



Sermon: 1 John 2:10-11

How Do I Love my Brother?

REVIEW: “The Command”



- 2:3 “keeping His commands.”
- 2:4 “keeping His commandments”
- 2:5 “keeping His word”
- 2:6 “walking in that same way in which He walked”
- 2:7 “no new commandment … old commandment … old commandment”
- 2:8 “new commandment”
- 2:9 “hating his brother”
- 2:10 “loves his brother”

3:23 And this is **His commandment**: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as **He gave us commandment**.

4:21 And this **commandment** we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

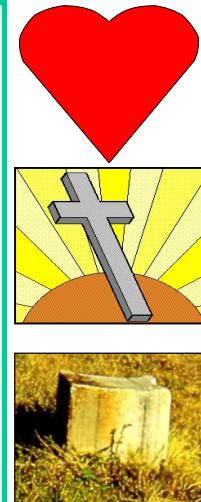
In my last sermon, I expounded on how loving our brother is a test of true Christianity. “Through this we know if we have come to know the Father, if we keep His commandments,” and, as I pointed out, His commandments are to love God and love one another.

But I felt like I left a gaping hole in my presentation because I never explored what it means to love your brother and how it is done, so that is where I would like to pick up today.

How do I love my brother? (v.10)



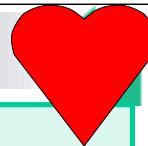
- 1. Love αγαπάω**
- 2. Remain μένει
in the light φωτὶ**
- 3. Have no σκάνδαλον
trap/stumbling block**



How Do I Love My Brother?

- As poor as I am at modeling love, I feel like getting me to preach on “how to love” would be a bit like asking Bill or Hillary Clinton to give a lecture on how to tell the truth.
- Thankfully, I have some Biblical rails to run on in order to answer the question, and I will try to stick to them.
- In 1 John 2:10, I see three phrases that teach us how to love.
 1. First is the Greek verb *agape*. Here it is a participle, indicating the person who is characterized by love. You are not perfect, so you will slip up here and there, but as an overall trend of life, this character trait of God is a defining characteristic of your life. We will begin by looking at its definition.
 2. Second is the phrase “remains in the light.” Here we will build on what I preached on in my last sermon on 1 John.
 3. Finally there is the statement that there is no *skandalon*, no stumbling-block or cause for offense.

How do I love my brother? (v.10)



1. αγαπαω: Love

- a) **Self-denying action for their good:** 1 John 3:16 “In this we have known love, because He, on our behalf, laid down His own life, and we ourselves, on behalf of the brothers, are obliged to lay down [our] lives.”

Examples:

1(a) Self-denying action:

- Shammah, one of David’s mighty men who defended the lentil patch from a marauding Philistine troop after all his comrades ran away. He risked his life to protect his community’s food supply.
- Not just men: American girl who left the stockade to get gunpowder from house during a siege by Indians and English
- (This is not speaking of being reckless; this is speaking of calculated risk for the good of others.)
- Also at home: Not asking anything of wife after she has collapsed into bed sick after a hard day.
- Even little things like when you see that there is not enough ice cream to go around, so you decline to take any even when it is offered to you so that there will be enough for the younger kids so that they won’t be disappointed.

How do I love my brother? (v.10)



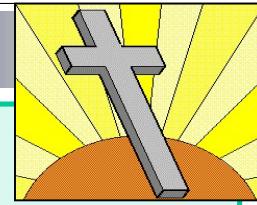
1. αγαπάω: Love

- a) **Self-denying action for their good:** 1 John 3:16 "In this we have known love, because He, on our behalf, laid down His own life, and we ourselves, on behalf of the brothers, are obliged to lay down [our] lives."
- b) **Attitude of appreciation of them:** Thayer Greek-English Lexicon: "to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly..." cf. Webster: "...to be pleased with; to regard with affection, on account of some qualities which excite pleasing sensations or desire of gratification..." (Christ loved the unlovely.)

