

Love Test

1 John 2:7-11

Introduction

The identification of a Christian has always been love. It is love for one another that is the thing that separates us from the world. Jesus prayed that we be unite—that the world will know that we belong to Him. And the bond that connects us is love. Here John introduces another test, the love test. Here he goes one step further. Not only will the world identify us, but we can know that we are saved through our love for one another.

I. The Commandment (7-8)

- word you have heard
 - **2 John 5** And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.
- the old commandment
 - **Leviticus 19:18** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.
 - **Deuteronomy 6:5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
 - **Matthew 22:34-40** But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. (35) Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" (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."
 - **Matthew 5:43-44** "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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (45) that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? (48) Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Note: Jesus said, "You have heard said"—Jews found it difficult to fulfill the love command. They saw everything that was different from them something to be shunned and disliked. He illustrated this point with the Good Samaritan—with the priest and the scribe.
- the new commandment
 - Note:** "new" not in time, but fresh in quality...New covenant
 - true in Him
 - Note:** He fulfilled the very law of God. He loved fully in the sense of the OT commands...realized in Him. As He said in Matthew 5:40...He was perfect in every way.
 - true in you
 - Note:** Love His people from the power of the Holy Spirit—as God originally intended.
 - Transition:** We are able to love because of our new nature in Christ.
 - darkness is passing away
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
 - **Colossians 1:13** He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
 - **1 Peter 2:9-10** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (10) who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

- **John 8:12** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Note: It is a new commandment because it is new in us...not necessarily new in time, but new in quality...just as new wineskins hold new wine...it is a new experience for us a Fruit of the Spirit.

Transition: John emphasizes that we are living in the new commandment, so he wants his readers to understand that some claim to be enlightened but their own words do not match their own actions. To walk in the light of God is to walk in love because God's light is the light of love. There is nothing that separates the two. How can we know we are Christians? It is through our love for others that really emphasizes our changed nature. John presents to us the two groups of people as a measuring stick so that we can evaluate ourselves.

II. The Test (9-11)

- love-vs-hatred
 - Test shown through love (love = action)
 - **John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
 - Hatred is absence of work done in love
 - **Matt 25:42-43** for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; (43) I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'
- The unbeliever (This is the general practice...everyday living)
 - In darkness (**Titus 3:3**) (belonging to the realm of darkness...continually in the sphere of action in darkness. World hides itself in false comfort. Rejection of God's truth and continual persistence in sin.)
 - Led by darkness (governed by circumstances that fulfill their own desires)

Illustration: Religious leaders in Jesus' day—they claimed to know God but through their own actions, they show hatred to God's truth and to others. When we are unconcerned about a person or their destiny...that's hatred.
 - Blinded by darkness (no knowledge of the future...and the consequences of darkness)
 - Stumbling block (He himself stumbles and causes others to stumble.)

Illustration: Moving up the corporate ladder

Note: John leaves the possibility that someone might repent ("until now") and come to the light of truth and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- The believer
 - In light (belonging to the light...living in the light)
 - Led by the Spirit
 - Opened eyes (enlightened)
 - Does not stumble (a believer wants the best for others—general practice)

Conclusion

What does this all mean? How are the love exhibited in us? Three ways (Francis Schaeffer):

- 1) When a Christian has failed to love his brother, he will go and ask for forgiveness.
- 2) Forgiving others...especially when the other has not repented.
- 3) Showing love, even at a high cost—Good Samaritan (cost him money and time).

Love one another.