

1 John 2:7-8 Love one Another; Be the Light of the World

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you

When we understand what God has done for us in sending Jesus to the Cross, and what Jesus has done in dying for us, for our sins so that we can have relationship with God, then we love God.

We obey God because we understand that God is love, and that following all His commandments and instructions will produce the very best life we can have. Our obedience also functions as a proof to us that we are saved because we obey God's commandments. Since the flesh in no way wants to obey God, then our obedience comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and so proof that we are saved. We are obedient to God out of love for Him. The one who lives in obedience, keeping His Word, Truly has a relationship with God. We love God, and so we want to imitate the lifestyle of Jesus. We have an obligation to walk as He walked, and a desire to do so.

7 Beloved

John is preaching to the Church, whom he loves as his brothers and sisters in Christ. He's talking to believers here, he's talking to us, reminding us to obey God and His commandments.

I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning;

Since obedience to Jesus' commands is a primary determinant of our personal intimacy with God, John wants to remind them that they shouldn't be shocked by His Words. This was God's plan from the beginning 1 John 3:11 **11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another;** John really wants us to know that loving one another with the love of Christ has always been God's expectation of us.

Jesus said in **John 13:34-35 34 I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.**" And the again in **John 15:17 This I command you, that you love one another.** What was new from the perspective of Jesus' earthly ministry was now understood to be so foundational to Christian life, that it seemed old to many of the believers, even though John was there personally, when it was first given.

It helps to understand that Jesus' original command to love one another was pretty radical, even all by itself. In the Old Testament, Jews were commanded to love one another as brothers, but only other Jews were considered their brethren. Gentiles were excluded. And the implication that the Jewish Rabbi's drew from this was that they should hate their enemies. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 5:43 **43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'** Jesus didn't say that God said hate your enemy, but that they had been taught that God had said hate your enemy. Nowhere in the Old Testament does it say this. So, Jesus goes on to correct this false teaching by saying in Matthew 5:44 **44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** So, not only are we to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, but we are to love those who make themselves our enemies, trying to do good for them, and blessing and not cursing them, and praying for those who persecute and attack us. Quite a difference from what they'd previously been taught.

the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

John wants to let them know that Jesus' command to them to love one another, and all the teachings of Jesus are completely consistent with the Word of God. They are not only to receive it, but to view it as a command that has always been in force for the people of God, and will always be, so we need to obey it now, in our daily lives. To abide in Jesus is to keep His Word, and we can only do this out of love for Jesus. John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, **"If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him.** This fellowship with Jesus, fellowship with God is based on loving Jesus and following His Word. We are One in obedience to Jesus, walking in the light, as He is in the light. And that means that we are one with each other as well. This is what Jesus purchased for us on Calvary.

It's keeping His Word that is our life in Him. It's His Word that's a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Our relationship with Him, the Living Word is also the source of our power. John 15:7 **7 If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** So, abiding in His Word by obedience means abiding in His power, and ultimately in the resurrection power that raised Him from the dead. John 8:51 **Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone follows My word, he will never see death.** That's why Romans 8:11 lets us know: **11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** That's how important this is. And so John is telling each of them, individually, that they must keep fellowship with God by obeying His Word, and that this shouldn't surprise them—it's always been this way, and it will always be this way.

8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you,

So John wants to share with them a new aspect of this old commandment to Love one another with the Love that Jesus has shown to us. John is giving us a new insight, or greater appreciation of this truth from the Bible, considering the life of Jesus who has given us this one new command.

The life of Jesus illuminated the nature of God for us. He gave us the power to love one another through the Holy Spirit's work in our heart. We see this great self-sacrificing love that was "true in Him," true in Jesus, our example. He demonstrated His love through His entire life spent healing the sick, caring for the poor and needy, teaching them the Truth from God, washing the disciples' feet in John 13, and especially in dying on the cross for our sins, so that we can be saved. Jesus embodies the new commandment.

because the darkness is passing away

The "darkness" of their old way of life, their former sinful life is passing away. John is urging us, as Paul did in 2 Cor 5:17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** Or Col 3:10 **And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** Col 3:1-3 **If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** Eph 4:22 **To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.** And John is going to tell us in a couple of weeks in 1 John 2:17 **The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.** So we should not walk in in darkness, that we know is going to pass away along with this earth some day, but in newness of life—in light **and the true Light is already shining.**

And so, as we follow Him, it should be as true for us as it was for Jesus. We should express God's love for people through our loving kindness and self-sacrifice toward them, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. Since we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, urging us to continue Jesus' ministry on earth through us, we can be the vessels from which **(and) the true Light is already shining.** And hopefully shining through us to serve others! As Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:14-16 **14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**