1(b) Attitude of appreciation:

- There are some people that we find it easy to appreciate because they love us and they are fun and really with-it. The challenge is to love everybody else who isn't so cool, but who are messy, irritating, egotistical, and do not add to our social status.
- Ezekiel 16:2-6 NKJV ...'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: ... your father *was* an Amorite and your mother a Hittite... on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you*.... No eye pitied you... but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed... [Yet] when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!'...
- Romans 5:6-10 NKJV For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly... God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- Just as God in Christ reached out to love and redeem us while we were being disgusting, as far as He was concerned, can we do the same to others? To the ill-tempered, the ugly, and outcast?
- Carlton was fat. I mean he was the fattest kid I had ever seen. Just gross, and awkward as all get-out – couldn't play sports. And he talked too loud, and he talked about uncool things – totally embarrassing. But my parents told me that he had been abandoned by his family and lived in an orphanage and that he needed a friend, so I decided to try. He depended on others to drive him to church, so he didn't come around often, but when he did, I endured his clinginess and made a friend, and found things to appreciate in him, even though my cool friends stayed away from me when I was with Carlton. I can't say that I sacrificed much for that friendship, and I can't say whether it made a significant difference in his life, but decades later, I got the chance to visit Carlton over his lunch break as I was passing through the city he had moved to, and the thing I was most impressed with was his love for his church. After lunch, he insisted on taking me to his church, and he showed me signs he had put up for his church along the way. Love can transform the unlovely into winsome people filled with the love of God.

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1. αγαπάω: Love

a) Self-denying action for their good: 1 John 3:16 “ He laid down His life.”

b) Attitude of appreciation toward them: (Christ loved the unlovely.)

2. Remain/μένει in the light/φωτὶ :

a) Holy fellowship with God generates love: 1 John 1:6-7 If we are saying that we are in fellowship with Him, yet we walk in the darkness, we are deceiving ourselves and do not [practice] the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we are having fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus His Son is cleansing us from all sin.

Object lesson: Try to operate microphone unplugged from sound system

2(a) Holy fellowship with God generates love

•Bible says Fellowship w/ God results in fellowship “with each other”

•Where does love come from in the first place? God. Fruit of the Spirit. You can't love others if you are disconnected from God, so it is important to cultivate your relationship with God so that you can love others.

•The first step in cultivating a right relationship with God is confessing your rebellion against Him and trusting Jesus to forgive you and make you right with God.

•Have you noticed that on the mornings when you missed your quiet time, you generally have a harder time being nice to people?

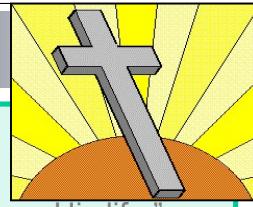
•John 15:4-5 NKJV "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

2(b) Your obedience to God is good for your neighbor

•Colossians 3:22-24 NET "...obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching — like those who are strictly people-pleasers — but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people, because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ."

•If you work enthusiastically for the Lord at your job instead of sitting around watching YouTube videos on the clock, will that be good for your boss' business? You betcha!

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a) **Holy fellowship with God generates love:** 1 John 1:6-7 If we are saying that we are in fellowship with Him, yet we walk in the darkness, we are deceiving ourselves and do not [practice] the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we are having fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus His Son is cleansing us from all sin.

b) **Your obedience to God is good for your neighbor!** Lev. 19:2b "...Y'all must be holy because I, Yahweh your God, am holy... 4 Don't pay attention to the idols... 11 'Y'all may not steal, and y'all may not be untrue – and y'all may not speak falsehood ...15 'Y'all may not do what is unfair in the justice-system...18b bear love toward your neighbor as to yourself. I am Yahweh."

- If you honor the Sabbath day, is that good for your neighbor? Chick Fil-A can testify that taking Sunday off is a good thing economically, and it's good for employees' well-being, because we need a day off.

- To love God and obey His law is necessarily to love your neighbor and to do them good.

- Sometimes they won't see it that way. They might not like it if you won't join them in worshipping their idol.

- Their idol might be a trashy movie they enjoyed
- or an unbiblical social cause (like gay marriage)
- or a fancy new car they bought
- or trying to impress you with some business achievement
- or bragging about how many grandchildren they have.

- But holding fast to godliness does bring tangible blessings to communities in which there are godly people.

- If Lot had had just half a dozen converts, it would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction by fire and brimstone!

- Joseph's faithfulness to God preserved the lives of millions of Egyptians during the famine.

- King Hezekiah's trust in God against all odds in the Assyrian army's siege of Jerusalem brought political freedom to all the citizens of his city, whether they trusted God or not.

