2:9, 11.)
- **“The true Light is already shining”** – Christ, the “light of the world,” has come (John 1:4–9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46); He is dispelling the darkness (saving and transforming sinners), and will one day vanquish it completely!

This commandment is unique to the work of Christ in the church.

This commandment is motivated from *within*, as part of *spiritual transformation*, and not merely from *without*, as part of external conformity to the Law.

This commandment demonstrates the victory of Light over darkness.

III. The Command's Definitive Verdict

1 John 2:9–11



*"The one who . . . hates his brother is in the darkness until now.
The one who loves his brother abides in the Light The one
who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the
darkness"*

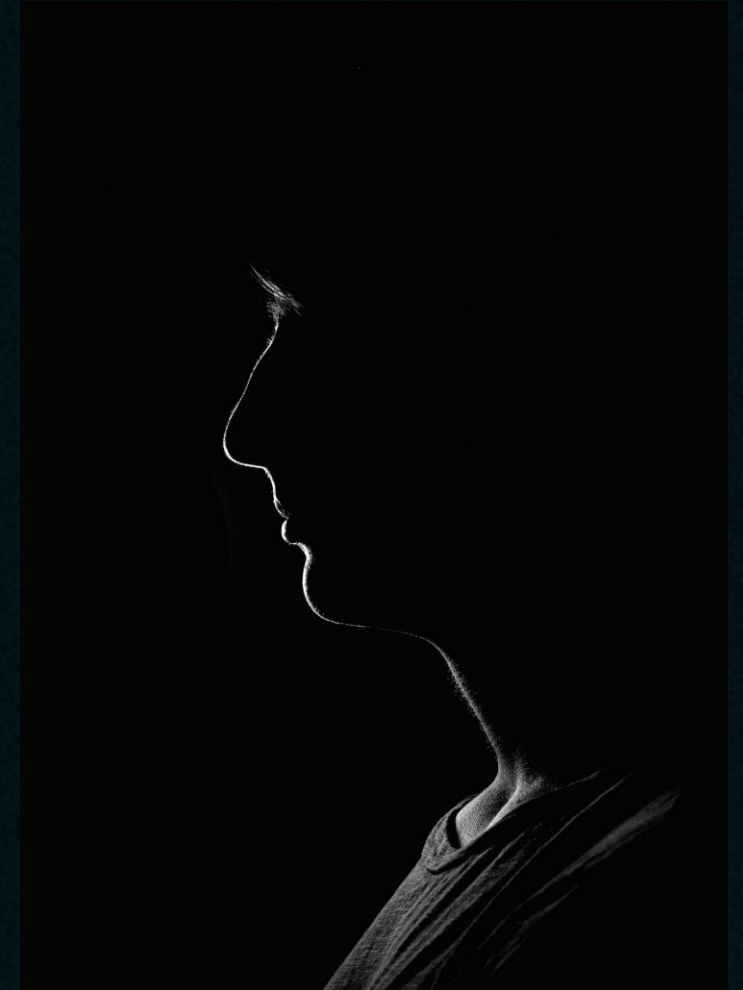
A. For the Disobedient – Part 1

“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now” (2:9).

- **“The one who says”** – a reference to a *confession* (see 1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4).
- **“In the light”** – a claim to salvation; a reference to being “in God” (1:5).
- **“Hates”** – a present tense participle, referring to a habit of life; self-love.
- **“His brother”** – narrower than “his neighbor” (Lev 19:18); a member of the community of those who profess faith in Christ; another one who has been cleansed by Christ’s propitiating sacrifice (1:7; 2:2).

“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now” (2:9).

- **“Is in the darkness until now”** – a description of spiritual deadness—lost in darkness, the domain of moral corruption and rebellion against the God of Light.
- In light of the command given by Jesus Christ, it is safe to conclude that the presence of ongoing hatred to another believer signals the absence of spiritual life.



A. For the Disobedient – Part 2

“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 has blinded his eyes” (2:11).

- **“The one who hates”** – a reiteration of v. 9, but without the reference to a confession of faith, and with added denunciation.
- **“Walks in the darkness”** – in addition to *being* “in the darkness” (also v. 9), this one *moves* in this state of *corruption and confusion*.
- **“Has blinded his eyes”** – his environment makes seeing impossible; nothing but a radical rescue can grant him real sight.



