

1 John 2:7-11

INTRODUCTION: I heard of an evangelist who was broke down on a highway that happened to be near a church.

The evangelist knocked on the door of the parsonage and the pastor answered the door. The evangelist introduced himself and asked for help.

The Pastor said, "There are many people who come by here asking for help claiming to be Christians. Let me give you a test to see if you are really a Christian. How many commandments are there?"

The evangelist responded, "Eleven!" "Ah, ha" said the Pastor, "I caught you, there are ten commandments."

The evangelist replied, "No, there are eleven, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." "I am asking you to obey that eleventh commandment."

Do you ever meet up with people who claim to be Christians yet don't seem to remember that there are eleven commandments?

John talks to us today about this commandment, really it is an old commandment and yet it is also new.

ILLUSTRATION: In the appendix to his excellent book "The Church at the End of the 20th Century" Francis Schaffer speaks of love as "the mark of the Christian."

His study is based on John 13:34-35 where Christ imparted a new commandment to disciples: "A new commandment I give you: love one another, as I have loved you..."

Schaffer's point is that "only with this mark may the world know Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father."

Schaffer is absolutely right, BUT WE CAN TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER.

— Not only is love the mark that proves to the world that a Christian is truly a Christian, it is the mark by which a Christian may know if he or she is born again.

Remember the purpose of this letter: 1 John 5:13

John writes to give believers assurance.

Last sermon I made three statements about assurance that bear repeating.

1) It is possible to be saved and not have assurance.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Full assurance is not essential to salvation, but it is essential to satisfaction. May you get it-may you get it at once. May you never be satisfied to live without it."

Thomas Watson wrote:

“A child of God may have the Kingdom of grace in his heart, yet not know it. The cup was in Benjamin’s sack, though he did not know it was there.”

William Gurnall wrote:

“We may have peace with God as soon as we believe, but not always with ourselves.

ILLUSTRATION: The Westminster Confession of Faith, drawn up in 1646, distinguished faith from assurance. The Confession included this:

[CHAPTER 18] SECTION III.—This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that **a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it:**¹

2.) It is possible to have assurance and not be saved.

ILLUSTRATION: Like the old Negro spiritual said, “Everybody talking bout heaven ain’t going there.”

ILLUSTRATION: According to a recent poll 88% of all Americans are sure there is a heaven and they are going there.

ARGUMENT: This is why I try to hammer so hard on examining yourself. This is why I tell people don’t take it for granted be diligent to make sure.

¹MacArthur, J. 2000. *The gospel according to the Apostles : The role of works in the life of faith*. Originally published: Faith works. Dallas : Word Pub., c1993. Word Pub.: Nashville, TN

^{ESV} **Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

^{SV} **1 Corinthians 11:28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 13:5** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

ARGUMENT: How do people get this false assurance?

Somebody gave them some information about salvation that was not true.

3.) It is possible to be saved and have full assurance.

^{KJV} **Isaiah 32:17** And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

Wherever God imputes His righteousness He also brings with it quietness or peace and assurance.

TWO MEANS OF ASSURANCE

We also mentioned that there are two means of having assurance as a believer.

First, subjective means – INWARD ASSURANCE

Subjective assurance is based on something within us, namely, the witness of the Spirit.

✂ Our internal assurance is described in several passages in the New Testament.

(1) 2 Corinthians 1:12--Paul says, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have behaved ourselves in the world."

Paul was saying, "I know what's going on in my life because of the testimony of my conscience. Something rings true in my conscience that my behavior is pleasing to God."

(2) 1 John 5:10--"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

That indwelling witness who bears testimony to Christ is the Holy Spirit. He attests to the validity of a believer's salvation.

(3) Romans 8:14-16--"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage [legalism] again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (vv. 14-15).

"Abba" is the equivalent to daddy, a very endearing term. It implies that we can relate to God like a child talks to his loving father.

Verse 16 tells us that the indwelling Spirit gives us the confidence to enter God's presence: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

- The internal witness of the Spirit in our lives is of little help to others because no one can read our hearts. But that kind of confirmation is helpful to us.

Second, Objective means – OUTWARD

Objective is things that are outside of us, the things we do.

We have already looked at several tests

1. The doctrinal test

a) Do you confess Christ?

A person's beliefs about Christ will validate his claim to be a Christian.

The Greek word translated "confess" means "to say the same thing."

The first part of the doctrinal test asks about the person in question: Does he say the same thing about Christ that God

says in the Bible? If he says, "I'm a Christian, but I don't believe Christ is God," then he's not saying the same thing about Christ that God said.

