

# 1 John Chapter 2

## Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places

In chapter 1, we were confronted with our obedience to commandments. There are 4 things that we need to know as believers about obedience:

1. Christ's Blood is sufficient and powerful enough to forgive you, sanctify you and make you just in the sight of God. Nothing more can be added and certainly anything you do now can cause Him to rescind His Promises of everlasting life with Him.
2. Obedience is a struggle because we live in a sin-filled world. But, that is not to be an excuse for giving in to it.
3. Paul tells us in [Romans 6:11-14 NKJV](#)
  - a. Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. [\(12\)](#) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. [\(13\)](#) And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. [\(14\)](#) **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

- b. **How many times have you had the occasion to quote this verse? We quote it when someone tells us we need to be obedient to some “law” in the Bible.**
  - i. **We need to look at the verse a little more carefully: “for sin shall not have dominion over you because”**
  - ii. **It’s not that you no longer have to obey, but the motivation for obedience comes from another Source: Grace! God’s unmerited favor motivates us and the Holy Spirit within us empowers us to want to joyfully obey Him.**
  - iii. **Before, it was an external motivation, the Law! Do it or else.**

4. David Guzik writes:

- a. When one becomes a Christian, there is a change in their relationship with sin. Sin is not eliminated in the believer until he comes to glory, **but their relationship to sin is changed** when they truly become a Christian.
  - i. A Christian no longer loves sin as he once did.
  - ii. A Christian no longer brags about their sin as he once did.
  - iii. A Christian no longer *plans* to sin as he once did.

- iv. A Christian no longer fondly remembers his sin as he once did.
- v. A Christian never fully enjoys his sin as he once did.
- vi. A Christian no longer is comfortable in habitual sin as he once was.

And why is this? We are under Grace – that all-sufficient, unmerited favor we have from God that causes us to have peace with Him, have Fellowship or Communion with the Father and Son AND therefore we want to please Him because we are so grateful that he’s removed us from the darkness and into His marvelous light!

Considering all of this, John reminds of an Old Commandment and a New commandment.

Turn to 1 John 2:7

**1Jn 2:7** Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

**1Jn 2:8** Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

John says he's not writing a new commandment to us but an old one you heard from the beginning.

Then he says he's writing a new commandment.

I'M SO CONFUSED!

But, it's just that we have to dig a little or, be patient and believe that John will explain himself...

So, what is this commandment that is both Old and New? John doesn't say...he moves on to another test but the test also reveals the commandment.

But, I'll present it here because he doesn't actually state what it is until Chapter 3.

Here's are the hints:

1. John has been writing about fellowship. So this 'old' commandment might be related to that.
2. John knows his readers would most likely know the "Old" commandment from Leviticus:
  - a. Lev 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.
  - b. **This, of course, was stated by Jesus when asked about the greatest commandment (found in Matthew 22:37-40).**

So the "old" commandment is "old" but how is it new?

Jesus said in John 13:24: **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

But, you ask, how is the new commandment different from the old?

Jesus said “as I have loved you”. How? Sacrificially, tenderly, compassionately, honestly in actions and not just with words!

And John reminds us that this commandment is a “thing that is true in Him and in you”...the word ‘true’ here means ‘revealed as in no longer concealed’ and not only **in Him but in us as well!!** Why is this so?

because the darkness (of sin) is passing away, and the true light is already shining. (the word for true here means, well, true). IT IS BECAUSE OF THE TRUE LIGHT THAT HAS ENTERED THE WORLD IS SHINING IN HIM AND, AS BELIEVERS, IT IS IN US – THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST!

NOTE that John has not actually said what the old and new commandment is.

But that doesn’t stop him from giving us another test:

**1Jn 2:9** He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

**1Jn 2:10** He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him

**1Jn 2:11** But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

In verses 9 thru 11 are the self-tests you can take to know where you are with this commandment to love others.

**First**, who is my brother? The context in the original OT command was “the family of God -- Israel”. Most believe that John was also referencing the “church family” – the whole church family!