B. For the Obedient

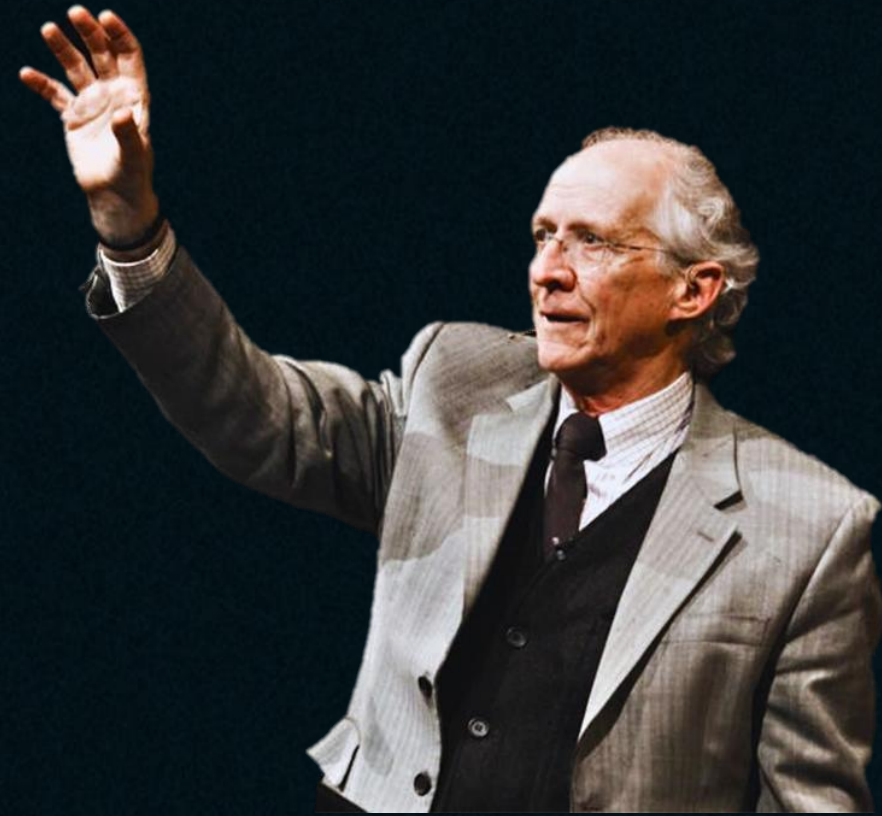
“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him” (2:10).

- **“The one who loves”** – John doesn’t even mention any confession but immediately goes to the heart of the matter—*a lifestyle of love*.
- **“Loves”** – *the gift of oneself for the benefit of another without any concern for reciprocity.*
- D. Edmund Hiebert: “It is an intelligent and purposeful love that seeks to promote the highest good for the one loved, even at the expense of self” (*Epistles of John*, 89-90).



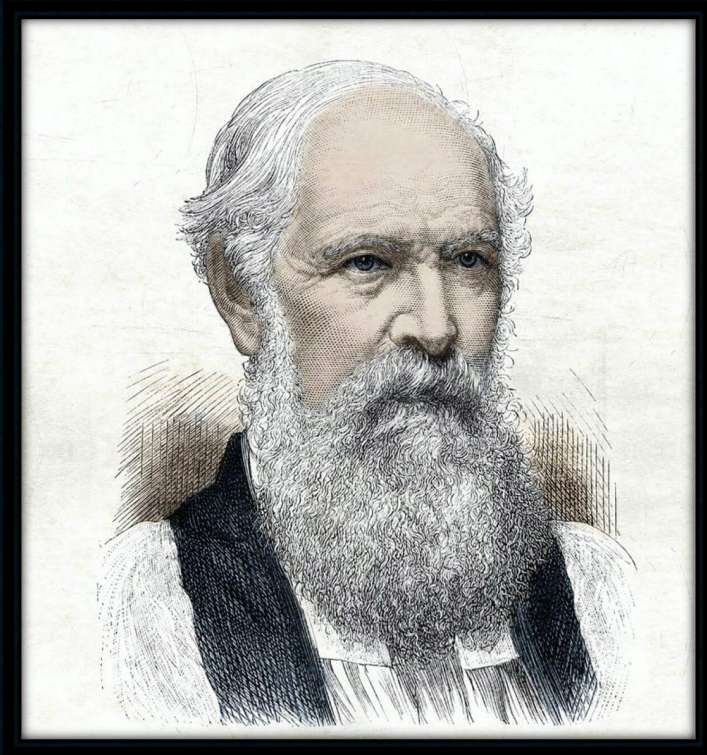
“Selfishness seeks its own private happiness at the expense of others. Love seeks its happiness in the happiness of the beloved. It will even suffer and die for the beloved in order that its joy might be full in the life and purity of the beloved.”

—John Piper, *Desiring God*, 176



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

- John summarizes the assessment of this “one” with two descriptions:
 - 1) **“Abides in the light”** – synonymous with “salvation”; the antithesis to “is in the darkness” (vv. 9, 11); this is the realm of God, who is Light (1 John 1:5).
 - 2) **“No cause for stumbling in him”** – literally, “a scandal in him there is not”; he has no inner turmoil, confusion, or doubt.
- “What John is saying by this negation is that hate is a snare, a cause of moral stumbling in the life of the believer. However, one who is characterized by love of the brethren will not have this source of moral failure within him” (Derickson, *1, 2, 3 John*, 176).