He is not confessing Christ.

(1) 1 John 1:1-4 – Is Jesus Christ real to you. 1 John 2:22-23--
"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?
He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.
Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; He
that confesseth the Son hath the Father also."

(2) 1 John 4:2--"By this know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit
that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

(3) 1 John 5:1--"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is
born of God."

Being truly saved is a matter of confessing or agreeing that
Jesus is the Christ.

b) Do you confess your sin?

A Christian says the same thing about his sin that God says. If
someone comes along and tells me he's a Christian but doesn't
acknowledge his sin, I don't believe him.

(1) 1 John 1:6, 8--"If we say that we have fellowship with him,
and walk in darkness, we lie If we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

(2) 1 John 1:9-10--Verse 9 tells us that if we are confessing sin, then we are the ones being forgiven--we are the true Christians. Verse 10 says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

2. The moral test

a) Do you obey God's Word?

First John 2:3 says, "By this we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

Now John gives the reader yet another objective test or means of assurance.

It is the test of love.

TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE: In laying out this test before us John gives us three principles about love that we need to understand.

I. Love is a FOUNDATIONAL Principle. 2:7

Notice v. 7

Brethren – this introduces a new thought.

"I write no new commandment unto you..."

John is saying I have nothing new to teach you.

EXPLANATION: Gnostics false teachers were always boasting about new truth or new insight or new revelation.

☞ In contrast to that and in order to expose their foolish claims John says this truth is not new.

APPLICATION: Beware of those who are always looking for something new. Some people are always trying to present new truth.

There is no such thing as new truth.

IF IT IS TRUE IT'S NOT NEW AND IF IT'S NEW IT'S NOT TRUE.

John wanted them to have faith in God's tested and tried truth.

ILLUSTRATION: Apostle John's Farewell - Tradition tells us that the aged apostle John, in bidding farewell to his congregation, admonished them to love one another.

"But, we want something new," they said. "Give us a new commandment."

John replied, "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning ... that we should love one another!" (I John 2:7; 3:11).²
"but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning."

²Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : [a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers]*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

EXPLANATION: Old – palaios – this is where we get our word ‘paleontology’ – the study of ancient things.

- The word speaks of something that has existed for a long time. Something that is ancient.

Beginning – because of the word “old” the beginning here describes something that existed in the Old Testament.

- John is referring to a commandment that existed in the Old Testament.

What is the commandment? John doesn’t really say what the commandment is until you get to **verse 10**.

- This is the only time love is mentioned in this passage. This is what is in view here.

Love is an ancient, old commandment that we see all throughout the Old Testament.

“The old commandment is the word...”

word – meaning divine revelation.

- This commandment is ancient, been around for a long time, originated in the Old Testament, it came from the divinely inspired word of God.

It is the commandment to love.

GOD ESTABLISHED THE LAW OF LOVE IN UNMISTAKABLE TERMS.

1. Love is commanded in the law of God.

^{KJV} **Leviticus 19:18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

^{KJV} **Leviticus 19:34** But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

^{KJV} **Deuteronomy 10:19** Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

News of their responsibility was nothing new. God said they were to love not only their neighbors but also strangers.

2. Love is the fulfillment of the law of God.

In fact, love is the sum and substance of God's law.

ILLUSTRATION: The first four commandments deal with love horizontally, love to God, the second table of the law deal with love vertically – love to your neighbors.

Paul who was an extraordinary OT scholar knew this very well. That is what he taught in Romans.

Romans 13:8-10 ⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to **love** one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. ⁹ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰ **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**

Love is the fulfilling of the law.

The prohibition against adultery is clear – but if you love your wife you won't be tempted to commit adultery.

And you won't violate your neighbor's trust if you love him.

The same is true of all the commandments Paul mentions.

You won't steal from someone you love.

You won't lie to someone you love, covet something that belongs to someone you love.

ESV Galatians 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

KJV Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 22:37-38 ³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt **love** the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

^{ESV} **Matthew 22:39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Paul wrote Timothy warning about those teachers in the church that use the law as an instrument of something other than love.

^{KJV} **1 Timothy 1:8** But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully;

What is the lawful use?

^{KJV} **1 Timothy 1:5** Now the end [aim, purpose] of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

So:

I. Love is a FOUNDATIONAL Principle. 2:7

But also:

II. Love is a FRESH Principle. 2:8

Again – Greek “palin” when it is used to denote a turn of thought you could translate, “on the other hand.”

“a new commandment I write unto you...”

- Someone might say this is a contradiction. John is contradicting himself saying “no new...new”

John is using a play on words to get across his point.

