

Dr. Cecil A. Fayard
Elliott Baptist Church
June 8, 2003

The Commandment of First John
I John 2:7-11

INTRO: There is one commandment in First John that is The Commandment of the book. Over and over in this book of First John, The Commandment is repeated (2:5, 3:11, 14, 16-18, 23; 4:7-12, 16, 19-21; 5:2-3). The Commandment of First John is The Commandment to love. It refers to God's love for us, our love for Him, and our love one for another.

In The Commandment to love, all the other commandments are wrapped (Matt 22:37-40; Rom 13:8).

I. VSS 7-8, THE COMMANDMENT OF LOVE IS OLD AND IT IS NEW

A. Vs 7, The commandment of love is old.

1. There is not contradiction between verses seven and eight. Love is old in that "God is love" (I Jn 4:8). Love is new to the sinner who experiences it for the first time in salvation (Rom 5:5-8).
2. Again we want to note that love is not new. God has been loving folks throughout eternity. He has set His particular love upon His chosen people.
 - a) Before God created man, He had love for him. Before man ever sinned, God in His love provided the way to have sins taken away. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8).
 - b) The Bible says that "We love him, because he first loved us" (4:19).
 - c) This love, a love for sinners, is not a New Testament concept alone for I Cor 15:3-4 tells us "that Christ died according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." The scriptures referred to here are the Old Testament scriptures.
 - d) Jeremiah 31:3 tells of God's love for His own. This love is an everlasting love. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."
3. Many folks are looking for something new! Friends, we need the old, old story of Jesus and His love. Many are caught up in all kinds of heresies. We need to anchor in "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
4. "The Greek suggests that though given long ago, the command remains in force" (Vaughn 44). Plummer puts it this way: "It was old but not obsolete, ancient, but not antiquated" (40).
5. "The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning."

- a) John preached the Word of God, and He preached God the Word (Jn 1:1).
 - b) He preached the Gospel as seen in Abraham offering Isaac, the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. Paul said: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...."
- B. Vs 8, The commandment of love is new.
- 1. It is new to the man who has just been saved (II Cor 5:17).
 - a) Vaughn says: "It is new in practice and application."
 - b) This love is as old as the Gospel is and as new as the sinner's experience of salvation when he believes.
 - c) Folks have been experiencing the love of Christ for centuries; but each time a sinner is converted, this love is brand new to the new born Christian.
 - 2. This commandment is new in principle.
 - a) The love of Christ is our model (Jn 13:34-35).
 - b) Jesus loves His own. He will always love them (Jn 13:1). We are to love each other with this kind of love (Eph 4:32).
 - c) The law of love that is true in Jesus is true in believers. "Which thing is true in him and in you."
 - 3. "Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."
 - a) There was a time when we were in darkness, but now the darkness is past (Col 1:12-14).
 - b) We heard the Gospel and the light shined out of darkness (II Cor 4:3-6).
 - c) The true light is Jesus (John 1:4, 6-9).
 - d) The light has impacted the life of the true believer (Jn 5:24).

II. VSS 9-11, RESPONDING TO THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE

- A. Vs 9, The way we respond to the command to love reveals our true character.
- 1. "He that saith." This points to inconsistency in talk and walk, in profession and conduct.
 - a) There are those today, as in John's day, who claim great enlightenment, great spirituality; yet their conduct does not change.
 - b) A lack of love is proof that there has been no inner change.
 - 2. "He that saith he is in the light...." The man who claims to be "in the light," is one who says he has been regenerated.
 - 3. "Hateth." This word is in the present tense meaning one whose hatred is settled and fixed as a principle in life.
 - 4. The man who claims regeneration yet has hatred as a way of life "is in darkness even until now."
- B. Vs 11, This verse and the last part of verse nine give us three characteristics of the man who hates.
- 1. "Is in darkness."

- a) He claims to be born again, but his daily practice makes null and void his claim. He is still in the realm of darkness and needs the light of the Gospel.
 - b) “The man who hates, in spite of the fact that he may have an outward connection with the Christian community, has really never left the darkness” (Vaughn 47).
2. “Walketh in darkness.”
- a) This man is groping in darkness. Many may try to help him, but he is blind until the Holy Spirit peradventure opens his eyes.
 - b) To walk in darkness speaks of action, of conduct, of friends that he runs with, of the places he goes.
 - c) “His conduct matches his character; he cannot act otherwise than he is, or walk in any region other than that where his habitation lies” (Findlay 160).
3. “Knoweth not whither he goeth.”
- a) To know the Lord, to be in His light is to have direction. To be lost, to be in darkness is to have no direction. It is to wander around in moral and spiritual night.
 - b) The destiny of the hate filled man is eternal darkness.
- C. Vs 10, Abiding in the light.
- 1. To abide in the light is to be always in the light. Love for our brother is our indication that we know the true light, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The person who walks in the light knows where he is headed. He is not stumbling and groping along in the dark.
 - a) Practice speaks louder than profession.
 - b) Because the one who loves is not stumbling around his life is not prone to trip up others.

CONCLUSION: Are you walking in the light?