

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 12- The Commandment of Eternal Life demonstrated in Love

We are continuing our study of 1 John and looking at the next 5 verses, namely 2:7-11. And in this section, John circles around our Fellowship with God by expounding on some previous Truths. John is giving us some deeper insight into the commandments that we have been learning about over the last couple of week, he continues contrasting the light and the darkness, and he gives us another test of Truth to know that we are abiding in Him. And in these next 5 verses, there are two parts: the first 2 verses, 7-8, define what the commandment is, and verses 9-11 are the action of the commandment. The demonstration of abiding in God.

Let's read **1 John 2:7-11**

The first thing you might think when you read verses 7 and 8 is what was John thinking? What is he saying? Why does John say in verse 7 that he is not writing a new commandment, but an old, and then seemingly contradicts himself in verse 8 by saying he is writing a new commandment. This seems like double talk... so which is it? Old or new? The answer is, it is both. This is an Eternal Truth in a new Light. John is not contradicting himself; he is using a play on words to tell the absolute Truth. Paul does the same thing by comparing contrasting statements to make a point. For example, in Romans 1:20 he says, "*His invisible attributes are clearly seen*". How can you clearly see something that is invisible? Or Ephesians 3:19, "*to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge*". How can you know something that surpasses knowledge? These are play on words to describe a deeper meaning. And John is doing that same thing here in verses 7 and 8.

Over the last couple of weeks, we saw John introduce the commandments, entolas, *ἐντολάς*. And we defined these commandments the way John explains them in 1 John 3:23- *And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment*. And I said the commandments are both a condition and a proof to everlasting life because the condition to everlasting life is to believe in Jesus. And the proof that you are abiding in Him and that His love is abiding in you is that you love the brethren. And today, we are going to take these ideas a little further. The action or doing of the commandment, such as keeping and holding fast the commandment, and loving the brethren is not the root of the commandment, but the proof. The action of the commandments are the proofs that we are abiding in God and in His Word. And now in verses 7 and 8, John goes a little deeper in defining what the commandment actually IS.

When we think of commandments, we immediately think of the Ten Commandments or some type of rules that we must follow. Ordinances to be saved or to have eternal life. But these commandments are not Legalistic. The action of the commandments are a result of abiding in Him and having Fellowship with God. The, *ἐντολή*, commandment, is more than just doing something, it **IS** something. We saw a glimpse of this when John interchanged the word, *ἐντολάς*, commandments, in 2:3, with the word, *λόγος*, Word, 2:5.

1 John 2:3- *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.*

1 John 2:5- *But whoever keeps His Word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

Jesus said this same thing in the upper room with His disciples before His arrest...

John 14:21- *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

John 14:23- *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

And now in verse 7, John is very clearly defining the, *ἐντολή*, commandment. Lets look at verse 7 closely in light of this...

1 John 2:7- Ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ ἐντολὴν παλαιάν, ἣν εἶχετε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς·

ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ παλαιά ἐστίν ὁ λόγος

ὃν ἠκούσατε
ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς.

1 John 2:7- 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
from the beginning.

This epistle begins with these same words, 1 John 1:1- *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life”*

To understand John’s thinking, we need to get into his mindset. Who is the Word?

Read the **Gospel of John 1:1-5, 12, 14**. And remember what Paul said in **Hebrews 1:1-3**. And in **Revelation 19:11-13**. This is the Logos, λόγος, The Word of God.

Now John is telling us in First John that **the commandment is the Word of God** that which they heard from the beginning. Are you starting to get a different picture of the commandment? It is the Testimony sent from Heaven, it is **the message of Eternal Life**. It is the message of Love sent from the Father. The commandment is the sending forth of the Word of Life from the Father and manifested in love, **First John 1:1-5**.

This message, this Word, this Promise of Eternal Life, as he says in 1 John 2:25, is the message of Light. And all who believe in the Light will have Eternal Life, **John 12:44-50**. The command of the Father is to believe in His Son so that we might have Eternal Life. This is why Jesus came, to bring us Life and it comes from the Father through Him, who is the Word of God. Look at the words closely, the Word **OF** God. This is the Father’s command of Eternal Life sent by the Father through His Son. We could also say the commandment is the Testimony of Eternal Life that the Father sent to us through His Son, **1 John 5:6-13**.

This is Psalm 107:20- *“He sent His Word, Logos, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions”*. Jesus is this Word sent from the Father to heal us and deliver us from the bondage of sin. This is the Word of Eternal Life. The Logos is not just Words on a page. This physical Bible we hold in our laps is the manifestation of The Word of Life so we can comprehend the Logos. But the Logos is the order and beginning of all existence. It is the source of Eternal Life. It is the Logos that was in the beginning with God. It is the Logos who is God, and it is the Logos who became flesh and dwelt among us to give us the message of Eternal Life in the Light. *“That was the True Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. And as many as receive Him”*, or we could say, as many as receive this command of Eternal Life, which is the message of Light, which is the Word of Life, who is Jesus Christ, *“to them gave He the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”*. That’s the key; our faith in Jesus. This is 1 John 3:23- *“this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ...”* The commandment is the message of Eternal Life through Jesus, His Word. How do we apprehend this Eternal Life? Through faith. We believe in Him. This is the commandment we have from the Father, to believe in His Son. What is the second part to the commandment? 1 John 3:23- *“and to love one another”*. Love is the demonstration of believing in Jesus.