This is not a contradiction but rather a clarification.

EXPLANATION: There are two words for new used most often in the NT.

Kairos – new in time, chronologically new

Kainos – new in quality, in freshness.

It is the exact opposite of palaios. The word John uses here is “kainos” new in quality, new in freshness.

It is an old commandment demonstrated and taught in a fresh way.

The commandment’s newness is not found in it’s words but in several other ways.

Notice the ways this is new:

A. New in it’s Example. 2:8

“which thing is true in him...”

Who is the “him” in this verse?

Same “him” in v. 4, 5, 6

It refers to Jesus Christ.

- Love was commanded in the Old Testament. It was taught that it was one’s duty to love.
- Despite the OT’s clear teaching on love it was never demonstrated as God wanted it to be.
- **But never was love ever demonstrated perfectly until Jesus Christ came.**
- Perfect love was manifested and embodied in the incarnate Christ.

Only Jesus could show the world was perfect love looked like.

ILLUSTRATION: John 13 – Look at this passage.

- 2 This took place in the Upper Room. I visited this very room in Jerusalem.

I think when John wrote this he was thinking of the Passover meal in the Upper Room, the Last Supper.

The Literary Setting

Chapter 13 marks the official end of Jesus public ministry to Israel.

John said in chapter 1 that he came to his own and his own received Him not.

➤ So, He turns his full attention to the little flock of disciples that did receive Jesus.

Ch. 13-17 Jesus turns from His public ministry of those who did not receive Him to His private ministry of those who did.

These chapters are wonderful intimate chapters.

- He assures them of the hope for heaven (14:1-3)
- He guarantees them power for ministry (14:12)
- He guarantees them provision for their needs (14:13-14)
- He promised them the Holy Spirit (14:16-17)
- He promised them divine truth in the Word (14:26)
- He promised them peace and joy (14:27; 15:11; 16:22)

The common theme that runs through this chapter is Christ's love for His own.

Notice 13:1

“end” – Greek word “telos” unto perfection, or “completeness”

➤ This means that Jesus loved His own unto the fullest measure of love.

A love unique from his love for the rest of the world.

The Historical Setting

John says it was the feast of the Passover, the feast that commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

This was the Last Supper Jesus had with His disciples. It was Thursday night before His death on Friday.

13:2 – Judas now satanically inspired to betray Jesus.

13:3 – This reiterates the statement in verse 1 that it was time for His passion.

✂ He knew it was time to be betrayed and for Him to suffer.

➤ None of these things were by accident, it was all according to the Father's providential hand. Soon He would return to the Father.

13:4 – Jesus girded Himself.

This is shocking!

Jesus is going to wash the disciples feet.

➤ This was considered etiquette according to the custom of the day.

ILLUSTRATION: The couches would be arranged around tables containing the food, with the upper part of each person's body facing the food and their feet away from the table. Jesus would go to the outside of this circle to wash each person's feet.³

➤ It was unclean and offensive for one to eat with feet unwashed.

Foot washing

➤ The host of the supper normally provided a servant to wash the feet of his guests.

➤ They wore sandals in that day and walked over dusty roads. It was certain that when a visitor came their feet were dirty and needed to be washed.

There was no servant to do the foot washing.

➤ You would have thought that one of the twelve disciples would have volunteered to do it.

➤ In Matthew 23:11 Jesus taught them a principle they seemed to conveniently have forgotten.

ESV Matthew 23:11 The greatest among you shall be your servant.

³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. 1993. *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, Ill.

- Luke records that the disciples at the Last Supper were actually arguing over who would be the greatest in the kingdom.

^{KJV} **Luke 22:24** And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

- So at the Supper with feet unwashed arguing over who is the greatest, waiting for someone among them to take action,

Notice 13:4-5

- Jesus began to wash the disciples feet.
- Jesus the Messiah, the Creator, the Ruler of the Universe was about to humbly wash the feet of His disciples.
- This was a menial task that was to be performed by slaves. Even Jewish slaves were not required to perform this.

It was an act of great humility and love. The disciples were no doubt shamed by this and watched in awkward silence.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT JESUS WAS NOT TRYING TO REBUKE THEM OR SHAME THEM.

It was an act of genuine love.

He loved his disciples and He wanted to show His undying love and devotion to them.

Love sees a need and naturally meets it.

ILLUSTRATION: Just as a mother sees her child with a dirty face and hands and seeks to clean them.

➤ It was a reaction of a loving parent or overseer.

He even washed the feet of Judas whom He knew was going to betray Him.

Notice 13:34 – Jesus said In this manner you are to love one another.