The same principle works in reverse too: “He who loves his brother remains in the light.” Loving others feeds our fellowship with God. In the context of loving God and drawing upon His love in order to love others, we find our relationship with God renewed. When I finish praying with my brothers in the fight club, I feel closer to God and ready to conquer the world!

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1. **ἀγαπάω: Love**
 - a) Self-denying action for their good: 1 John 3:16 “ He laid down His life.”
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2. **Remain/μένει in the light/φωτὶ :**
 - a) Holy fellowship with God generates love: 1 John 1:6-7
 - b) Your obedience to God is good for your neighbor! Leviticus 19
3. **Have no σκάνδαλον/trap/stumbling block:**
 - a) **The stumbling block of hate/disdain:** 1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness...

3(a) hate/disdain

- In 1 John 3:12 we see one of the stumbling blocks of hate, and that is the jealousy of Cain. “I hate Abel because God is always blessing him instead of me!”
- 1 Cor. 13:4 tells us that Love puts jealousy away. “I love my brother/sister and am happy when they experience blessings! I will keep trusting and waiting on the Lord to see what His blessings will be for me too.”
- But sometimes we hate others because they have been unkind or cruel to us. There have been families in our church who parted with harsh criticism about my performance as a pastor. It was particularly hard to hear one of them say, “I want a large family like yours, but your family is a living example of what I don’t want my family to be like. Unlike your selfish, lazy children, my children are going to HELP other people in the church.” I have a choice to hate them for their unjust accusations (although often they have some valid criticisms too) and hope never to see them again, or I have the choice to love them anyway and keep the doors open to re-connect as friends. My wife arranged to meet one of those families for dinner earlier this year. I could tell they were still struggling with hating me, and they still said some things that I thought were mean, but it was good to know that we could still share a meal together and hope for reconciliation.

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 - a) The stumbling block of hate/disdain: 1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness...
 - b) The stumbling block of harboring sin: 1 John 2:12-13 ...sins have been dismissed from you on account of His name... you have conquered the Evil One.

3(b) harboring sin – not seeking forgiveness and victory

- There are some sins that interfere with love because they are so offensive to others.
 - Maybe it is hot-headed anger - people don't want to be around you because they don't want to get hit with your fists or to get their head bit off with your words.
 - Maybe it is some kind of addictive sin that holds a protected space in your life. You keep your options open to continue in that sin because you like that sin. You don't want to dismiss it or conquer it. And it is a cancer that sucks up your resources so that you don't have the time or money to do acts of love toward others. Root it out!
 - You may feel that you can't get free from them, but you need to look at God's word in v.12 "your sins have been dismissed from you on account of His Name." Who did you ask to forgive you? The Son will set you free indeed. When He forgives, your sins are dismissed; you are no longer a slave to that sin. Sometimes overnight; other times it is an increasing reality over time, but you will be free.
- Other sins are bad attitudes that block your ability to love.
 - Perhaps you are worried about what other people will think of you if you are seen with someone who is not cool, so your bondage to earning the respect of other people prevents you from loving.
 - I often find my mind infiltrated suddenly with a stack of memories with a common theme of why I should be frustrated with a certain person. I think they come from Satan or demons. Here is where we need to conquer the Evil one. "take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). In order to love my brother, I must challenge those bitter thoughts and obey Jesus, I have chosen to overlook or to forgive those past offenses, so I cannot allow them to come back up and be a stumbling block for love any more.

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- b) The stumbling block of harboring sin: 1 John 2:12-13 ...sins have been dismissed from you on account of His name... you have conquered the Evil One.
- c) The stumbling block of loving the world: 1 John 2:15b ...If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him.