Now that we understand what the commandment is, now we can answer the question, “why is this an old commandment?” Let’s read verse 7 again...

⁷ 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 from the beginning.

⁷ Ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ ἐντολὴν παλαιάν, ἣν εἶχετε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ παλαιά ἐστίν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς.

The commandment is old because it was, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, from the beginning. The Word that they heard from the beginning when Jesus walked the earthⁱ; the Word that they had from the beginning through Moses and the Prophetsⁱⁱ; and the Word that was existing from the beginning before the foundation of the worldⁱⁱⁱ.

John is also referring to this commandment of Eternal Life as “old” to refute the Gnostic heresies who were constantly profession new knowledge and new philosophy. Remember Paul in Athens, Acts 17:21- *For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing*. The Gnostics and philosophers were always seeking something new. John says, this is not a new branch of philosophy, this has been around from the beginning.

I just want to make a comment on that, because this progressive way of thinking is still going on today. Christians trying to re-invent the Gospel to attract the world. This is a dangerous road to be on because this can easily get into something called Progressive Christianity which is not Christianity at all. Progressive Christianity is actually modern Gnosticism. So being on the cutting edge and trying to attract the world is not always good and it can lead to compromising the Truth. So John says, this is nothing newly invented...

Now John goes on to explain that even though this is an old commandment; it is new.

⁸ Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you...

πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ὃ ἔστιν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν.

It is new because it “*is True in Him and in you*”. It is new because of our Fellowship in Him.

It is new because of Jesus. It's new because of the cross. These old words of Life established before the foundation of the world, spoken by the Prophets and then spoken by Christ Himself; are now made new because they are made True in Jesus, and not only in Him, but in you, in us. Eternal Life has been manifested to us in these last days. It is new because the Love of God has been perfected in us when we have faith in Him. It is new because of the New Covenant in His blood, Heb 9:15; 8:13; 7:17-22. This is the same commandment, the same plan of redemption for mankind, the same Word of Life, but now it is reborn in new Life through Jesus. And all who receive Jesus have the Love of the Father perfected in them. It is new because we are new creatures in Christ, 2 Cor 5:17. Because we are reborn, children of God and this old commandment of Eternal Life demonstrated through Love is now fresh and new and reborn in us because it is in Jesus. It is made “*True in Him and in you*”. This is the Fellowship.

And John goes on to say how this Fellowship is possible...

⁸ ... because the darkness is passing away, and the True Light is already shining.

ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται, καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει.

The True Light has come to give us Everlasting Life through Fellowship in Him, 1 John 1:1-4. As the True Light continues to shine, *the darkness continues to pass away*, παραγεται, παράγεται. I think what John is describing is the temporal reality of darkness compared to timelessness of eternity. The darkness is passing away and has an end. Light and eternity has no end, it is endless, eternal. Therefore, the darkness has no place with the Light because the True Light is already shining. The Light is expelling the darkness, but even more, the Light is exposing the hopelessness and despair of darkness.

John uses the same word, παραγεται, παράγεται, in 1 John 2:17- *And the world is passing away*, παραγεται, παράγεται, [passing because it is only temporary] *and the lust of it; but he who is committed to the will of God abides unto the forever*. That's Eternal Life with God. Darkness is hopelessness and despair, and Light gives Life, Hope, and an earnest desire to be with our God forever.

When John says, “*The True Light is already shining*”, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει, this tells us there is an overlap in this age with the True Light and the darkness. Even among this darkness, the True Light is already shining, even now, in this age. The True Light is Jesus, who shines the Words of Eternal Life into the darkness, John 1:5. This word

shining, φαίνει, is in the present tense meaning it is continual. It didn't just shine once and stop, but it is continually shining. How is it continually shining? Because His Word shines on our hearts everyday, 2 Pet 1:19. John says this Light is *True in Him and in you*. You have His Light in you and so we must continue to let our Light so shine before men..., Matt 5:14-16. We continue to proclaim the commandment of Eternal Life in Jesus by preaching the Word of Eternal Life, we proclaim the Truth, we preach Christ and Him crucified, and we walk in Love. The best way to shine our Light to the world is by displaying our Fellowship with God and with the brethren, **John 17:20-23**. Loving the brethren is not only proof to us, but also to the world that we are abiding in Him and have Eternal Life, 1 John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:11-12; 5:1-2.

This is why John goes into verses 9-11 and gives us the test of Love. Because those who walk in Love are demonstrating the commandment in action.

1 John 2:9-11-⁹ *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.*

Here we are back to the “if we sayers” and remember in 1:6 these imposters were saying that they had Fellowship with God, but yet they were walking in darkness. So they are liars. Now John, using the same contrast, defines walking in the darkness as hating the brethren. He says if you hate the brethren, you are in the darkness, but then he adds, “**until now**”. Does this mean that person is no longer in darkness? They are still walking in darkness, but this means they can't hide in the darkness because the Light of Truth is exposing their evil deeds. The Truth exposes the darkness, and because they are exposed, they will leave, John 3:19-20; 1 John 2:19; 2 Tim 3:9.