➤ Love is selfless acts of service towards another. It is action!

He was not instituting a ceremonial foot-washing service, where everyone comes with clean feet to be washed!

He was saying something much more difficult to practice, that we who follow Jesus must set aside our rights and serve one another out of love.

ILLUSTRATION: Christ's New Commandment

The day before Good Friday is called "Maundy Thursday," so-called from the Latin "dies manda'ti" (the day of Christ's great mandate).

That day, after He had washed His disciples' feet, He said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13:34).⁴

This understanding of love is in contrast with what the world thinks about love.

ARGUMENT: Contemporary society talks more about love than ever, yet knows less about it than any generation.

— Society's view of love is narcissistic, self-centered and self-absorbed.

QUOTE: One commentator wrote:

"The modern world's version of love is unabashedly narcissistic, totally self-focused, and shamelessly manipulative. It sees others merely as a means of self-gratification. Not surprisingly, relationships between selfish people usually do not last. If a current partner fails to live up to expectations (or they find someone else more exciting), they move on. People are takers not givers; humility is considered a weakness; selfishness a virtue." [MacArthur, Gospel of John, p. 60.]

That is the opposite of what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches that the essence of love is self-sacrifice.

⁴Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : [a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers]*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

- Love instead of pursuing it's own good, pursues the good and interests of other people.
- Love instead of seeking to have its needs met, seeks to meet the needs of another.

To love like this requires humility.

Jesus perfectly modeled this and then gave the divine mandate to do likewise.

A. New in its Example

But also:

B. New in its Expectation.

Notice v. 8 - it is true in the Savior and it is true “in you.”

It is also characterized in true children of God.

Just as Jesus commanded He expects us to follow this example.

ILLUSTRATION: Grace is a very loving group of believers. I grew up in this church that was a very loving group of believers.

I know there may be some sour saints here, but I'll be honest I have not met any yet. I commend you for loving one another.

ILLUSTRATION: My son Jeremiah really hurt his ankle on his basketball tournament. He was in a lot of pain. We soaked it in ice. Time came for him to leave and walk out.

I happen to turn around and watch his little brother place his shoulder under his arm and put his arm around his waist and help his brother walk.

My first thought was I wonder if God is as thrilled to see His children love one another. He is. That is what He expects.

C. New in its Empowerment.

v. 8 - “because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth...”

EXPLANATION: John is describing salvation – “darkness is past...true light shines.”

- God not only expects it but He has given us the wherewithal to perform it.
- Before we were saved we were selfish, filled with an inordinate self-love.
- We lived for self, we thought only of self, looked out only for number one.

ILLUSTRATION: In Greek mythology **Narcissus** was a hunter who was renowned for his beauty. He was exceptionally proud

of what he did to those who loved him. Nemesis noticed and attracted Narcissus to a pool, wherein he saw his reflection and fell in love with it, not realizing it was merely an image. Unable to leave the beauty of his reflection, Narcissus died.

Narcissus is the origin of the term *narcissism*, a fixation with oneself.

It is self-love, selfishness on the highest level!

It is selfishness. Selfishness is simply self love! It is the practical end of narcissism.

- Selfishness is the great destroyer in our world!
- Selfishness has broken up marriages.
- Selfishness has destroyed relationships.
- Selfishness has divided churches.
- Selfishness has brought misery in peoples lives.

But when a person gets saved God changes the inward nature.

Romans 5:5 says “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”

At salvation God baptize us with His love. He gave us all the love we need, to love one another.

ARGUMENT: Before salvation we could not obey the law we could not fulfill the law. But now because of the Holy Spirit we can fulfill the law.

Love is the fulfillment of the law and the Holy Spirit gives us that love.

Romans 8:3-5 ³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

➤ The righteousness of the law is simply loving others the way we are suppose to love them.

We are given the mind of Christ, which is a selfless mind, we think of others first.

ILLUSTRATION: Some of you know that Adrian Rogers was one of my favorite preachers. I remember him telling the story of how they can take a Florida orange tree that produces sour oranges and change it to where it produces sweet oranges.

He said they take a branch from a tree that produces sweet oranges and they graft it into the tree that produces the sour oranges. The result is it changes the whole nature of the tree.

That is what happens to us as Christians.

➤ God implants into our souls the nature of Christ the sweet loving Savior.

The result is we have been shed abroad by the love of God.

