

## **A NEW COMMAND**

### **1 JOHN 2:7-14**

In our study of 1 John, last time we introduced the question:

*“How can we know for sure that we belong to God’s family?”*

“Can we KNOW for sure?”

That’s a question many “church-going people” ask themselves.

John responds to that concern in 2:3-27.

### **JOHN’S PURPOSES**

1. That we might enjoy fellowship 1:3

–with other people – with God

2. That we might have authentic joy 1:4

### **JOHN’S MESSAGE:**

Amos 3:3: *“Can two walk together unless they agree?”*

To enjoy fellowship with God, we must be like Him.

### **GOD’S HOLINESS 1:5-3:10**

#### **Description of God 1:5**

“God is Light” => God is HOLY

#### **Implications for God’s children 1:6-3:10**

If God is holy, then His children ought to reflect His character.

We ought to be “a chip off the old block!”

We should resemble our Father.

WE should be holy.

Summary: Our need to walk in holiness 1:6-7

*To enjoy fellowship with a holy God, we must be holy!*

[But, when we come up short...]

God has made provision for our restoration to holiness

1:8-2:2

None of us is *totally* holy *all* the time. 8, 10

When we “agree with God concerning our sin, He forgives and cleanses us. 9

God wants us to enjoy fellowship with Him, by *avoiding* sin 2:1a

But, when we DO sin, God provides a defense attorney: Jesus 2:1b-2

## **EVIDENCE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD 2:3-27**

*4 evidences we're in fellowship with God:*

### **1. Obedience to His Commands in General 2:3-6**

***We know that we know Him, when we're keeping His commands 3***

*Contradictory life characteristics:*

*SAYS he knows Him +*

*DOESN'T keep His commands = Liar 4*

*God's love has been perfected in people who keep His commands 5a*

*How do we know that we're in fellowship with Him? 5b-6*

***when we're walking as He walked 6***

*Consistent life characteristics:*

*SAYS he abides in Him => Ought to walk as HE walked!*

*Unless we're walking as He walked, we have no basis to claim we are abiding in Him!*

**Today we'll consider the 2<sup>nd</sup> evidence that we're in fellowship with God?**

*“How do I know one when I see one?” –Specifically, . . .*

## **2. OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER 2:7-14**

3-6 General obedience to His commands

=> Specifically, loving one another 7-11

### **The command 7-11**

A “new” / “old” command

**7-8** *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. 8 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.*

**An old command 7**

**A new command 8**

In one sense, it’s the oldest commandment in the book!

*“Love your neighbor as you love yourself!”*

In the context of the church, it takes on a totally new meaning.

We’re family.

The world hates God’s children.

We’ve been “called out” from the world.

We’re not like the world.

We’re light in the darkness.

The world hates the light.

But God’s true children love one another—that’s what sets us apart.

Christ demonstrated the significance of this command.

It's also evident in His children

It's true in Him AND in us!

Because God is already at work in the world, the darkness is beginning to pass away

& the light is already starting to shine *through us*.

We're on the right path, though it's not yet all God wants it to be.

The revelation of the light isn't complete—it isn't a perfect reflection of God's light. –But it IS becoming evident to people who are watching us.

### **Contradictory life characteristics: 9**

*“Whoever says he is in the light & hates his brother is still in darkness.”*

**SAYS he's in light**

+ **HATES brother**

=> **Still in darkness**

**Consistent life characteristics: 10** *Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling”*

**LOVES brother**

=> **ABIDES in light**

+ **No cause to stumble**

The only way any of us will live that way is by abiding in Him.

He produces HIS light in us!

The other side of the coin => **11**

*“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.”*

**HATES brother**=> **In darkness**+ **WALKS in darkness**+ **Doesn't know where he's going**

A person characterized by hatred for his brother isn't in the light.

He's still in the darkness.

He's walking in darkness.

*Can't see where he's going!*

**Darkness has blinded him**

He can't see!

***If you're part of the family, you'll love your brothers.***

This doesn't mean you'll love every one, every day.

Some members of our family are hard to love!

But this is a general response to belonging to the family.

Members of an authentic family love each other.

–especially if it's a family characterized by authentic love.

–when the Father's identifying characteristic is love.

**Therefore, when we know we love God's children,**

**it gives US assurance that we belong to His loving family.**

**Parenthesis: His confidence based on our experience**

**12-14** *I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.*

<sup>13</sup>*I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.*

*I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.*

*I write to you, children, because you know the Father.*

*<sup>14</sup>I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

**We've all seen God's work in our lives–at different maturity levels**

Assumes that all three levels genuinely belong to the family.

John wants them to know that he's convinced his readers belong to the family.

They may be at different levels, but he assumes that they have the real thing.

He repeats list– (12 => 13-14)

He's written before–now he writes again, always assuming they belong to the family.

He repeats it, because it's important!

He's confident he can appeal to us on the basis of our experience, because we've seen in distinct ways–at different maturity levels–how God has changed our lives.

“Children= “descendants”–even immature ones

2:12 = “descendants”–without regard to age or size.

They are their father's children.

2:14 = small children, little ones, immature children

The two words together tell us

he is referring to those who are God's children

–no matter how immature

=> **Your sins are forgiven**

**You have known the Father.**

An appropriate characteristic for God's children!

However childish or immature we may be, God's children can be sure that our sins are forgiven and we know the Father personally.

**Parents => You have known the One Who is from the beginning.**

These seem to represent mature, older saints who have been around for a while.

They have stability of faith from having known the Eternal One.

**Young men=strong, brave, bold, "warriors"**

**=> You have defeated the evil one.**

**You are strong.**

**The Word of God ABIDES in you.**

**If you're part of the family, you experience God's work in your life!**

**-at your maturity level!**

The experience won't be the same for everyone.

All members of the family WILL experience God's work in our life at SOME level!

Whatever level of maturity we're on, we can ENJOY FELLOWSHIP with Him, if we abide in Him and walk as He walked.

**One way we should ALL experience God's work in us is by our love for one another!**

Main thought in this section:

When we're obeying his commands, especially when we're obeying His command to love one another, . . .

*we KNOW we're His children!*

*That confidence gives us assurance before Him.*

## **HOW SHOULD THIS AFFECT US?**

**We can KNOW that we know Him!**

We'll never be perfect.

But there will be evidence we can SEE that will result in assurance.

**We must understand the crucial importance of our love for one another.**

If we hate God's people, . . .

If we want to avoid the people of God, . . .

there's good cause to doubt that we really belong to Him.

**When we abide in Him, He produces His love in us and we will naturally love His people.**

Corollary we'll look at later in our study of 1 John:

You can't hate your brother and enjoy fellowship with God at the same time.