Then in verse 10, John defines what it means to “hate your brother”. “Brother” is the brethren: brothers and sisters in Christ. In verse 10 he says, “*He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.*” Those who abide in the Light love the brethren and they won't make their brother stumble. In contrast, those that hate the brethren, there is a cause for stumbling in him. Cause for stumbling is the word, skandalon, σκάνδαλον, a hinderance, offense, snare, stumbling block, a cause to sin, and specifically directed against the brethren. The verb is skandalizo, σκανδαλίζω. Look what Jesus thought of the one who would make the brethren stumble. Matthew 18:6- “*Whoever skandalizo, σκανδαλίζω, causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*”

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:13- *Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, skandalizo, σκανδαλίζω, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble, skandalizo, σκανδαλίζω.*

If you are in the Light, if you are abiding in Him, if you are in Fellowship with God (these all mean the same thing), you will love the brethren because the Love of God has been perfected in you. And the one who loves his brother cares for him and won't do anything to make him stumble. When John speaks of one hating his brother, he's not speaking of an impulsive emotional response. It's not emotional anger, it's not getting into an argument or getting frustrated with a brother. Hating your brother is an attitude of the heart. It is skandalizo, σκανδαλίζω. It is purposely doing harm to them. It is purposely and intentionally making them sin and swaying them from the Truth. This is exactly what the Gnostics were doing to the brothers and sisters in Christ. They were purposely deceiving them away from the Truth. This is hating your brother. This is hatred from the heart to intentionally hurt a brother. In verse 11, John says the one who hates his brother is walking in darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

They are so far in the darkness, they can't see the Truth, and they are willingly ignorant of the Truth. The darkness has blinded their eyes. 2 Corinthians 4:4 tells us they are those “*whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them*”

Because they have rejected the command from God and do not believe the Word of Eternal Life sent from the Father, their eyes are blinded by darkness. But those who receive the Light have their path illuminated by the Word of God, and we do know where we are going because our eyes are fixed on Jesus.

When you receive the command of Eternal Life by believing in Jesus; these Words of Life now abide in you.
Faith in Jesus then binds us to His Eternal Life.

✧ **THIS IS THE BOND OF PERFECTION IN LOVE** ✧

This perfected Love is then displayed in an outward expression of love toward God and the brethren

✧ **AND THIS IS THE DEMONSTRATION OF ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN YOU** ✧

There is no cause for stumbling in you, there is no skandalon, *σκάνδαλον*. There is no hate for your brother, but rather you love the brethren because you love God. You abide in Him, and His Word abides in you.

And when you are in this Fellowship, nothing can separate you from

✧ **THE PERFECTED LOVE OF GOD** ✧

ⁱ From the beginning of Jesus' ministry when He walked and talked with His disciples. It is the Word of Jesus they physically heard from Him from the beginning of His ministry, 1 John 1:1-5. When Jesus came to this earth, He was and still is the Word of Life, and He spoke the Words of Life, John 6:68-69-⁶⁸ *But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."* ⁶⁹ *Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* This is the same Word, the same commandment of Eternal Life spoken since before the foundation of the world. And the pivotal point in which this old commandment now becomes new is the cross. It's not that the commandment became new, but now through Jesus, namely His death and resurrection, we are in a New Covenant in which we now have access into this Eternal Life through Him because we were reborn in Him and in Him is Eternal Life, John 17:2-3.

ⁱⁱ From the beginning of the Law and Prophets because the message of Eternal Life, namely of Jesus' death and resurrection, was written in the Prophets, but retained as a mystery until this present age, Is 53; Ps 22; Ps 16; Dan 9; Lk 24:7; Jn 5:46. Nobody in the Old Covenant had the full understanding of the Father's redemptive plan. It was a mystery hidden from before the foundation of the world, "*for had they know, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*", 1 Cor 2:8. The commandment was the message of Love foreshadowing Jesus. This is why in Matthew 22:37-40-³⁷ *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* ³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* This message of Love in the Old Covenant was a foreshadowing of this bond of perfection that could only be possible in Jesus Christ in the New Covenant.

ⁱⁱⁱ From the beginning, which is to say, before Creation, before the foundation of the world, it was determined that Jesus would be our propitiation, Jn 1:1-5; 1 Pet 1:20; Eph 1:4; Acts 2:23; Rev 13:8; Matt 25:34. It is the Word that was in the beginning with God. Before the foundation of the world, up in Heaven, the Trinity established the plan of redemption for mankind, 1 John 5:7. Before man was even created, God knew man would sin and that we would need a Savior. The plan from the beginning was to send Jesus, the Word of God to bring the message of Eternal Life, that through His blood, that is the Propitiation, we might have Everlasting Life in Him. And this plan was established before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet 1:20; Eph 1:4; Acts 2:23; Rev 13:8; Matt 25:34. You can't get much older than that.