Selfishness becomes selflessness

We stop try to get and start trying to give

Hate becomes love

Darkness becomes light

Paul said to the Thessalonians

KJV **1 Thessalonians 4:9** But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

1. It all begins with *how you think about others.*

- Instead of thinking first about yourself, your feelings, your rights, and your needs, you must learn to think first about others.
- How can I show this difficult person the love of Jesus Christ?
How can I serve this person in love?
- Rather than thinking angry thoughts about how he wronged you and how you'll get even, you begin to think about how Jesus wants you to think about the one who mistreated you.
- You begin to pray for this person, that he would come to know Jesus.

You look for opportunities to return good instead of evil.

2. Then, love extends to *your speech*.

You put off abusive speech that tears down the other person, and you put on speech that builds him up (Gal. 5:15; Eph. 4:29, 31-32; Col. 3:8).

You stop lying or stretching the truth to your own advantage and begin speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15, 25).

You cease from gossip and slander (2 Cor. 12:20).

3. Then, in *your behavior* you begin to practice loving deeds (Rom. 12:9-13; Eph. 5:2).

You look for opportunities to serve others, beginning in your home.

— You become “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14).

Again, this is not advanced, graduate level Christianity. This is freshman Christianity 101.

So:

- I. Love is a FOUNDATIONAL Principle. 2:7
- II. Love is a FRESH Principle. 2:8

But also:

III. Love is a FELLOWSHIP Principle. 2:9-11

Having established the importance of love as both a foundational principle and a fresh principle John now concludes this portion with a test.

- The presence of love in one's life is a sure indicator of true salvation and divine life.

EXPLANATION: John is very dogmatic! He makes very exclusive either-or statements.

- ✂ You can't walk in light and in darkness at the same time. You do one of the other.
- ✂ If you claim to walk in the light (be saved) and hate your brother you are in darkness, you are self-deceived.

Notice verse 9

- There can be no doubt that John was referring here to the Gnostics false believers who were troubling true believers.
- ✂ They boast that they had superior knowledge and superior insight.
- ✂ They called it light, walking in light, yet at the same time they were making the believers feel inferior.

They did not love those who professed Christ.

- They were looking down with scorn and disgust on these “unenlightened” followers of Christ.

ARGUMENT: They had an elitist attitude, that they were better than others.

APPLICATION: There is some of this still prevalent in the church today.

GOD HATES THIS SIN! He hates a proud look.

ILLUSTRATION: 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 Abusing the Lord’s Supper!

- The rich upper class believers were hoarding their food and shaming the poor.

Shows selfishness and a lack of true love.

v. 19 - Paul says those who are approved of God are made manifest, and those who are not true believers are also made manifest.

That’s why God was judging some of them at the Lord’s Supper. (v. 30)

1 John 2:10 says that is not how true love acts.

- A believer who truly loves his brother is not going to want to do anything that will offend a brother or cause them to stumble in any way.

APPLICATION: I am going to want to never do anything that may cause a brother to be offended or lose heart.

✍ A true believer is willing to go the extra mile on the behalf of his brother so as not to offend.

ILLUSTRATION: A sign of true salvation is a genuine love for the saints of God.

ARGUMENT: Sometimes I hear someone say well I love God but I just don't love Christians.

1 John 4:20 – You really don't love God.

✍ If you don't love His people you don't love Him.

These two are inseparably linked together.

John hammers this again and again all throughout this epistle.

QUESTION: DO YOU LOVE THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

ILLUSTRATION: When I first got saved I could get enough of being at church. My parents didn't have to get me up and say go to church.

I wanted to be there every time the doors were opened. I love being around God's people.

ILLUSTRATION: Tradition says when John was brought back to Ephesus from the isle of Patmos he said as he was brought in on a stretcher to the church, “Oh the fellowship of the saints, Oh the fellowship of the saints.”

CONCLUSION:

- I. Love is a FOUNDATIONAL Principle. 2:7
- II. Love is a FRESH Principle. 2:8
- III. Love is a FELLOWSHIP Principle. 2:9-11

ILLUSTRATION: A church in Naperville, Illinois, is basking in excitement about its brand-new bells in the belfry above its sanctuary.

When the church was built many years ago, they didn't have the money to purchase bells. However, for its 25th anniversary they were able to raise the funds to hang three bells in the vacant space.

Even though they are stunning, there is one problem: the congregation will never hear the bells ring. Although they look real, they are artificial.

The apostle John wrote his first epistle to encourage believers not to just *look* like real Christians, but to prove they are genuine by how they live.

The evidence that a person's faith is real is not found in some mystical experience with God. The proof that people truly know and love God is found in two of the tests that John gives.

- Obeying Christ
- Loving Others

1 John 2:9–11 (KJV 1900) — 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. **10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. **11** But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.