

## 1 John Lesson 28 – FAQ

Date: July 23, 2025

### What is the "new commandment" of love, and how does it differ from the "old commandment"?

The "new commandment" of love, as discussed in 1 John 2:7–8, refers to the command to "love one another." While the concept of loving one's neighbor as oneself was present in the Old Testament (the "old commandment"), its perfection and deepest meaning were fully manifested in Jesus Christ. Jesus personified perfect love—demonstrating it to a degree previously unseen and not fully comprehended by humanity.

The "newness" of this command lies not in its novelty, but in its perfect fulfillment through Christ and in its new potential to be lived out by believers through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

### How did Jesus demonstrate "perfect love" during His time on Earth, particularly in the Upper Room?

Jesus demonstrated perfect love by loving His disciples "to the very end" or "to perfection" (John 13:1). A profound example of this is found in the Upper Room, where, despite knowing of His impending suffering and the disciples' disputes over who was the greatest, He humbly washed their feet—a task typically done by the lowest servant.

This act symbolized His selfless love, even toward Judas, to whom He offered the honored guest's portion of bread. His humility, compassion, and willingness to serve and sacrifice revealed a love previously unknown in its complete and perfect form.

### What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in believers regarding this "new love"?

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is essential to the "newness" of this love. Before Christ, the Spirit was "with" people, but after Jesus' ascension, He now dwells "in" believers (John 14).

This signifies a qualitative difference—believers are now empowered to manifest God's love in a fresh and powerful way. As Galatians 5:22 teaches, love is the first "fruit of the Spirit," and Romans 5:5 declares that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts." This divine deposit enables Christians to love one another—and the lost—with a new capacity, as new creations.

### How does the concept of "light" and "darkness" relate to living out this love?

According to 1 John 2:8, this "new commandment" is relevant "because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining." Jesus is the "true light" (John 8:12), and His coming ushered in a kingdom of light that dispels darkness.

Living out this love is equivalent to walking in the light. Those who walk in love will not stumble or sin against others. Conversely, anyone who claims to walk in the light but hates a fellow believer is still in darkness, showing no true transformation. Love, therefore, is the practical proof of walking in the light and of God's work in one's life.

## What is the practical test or proof of true Christian faith according to John?

The Apostle John emphasizes that love is the test and proof of authentic Christian faith. He writes:

- “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.” — 1 John 2:9
- “He who loves his brother abides in the light.” — 1 John 2:10

True Christians will have hearts full of love, especially for other believers. A life characterized by hatred indicates that God is not in control, regardless of any verbal profession of faith.

## How does Christian love differ from the Gnostics’ view of “enlightenment”?

Christian love directly contrasts with the Gnostic view of enlightenment. The Gnostics claimed spiritual superiority and often treated others with disdain, believing their knowledge made them elite.

In contrast, true Christians, while holding essential truths, are called to humility and compassion. They should be broken-hearted for the lost and motivated by love, not pride. Christian love is self-sacrificial, not self-exalting.

## What does it mean to “not stumble” when walking in the light through love?

To “not stumble” means to avoid sinning against others. 1 John 2:10 says:

“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”

Just as one can walk safely in a well-lit room, the believer who walks in love avoids the relational sins of hatred, lying, theft, or covetousness. While perfect love is not possible, the direction of a Christian’s life will reflect this love. When failures happen, remorse will follow.

## How is love presented as a “way of life” rather than just a philosophy?

Love is not merely an abstract idea or philosophy—it is the direction and evidence of a Christian’s life.

True love is seen in actions:

- Serving others
- Helping and lifting up the weak
- Offering aid
- Refusing to harm or demand

This way of life is the unmistakable sign of God’s work in a person’s heart and the clearest mark of true faith.

## Greek Words in This Document

- Agapē (ἀγάπη)
  - Phonetic: ah-GAH-pay
  - Definition: A selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. In the New Testament, it refers to the highest form of love, exemplified by God’s love for humanity and the kind of love believers are called to show one another.