3(c) loving the world

- “How do you put an antelope in the refrigerator?” How do you put an elk in...? Take the antelope out; put the elk in. There is not room for both in your fridge.
- Likewise, there is not room in your heart for both the love of the world and the love of God. In fact, they are mutually exclusive... I plan to spend more time on that next week.
- Back when I lived in a trendy neighborhood in CO, I went to a block party, hoping to get to know some of my neighbors. I entered into conversation with a neighbor who gushed enthusiastically about lawn care for an hour straight. I couldn’t get a word in edgewise about spiritual things I cared about; we parted ways with almost no progress.
- The last way that this immediate passage indicates we can remove road blocks to love, is by weaning ourselves from loving the world (that is, our lawns or our hobbies or entertainment or politics, or anything we pursue apart from the Lordship of Christ). We must wean ourselves from love of the world so that we have room and ability to love God. And when we love God, it follows that we will love one another.
- My father is a pastor in Birmingham, Alabama, and one of his parishioners had a business that provided him with a brand-new Corvette as his company car. But one day he got to thinking about his love for the world and how much driving that Corvette was an idolatrous thing in his life. So he did some research and discovered that he could trade that Corvette in for two more modest cars and his company would still pay for both of them! So that’s what he did: he traded his current-year red Corvette for two current-year Cadillac sedans and left one of them in my parents’ driveway. As a result of denying his love of the world, a stumbling block was removed from his life that released resources for him to be generous to my family, and we enjoyed the blessing of driving a car with air conditioning that worked!

Love comes down to everyday choices



1. αγάπαω: Love

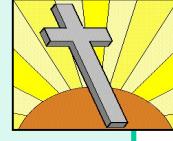
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- b) Your obedience to God is good for your neighbor! Lev.19

3. Have no σκάνδαλον/trap/stumbling block:

- a) hate/disdain: 1 John 2:11
- b) harbored sin: 1 John 2:12-13
- c) loving the world: 1 John 2:15b



WHICH PRINCIPLES APPLY IN THESE SITUATIONS?

- You're sitting on the floor, minding your own business when big brother/sister/co-worker/spouse/roommate walks in, carrying a big box and trips over you.
- You're at a store and you see the coolest video on a screen there, but then your Mom calls you to come here...
- Or maybe you are the Momma and you're running late because a kid was sick and a friend needed to talk and now you're frantically trying to pull dinner together, and hubby walks in saying, "Why isn't dinner ready yet? I was counting on it being on time because I have to turn around and go to a meeting!"
- Or maybe you're the husband, and her response is to break down crying.
- You were playing rough and knocked a nice picture off the wall and it broke. Or maybe you were moving things at work and accidentally bumped something and broke it. Dad (or the boss) comes in and asks, "Who did it?"
- A neighbor offers you \$25 to babysit their kids on Sunday.
- You're walking down the aisle of the store and see your favorite kind of candy or pastry or canned drink. It is so good, you crave it, but you know it's bad for your health. (Don't love the world)
- You're alone with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, and they lean over to kiss you.
- You just settled down for a Quiet Time and your little one toddles up and asks for a sipper cup of milk.
- Someone asks, "Do you go to church?"

1 John 2:10-17



Patriarchal GNT	NAW
10 οὐ ἀγαπῶν τὸν αδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει, καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν·	2:10 The one who loves his brother remains [abides/lives] in the light and a trap [occasion/ cause/to make stumble] does not exist in him.
11 οὐ δὲ μισῶν τὸν αδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἔστι καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ καὶ οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι η σκοτίᾳ ἐτύφλωσε τοὺς οφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.	2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and is walking in the darkness, and does not know where he is heading [going], because the darkness blinded his eyes.
12 Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται νόμοι αἱ ἀμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.	2:12 I am writing to you, dear [little] children, because the sins have been dismissed from you [forgiven] on account of His name [for... sake].
13 γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εγραψα [γράφω ^{Byz. TR}] ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.	2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known the From-The-Beginning One. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered [overcome] the Evil One.
14 ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδία, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἔστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μενεῖ καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.	2:14 I write to you, little children [<i>paidea</i> here but <i>teknia</i> in v.12], because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known the From-The-Beginning One. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God is staying [abides/lives] in you and you have conquered the Evil One.
15 Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν η ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς [Θεοῦ ^{A.C.33}] ἐν αὐτῷ	2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world. If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him,
16 ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, η ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ η ἐπιθυμία τῶν οφθαλμῶν καὶ η ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κοσμοῦ ἔστι.	2:16 For everything in the world--the desire [lust/craving] of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the [boastful/pride] showy lifestyle--is not from the Father but is from the world,
17 καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ η ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ ^{A.33} . οὐ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ μενεῖ εἰς τὸν αἰώνα ^[1] .	2:17 And the world and its desires are being phased out [passing away], but the one who does the will of God remains [abides/lives] forever.

^[1] Augustine quoted a phrase following this verse which is in a few Latin manuscripts: "even as God also abides for ever."