The New, Old Commandment



1. **This commandment is not new in the sense that the Jews have had this teaching from the beginning of the words of God being passed down to them, 2:7.**

- (1 John 2:7 ESV) Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, **but an old commandment that you had from the beginning**. **The old commandment is the word that you have heard**.

This old/new command is expressed in a variety of ways throughout both the old and new testaments–love one another, love your friend, love the other, love your brother, love your neighbor, love the foreigner and even love your enemy.

A. The command to love one another comes from both God the Father *(his commandment)* and God the Son *(my commandment)*.

- (1 John 3:23 ESV) And **this is his commandment**, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ **and love one another**, just as he has commanded us.
- (John 15:12 ESV) **This is my commandment**, that you **love one another** as I have loved you.

B. Because God is inherently love this is exactly what we should expect to see—love from the very beginning and throughout God's interaction and communication with his human creation.

- (1 John 4:7–8 ESV) Beloved, **let us love one another, for love is from God**, and whoever loves has been **born of God** and **knows God**. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, **because God is love**.

C. The logical conclusion then is that anyone who does not love as one born of God does not know God.

D. Loving our neighbor reflects the character of God and is clearly taught in the five books of Moses, aka the Law, the Pentateuch, the Torah.

E. Loving our neighbor shows our love, reverence and submission to the LORD as we obey him in our relationship with other humans.

i. Do not hate in your heart, but warn your neighbor frankly of his sin and do not take vengeance or bear a grudge, but love your neighbor as yourself.

- (Leviticus 19:17–18 ESV) **You shall not hate your brother in your heart**, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, **lest you incur sin because of him**. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself**: **I am the LORD**.

ii. Do no wrong to those who are strangers but treat them as one of your own – meaning fair judgment and no cheating or taking advantage of in business.

- (Leviticus 19:33–36 ESV) **When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong**. 34 You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, **and you shall love him as yourself**, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: **I am the LORD your God**. 35 "**You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity**. 36 You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: **I am the LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt."
- (Romans 13:10a ESV) **Love does no wrong to a neighbor**. ***(See above, Lev. 19:35.)***

iii. Christ commands – love your enemy.

- (Matthew 5:43–44 ESV) You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 **But I say to you, Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you.

F. John presents the Genesis account of Cain as the antithesis of loving one another.

- (1 John 3:11–12 ESV) For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, **that we should love one another**. 12 **We should not be like Cain**, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? **Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous**.

G. Biblically then we should see loving our neighbor as fruit in the life of the one who obeys and loves God first and foremost—the most important command.

- (Deuteronomy 6:4–5 ESV) Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- (Mark 12:29–31 ESV) Jesus answered, "**The most important is**, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your

strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

H. In obeying this command our behavior reflects God our Father who is impartial, fair and just ... and loving the sojourner reflects our view of God in our reverent actions and obedience to God.

- (Deuteronomy 10:17–20 ESV) For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.

I. This is the word which they heard both by oral tradition and then written down by holy men of God.

- (1 John 2:7b ESV) The old commandment is the word that you have heard.
- (2 Peter 1:19a, 21 ESV) And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place ... For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Moses is credited for "writing" the first five books of the Bible as inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. So "the word that you have heard" was not written down until the time of Moses some 2,500 years after creation, around 1,500 B.C.

2. Not a new command but at the same time it is new as witnessed in the fuller revelation when the Word became flesh and lived among us and in the lives of those who believe in his name, 2:8.

- (1 John 2:8 ESV) At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.
- (John 13:34 ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
- (2 John 5–6 ESV) And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

A. Loving one another is a witness of the true light shining in the lives of those who believe in Christ.

B. Those who follow Christ do not walk in darkness.

- (John 8:12 ESV) Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

C. By the default rationale of the natural mind—what seems right—people prefer the darkness rather than the light (including what it means to love someone).

- (John 3:19 ESV) And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

3. Hating one's brother exposes the spiritual state of the person as "*still in the darkness*," 2:9-11.

- (1 John 2:9–11 ESV) Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever 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.

A. No matter what the person professes about his life, if he hates a member of the family of God, he gives evidence that he is still in the darkness.

B. Hating one's brother is in direct opposition to the nature of the new commandment, the nature of God and the new nature of the one who knows God.

C. Whoever says he is in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness

D. The phrase "is still in the darkness" suggests the person is deceived thinking he is in the light when in reality he is still in the darkness.

E. Abiding in the light is not a hit-or-miss, subjective, emotional state of mind but a conscious decision to obey God and love your brothers and sisters in Christ in the way that God speaks of love.

F. The person who hates a member of God's family is still in darkness, lives in darkness and does not know where he is going regarding his life now and in regard to his eternal destination.

G. This person has no true perspective of his life

because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

- (Matthew 6:22–23 NLT) **Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body**. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. 23 **But when your eye is unhealthy**, **your whole body is filled with darkness**. **And if the light you think you have is actually darkness**, **how deep that darkness is**!

CONCLUSION: Is it possible that in some areas of your life that you prefer darkness rather than light?

- (John 3:19 ESV) **And this is the judgment**: the light has come into the world, and **people loved the darkness rather than the light** because their works were evil.

STARTLING ... BUT THINK ABOUT IT ... **until a person is willing to submit all of his or her thoughts in obedience to Christ he reveals that in certain areas of his theology he has a preference, even a love, for darkness rather than light.**

- (2 Corinthians 10:5–6 ESV) We destroy arguments and **every lofty opinion** raised against the knowledge of God, **and take every thought captive to obey Christ**, 6 **being ready** to punish every disobedience, **when your obedience is complete**.

So to do what is best for the person we care for we need to know what God means when he speaks of love and hate. And to do that we must submit our ideas of love and hate to the word of God. We must allow God to defeat our pride as we bring our lofty opinions and submit them in obedience to Christ.

Here's why ... because if we don't ... we will get love wrong ... and many professing Christians very often get love wrong ... preferring to do things for people that fits what that person believes to be love ... what makes them feel better ... and that which they consider to be and interpret as acts of love.

But here's the problem ... they don't know ... the unbeliever does not know what love is; they do not know what is best for them ... because they are in the darkness and they only know love and hate according to the ways of this earth ... according to the darkness.

THREE MUST ANSWER QUESTIONS ...

1) Do we know what God means and do we agree with him when he speaks of love?

2) Do we know what God means and do we agree with him when he speaks of hate?

3) Have we ever consciously submitted our definitions of love and hate to the word of God to see if we do know and agree with God?

WE NEED TO TAKE THIS "LIST" VERY SERIOUSLY — HOW GOD DEFINES LOVE ... 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–7 ...

- **Love is patient and kind.**
- **Love does not envy or boast.**
- **It is not arrogant or rude.**
- **It does not insist on its own way.**
- **It is not irritable or resentful.**
- **It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.**
- **Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**
- **Love lays down his life for his brothers.**
  - (1 John 3:16 ESV) **By this we know love**, that he laid down his life for us, **and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers**.
- **Love lives according to God's commandments.**
  - (2 John 6 ESV) **And this is love**, **that we walk according to his commandments**; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, **so that you should walk in it**.

FINAL QUESTIONS FOR TAKE HOME ...

- **Do I know love?**
- **How do I know love?**
- **What am I going to do about it?**

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