But what about those outside the body? Should we love them sacrificially? Great Question Pastor Stu! I think this is a matter of spiritual discernment and how the Holy Spirit guides you...I wouldn't give an alcoholic money, that's not love. However, I would buy someone a meal or clothing or a blanket; Truly seek the LORD on this, remembering how He treated you while you were still a sinner.

**Second**, is not as much a test as it is a truth: if you are continually loving others, it is a good indication that you are also continually abiding in His light and that light is the cause or motivation for Your expressed Love. It is the Fruit of the Spirit! And in this Light, there ought not to be any reason to stumble because this Light guides your very steps. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

**Third**, Do you hate someone? That is, are you a hateful person and given the circumstances of your life, feel as though you have a right to be so? John says 3 things:

1. Do not be in denial, you ARE in darkness (v9)
2. Being in the dark, you walk in it; your “works” are dark, and not pleasing the Lord! Perhaps as some believe, you are “controlled” by it – that is, the Prince of darkness! For darkness is always associated with evil. IT IS NOT TRUE what Flip Wilson said: The devil made me do it” ....nope you did it! It was your choice!
3. The darkness blinds the eye; This is like being in a cave and someone turns off the light. Immediately you are in total, absolute darkness. The first time I experienced this, the first thing I did is put my hand up to my face, touching my nose, and I could NOT see it! It was the strangest experience. Without light, we dared not take a step!
  - a. the Light of Jesus never blinds! It illuminates everything! Not just sin and your true need for a savior, but as you shine the light of Jesus, people see your good works and glorify the Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

### **John next encourages us. All of us!**

**1Jn 2:12** I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

In v12, “little children” is a term of endearment for all of us. He reminds us that our sins are forgiven and are continually forgiven – put away permanently! AND

remember, this is all for His Name's sake – absolutely not for anything we have done or not done!

1Jn 2:13 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.

1Jn 2:14 I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

(( (one day, we're going to have a teaching on roles and responsibilities in the church which will clear up any perceived gender issues in the Scriptures))).

**Father's:** these are normally older men of understanding of spiritual matters; men of wisdom who make sound judgments. These may be elders or leaders in the church but not necessarily so. They know God, and because they know Him experientially, they obey Him.

**Young men:** these are men up to about the age of 12-30 (as some commentators and Jewish sages believe). These are strong men who have fought the evil one and have been victorious; they know of the armor of God and use it!

**Little Children:** not the same word as in v12; this word

means young children and by extension, those young in the Lord. John only mentions these once, while the fathers and young men are mentioned twice. They are encouraged to continue to grow in their Knowledge of the Father!

The only difference when he addresses the fathers and young men twice is “I write” and “I have written”. Some believe the “I have written” is a way to reinforce that he just wrote or to encourage them to continue on the Path laid out before them. Don’t rest on what you think God is like, continue to grow in “the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”. And, be humbled by your victories knowing that these are God’s, not yours.

**1Jn 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

This is best thought of as the “world system”, those ideas, philosophies and practices which are NOT of God, which are not approved by Him. This is the opposite of and truly opposes the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are just visiting, just temporary residents awaiting our Bridegroom to come and snatch us away to be with him forever!

I’d like to take one of Jesus’s teachings in Matthew 6:24 out of context a bit to illustrate this issue with us

being in the world but not of the world (John 17:11-16)

**Mat 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

(the word mammon is wealth or avarice; it comes from a Chaldean word for confidence; confidence in the money which makes it an idol or confidence in yourself, perhaps making you an idol as well)

If you love the world, things of the world your loyalties are divided – and your priorities will be all out of whack. And, not just divided...John says that the Love of the Father is not in such a person; Again, remember, this is a full blown love of the world systems – you cannot be a Gnostic and a Christian at the same time.