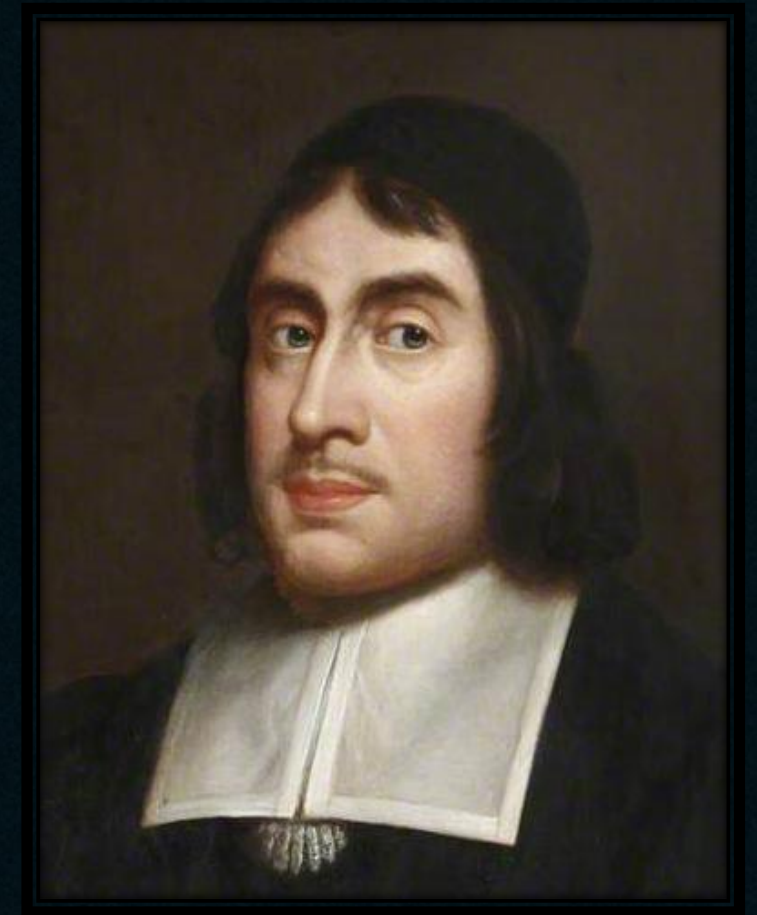


“Let us note that our Lord does not name gifts or miracles or intellectual attainments as the evidence of discipleship, but love, the simple grace of love, a grace within reach of the poorest, lowliest believer, as the evidence of discipleship. If we have no love, we have no grace, no regeneration, no true Christianity!”

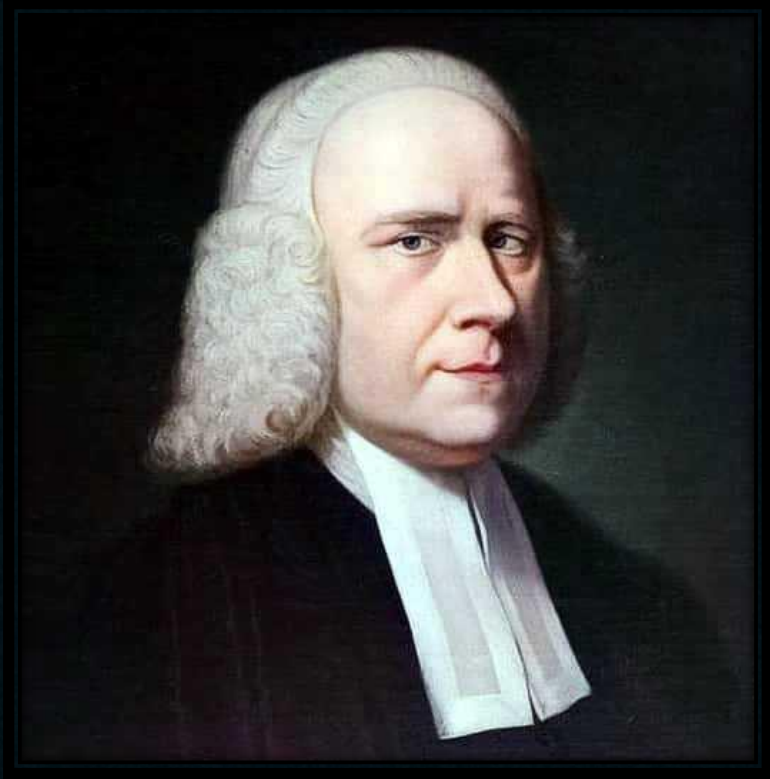
—J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*,
comment on John 13:34–35

“The saints are the walking pictures of God. If God be our Father, we shall love to see His picture of holiness in believers; shall pity them for their infirmities, but love them for their graces. . . . It may justly be suspected that God is not Father of those who love not His children. Though they retain the communion of the saints in their creed, they banish the communion of saints out of their company.”

—Thomas Watson



Men of the Word



“Oh, this self-love, this self-will! Lord Jesus, may Thy blessed Spirit purge it out of all our hearts!”

—George Whitefield

THAT YOU MAY **KNOW**

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

- ✓ Remember that Christ went to the cross for your brother.
- ✓ Surrender your record of his wrongs.
- ✓ Match practical sacrifice to your confession.
- ✓ You cannot love truly if you have not experienced saving grace.