

2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation [payment for sin-satisfying God's righteousness to] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world [in conflict with Calvin' "Limited Atonement"] .³ Now by this we know [know by experience] that we know Him, [proof of whether we know Him or not] if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him [as you keep the Word of God, His love becomes perfected in us]. By this we know that we are in Him. [I know that I have this relationship with Him when I am keeping His commandments] ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. [if we're in Christ then our walk will reflect what we are saying....that we abide in Christ]

NEW MATERIAL

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. 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.

VERSE 7

John then tells the audience that this isn't some new commandment for believers. It is an "old commandment" that they heard from the beginning. The old commandment can be boiled down into a word, LOVE.

When Jesus came to earth, He truly was the embodiment of love. Mankind had never seen anything or anyone like Jesus. When Jesus was questioned by the lawyer, he quoted the Shemah Israel, 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.*³⁹ *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40 KJV)*

THE WHOLE LAW IS FULFILLED IN LOVE. If I am loving God as I should, we don't have to worry about the first table of the law. If I love my neighbor as myself, I don't have to worry about the second table of the law. God wants a loving relationship with you. And, He wants you to love one another.

VERSE 8

Jesus came along and accentuated this love that we are to have for one another. He said:

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35 NIJV)

We so complicate the faith when God tells us repeatedly it is about love. It is about His love for us. It is about our love for each other. It is about our love for Him. LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO. I will once again remind you all that LOVE ALWAYS COSTS YOU SOMETHING. IT COSTS IN TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE. Don't be surprised when it costs you something. That's what love is.

VERSE 9-11

⁹ He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰ He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 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.

John keeps telling us that if our actions don't measure up to what we're saying, we're in trouble. So He says if we say we're walking in the light, but we have no love for our brother, John says that you're really in darkness right now! If I say I have fellowship with God and I'm walking in darkness, I am a liar.

So, what does it mean to "hate your brother". People who harbor bitterness and hatred for others are liars. John says, "They're really not walking in the light". This is pretty severe. It is saying that a person that is saved by the fact that they are saved should have a love that's godly.

VERSES 12-14

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

These are sort of stylistic verses. This is a kind of poetry and verse but of course it is not in rhyme. It is also repetitive perhaps as John is attempting to accentuate.

He's talking to people who perhaps are of different spiritual ages. The young children may be the whole group, but it could be those who are new in the faith. The "fathers" may be to those who have walked with the Lord for a long long time.

There is a struggle and a battle described in these verses. There is a battle for your mind to control your life. God wants to control your mind to aid you in being all that you're meant to be. The enemy of your soul also wants control of your mind. He desires to bring you into bondage under him. As the Bob Dylan song says, "You've gotta serve somebody". Jesus said, *"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. [riches] (Matthew 6:24)* What are you relentlessly pursuing?

We either are serving God or we're serving the kingdom of darkness. The "young men" in this passage are "strong because the Word of God abides in them". Having God's Word in your heart is your greatest protection against sin. *"Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11)* You and I are able to resist Satan through intimacy with the Lord and by knowing God's Word.

Verse fourteen makes it clear that the key to overcoming the wicked one is by having the Word of God alive and active in your soul. If you do this, you will overcome the wicked one. Paul calls satan the "god of this world" and Jesus calls him "the prince of this world". I want to end tonight reminding you that we are in a spiritual battle. Paul tells us, *"¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:2 KJV)*

Paul had founded the church in Corinth in *"the humility and gentleness of Christ"* (2 Cor 10:1), but it was beset by all sorts of attacks. Paul understood the efficacy of spiritual weapons. He writes, *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 KJV)*

The weapons of our warfare are part and parcel of our inheritance, and we share in these as part of our identity in Christ. We should never despair about the onslaughts of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus told us, *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 KJV)* **THE BATTLE MAY RAGE ON, BUT PRAISE GOD, THE WAR HAS BEEN WON.**