And John has a word about the source of these worldly beliefs:

**1Jn 2:16** For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

There have been two pictures found in Scripture that portray what John is saying:

1. Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden

- a. **Genesis 3:5-12 NKJV** For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (6) So when the woman **saw** that the tree *was* good for **food**, that it *was* pleasant to the **eyes**, and a tree **desirable to make *one* wise**, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

2. Jesus in the Desert

- a. **FLESH: Matthew 4:2-3 NKJV** And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. (3) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."
- b. **PRIDE OF LIFE: Mat 4:5-6** Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, (6) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,' and, IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.' "
- c. **EYES: Matthew 4:8-9 NKJV** Again, the devil

took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (9) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

- i. Did not King David demonstrate his LUST of his eyes when he saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof?
- ii. There was a man named Achan who took that which was declared accursed by the LORD at the battle of Jericho. Joshua 7:21 **NKJV** When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

But be encouraged, he writes:

**1Jn 2:17** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

This truth is meant to comfort us! There will come a day when our flesh and the lust there of will be transformed into a glorious body! And in this body that we cannot even really imagine, we will be living

forever, with our God, Our Lord and King.

### **Warning Concerning Antichrists**

**1Jn 2:18** Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

This isn't a 'false christ' this is man who opposes Him and His people! He's an enemy. So, they were taught that there is "the antichrist", who Jesus and Paul called the "son of perdition"; the evil one! And there are many "antichrists" running around trying to create havoc in the church.

**1Jn 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

I think John is saying "it was good that they left the church because that proved that they were not of the body.

At CCW, we had to ask someone to leave....

**1Jn 2:20** But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

John Gill explains this idea of knowing all things:

it makes persons of quick understanding; it enlightens their understandings, refreshes their memories, and strengthens all the powers and faculties of the soul; it leads into the knowledge of all spiritual things, into all the mysteries of grace, and truths of the Gospel, into all things necessary for salvation;

This anointing is on all of us. The measure of which is determined by God the Holy Spirit. The Holy One is Messiah who is the source.

1Jn 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

If you know the truth, don't believe the lies! Test everything you hear/read and compare it against the truth of Scripture. Test every circumstance against the truth of Scripture and the Character of God!

1Jn 2:22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

1Jn 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Pretty simple test: Is Jesus the Christ or not?

If not, you're wasting your time with your man-made religion!

1Jn 2:24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

Let love abide in you. Don't fight the Holy Spirit – He is a gentleman and if in your self-will decide to sin (including hate, unforgiveness etc), He will warn you; He will help you (as in 1 Corinthians 10:13) but ultimately, He will respect your free will decision!

The point John is making again, if love abides, if it remains within you and is the source of your thoughts and actions towards others, then you are in fact abiding in the Son and the Father.

1Jn 2:25 And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

Be constant in your abiding (which is redundant since abiding means to stay); It happens by prayer and the Word; it is expressed in your praise and worship!

1Jn 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

There will always be someone who tries to deceive you! Not on the internet because everything you read there is true! **Paul said in 1 Thess 5:21, “test all things; hold fast what is good”**

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

“you don’t need anyone to teach you”. This doesn’t mean you are to reject all teaching, but rather, “don’t listen to false teachers!” Heed the “red-flags” – stop and confirm the truth – and reject the teaching and/or the teacher.

And the anointing is internal, not external like in the days of the Old Covenant. It abides in us always because it is a person – The Holy Spirit.

1Jn 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Abide in Him....need I say more? Stay put in Him.

If you haven’t read John 15, I highly recommend it! It’s Jesus’s teaching on abiding.

1Jn 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Christ, the righteous One, the Savior, the Mediator, the Justifier, the Sanctifier – get to know Him in all His revealed fulness!

“Practicing righteousness” has nothing to do with salvation. It has to do with the process of sanctification that results in our separating ourselves from the world and the lusts thereof.

And when you live righteously REMEMBER: He is the source; It’s not you, but Him in You. Humbling? YES. God gives grace to the humble as He promises in [Proverbs 3:34 NKJV](#) “Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.

