

# The Epistles of John

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Week 26: 1 John 2:7-11

The one who understands will also do the works that pertain to the duty of virtue, but someone who does the works is not necessarily among those who understand. John teaches that a man of perfect understanding does these things out of love.

Clement of Alexandria

# 1 John 2:7-11

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1 John 2:7–11 (ESV)

*7 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.*

*9 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.*

## 1 John 2:7-11

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What we have now is amplification on several major themes, and like a rondo, they keep coming around again and again. So we're going to hear about **love**. We're going to hear about **commandments**. We're going to hear about **sin**. We're going to hear about **truth**, and **light**, and **darkness**.

# 1 John 2:7-11

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*7 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**.*

- John begins these verses with beloved, a term of endearment
- John's usage is of a piece with other General Epistles whose authors frequently use "beloved" to connote both heartfelt human closeness and grateful acknowledgment of the corporate experience of undeserved divine favor

# 1 John 2:7-11

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## An Old Command or a New Command?

How can the author say, 'I am **not** writing you a new command' (2:7), and then immediately afterwards say, **Yet I am** writing you a new command? The clue to resolving this apparent contradiction is to be found in John 13:34, where Jesus says, '*A new commandment I give you: Love one another.*' The command to love one another was described by Jesus himself as a 'new command'. However, the ministry of the historical Jesus was for the author long past. So the 'new command' of Jesus was the 'old command' for the author and his readers, and it was something his readers had heard long ago, when they first received the gospel. The striking juxtaposition of what appear to be contradictory statements, then, is the author's way of saying that he is not imposing some novel obligation upon his readers, but only recalling them to what they have known from the very beginning of their Christian walk.

## 1 John 2:7-11

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***the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining***

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."*

1 John 1:5 (ESV)

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

## 1 John 2:7-11

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In his death and resurrection the power of sin and death was broken and the kingdom was inaugurated.

The transformed lives of his followers provide infallible evidence for this victory. The battle, however, is not over.

Despite the fact that the victory over darkness has been secured, the complete eradication of evil and the end of the old age will not occur until the consummation of all things.



# 1 John 2:7-11

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9 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.

## 1 John 2:7-11

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### **Controversy: Brother *or* Brother and Sister?**

A word regarding brother or sister is in order. The original Greek text reads adelphon autou or, literally, his brother. Although the author uses a masculine noun here, it is clear that he generally means a person who is a member of the Christian community and *not* just males in that community. The word adelphos is used sixteen times in the letter for “spiritual relatives”. Those spiritual relatives could be either male or female. In fact, the word brother is a common NT expression for a believer’s “spiritual relative.” Only rarely does a NT writer take time to specifically refer to “brother and sister” (cf. 1 Cor 7:15; James 2:15).

# 1 John 2:7-11

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*9 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.*

There are no shades of gray when it comes to John's discussion of an individual's relationship with God. One is either in the light or in darkness. One either loves his brother or hates him

# 1 John 2:7-11

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Romans 13:12 (HCSB)

*The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near, so let us discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

The test of obedience to the command to love surfaces when we come to terms with those whom we have difficulty loving.

The command to love is a command to work at relationships that have gone wrong.

## 1 John 2:7-11

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John wants us to see that spiritual life is characterized by positive acts of love, and that such love will be seen in the fellowship of the church as well as in our attitude to other people generally.

## Application for This Week

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We have a New, Old Command: that we love each other

The darkness is decreasing as the light increases. That light shines through us as we show it by loving and caring for one another

Light is tied inextricably to love while Darkness is tied inextricably to hate.

# Homework

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*My blog with past lessons is:*

[www.UnapologeticallyJohn.com](http://www.UnapologeticallyJohn.com)

Thank you for coming!

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See you back next week