(your translation might read “God resists the proud”.)

Beloved of God, while some of John's tests were hard and some of John's statements are difficult, I want you to leave here believing and assured by His Love, salvation and forgiveness for each of you. This is the "knowing" that John talked about. It was more than head knowledge, it was heart truth.

I titled this message "looking for love in all the wrong places" because I think that's one way we get in trouble and struggle in our walks.

And why do we look elsewhere when Jesus is here with us and in us?

And why might His love not satisfy us at all times?

Truly, nothing else will satisfy the soul as Jesus can and does.

How do I know that? Here's my test: before Christ, I was miserable and a miserable person to live with. I was angry, I was depressed, I was dishonest, I was addicted to porn, I did drugs and I drank. My mouth was foul. I was selfish; I WAS NOT SATISFIED; I WAS NOT AT PEACE except those times when I was high – but that was all an illusion. I believed the lies; I looked for love in all the wrong places and with all the wrong people! Thank God He sent my wife! Truly, GOD had other plans.

I am NOT perfect; I still get angry; I still get depressed; I still act selfishly; These episodes are less frequent and

shorter in duration. This is a journey, where progress is measured by my commitment to submit and surrender to the Holy Spirit. It's a choice but a compelling one. I've have "tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come..." (Hebrews 6:4-5). There really isn't anything else that satisfies!

AND God gets all of the Glory because it's by His Grace that any of these changes happen!

Several times when John mentioned abiding and I tried to clarify it with some practical advice. This abiding is all about relationship. We must believe that we CAN have the personal relationship with God beyond the "do you know Jesus as your personal savior" type of statement which unbelievers have difficulty in understanding or believing.

Your relationship with Him is real and like any relationship, it grows deeper with the amount of care given to it. Just like spouses deepen their relationship with emotional intimacy, talking about our lives and life we share, talking with God is essential. Therefore, prayer is essential. "but Pastor, I don't know how to pray!". *Just talk with Him. If that is difficult (it was for me) then write out your prayers in a journal. I do because it helps me to stay focused. Another way is to read the Psalms and make them your prayer to Him*. "But Pastor, God doesn't speak to me in

prayer”. Really? He doesn’t speak to your heart? He doesn’t speak thru trusted friends? He doesn’t speak thru circumstances? He doesn’t speak thru His WORD? Does he not speak thru your spouse? “But Pastor, that’s just nagging”. Really? Take a closer look! Look beyond what is being said and into his or her heart! Perhaps he or she is concerned about you, your health, your walk with God as evidenced by your actions.

Reading the word is essential! “But Pastor, I don’t understand what I read!” Here’s a truth: I don’t always either. But I go to learned men; I ask other Pastors; I dig into commentaries. I read Christian Classics written by men of God like AW Tozar or Spurgeon or John Gill or Whitefield. I like Chuck Smith, David Guzik and many more. I trust them...but I always verify what they say against what the Holy Spirit has written.

And I believe everything I read on the internet!

But Pastor, I don’t have the time to do all of that! I know, I understand. But, how about this, come to church to have fellowship with other believers who are struggling just like you are. Before you come, just read the chapter I’m going to be teaching on. Put a mark next to any verse or paragraph that you don’t quite get. If I don’t explain it, ask me after the service. This goes for Wednesday night and Sunday mornings.

By doing these things, you will be abiding. And God will take care of the rest.

I want to leave you today with a Psalm. It's very familiar to most people:

(Psalms 23:1 NKJV) **A Psalm of David.** The LORD *is my* shepherd; **I shall not want.**

(Psalms 23:2 NKJV) **He makes me** to lie down in green pastures; **He leads me** beside the still waters.

(Psalms 23:3 NKJV) **He restores my soul; He leads me** in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

(Psalms 23:4 NKJV) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

(Psalms 23:5 NKJV) **You prepare a table** before me in the presence of my enemies; **You anoint my head** with oil; My cup runs over.

(Psalms 23:6 NKJV) **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.**