



## Daily Devotionals

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### 1 JOHN 2:7-14 WALKING IN LOVE

*<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. <sup>8</sup> Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

*<sup>9</sup> Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

*<sup>12</sup> I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.*

*<sup>13</sup> 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 evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.*

*<sup>14</sup> I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

Knowledge of God is revealed and not learned in the sense that we can access and assimilate it by our own efforts. Likewise, knowing God is not a matter of accumulating information about God but rather growing in a loving relationship with God. Therefore, love becomes the center piece of our identity as the people of God. It is the key to and fullest expression of our living in proper relationship with both God and our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). Jesus' teaching is clear in that we are to love everyone, but here St. John is specifically addressing the Church. His simple logic is that we cannot expect to love those who do not share with us a common relationship to God if we cannot find it in ourselves to love our brothers and sisters in the Church.

Given that this love is a matter of serving God and neighbor rather than an emotional feeling about the objects of our affection, we see that our relationships cannot be based on self-interest. It follows that any act of "spiritual" self-preservation or separation from others for the sake of spiritual purity is a violation of the law of love, and therefore, an act of darkness. Within the Church it is also a negative witness to the nature of God who "While we were still sinners, [sent his Son to die] for us" (Romans 5:8). The Son became man, took on the sins of humankind and paid the penalty of our sins so that we might be beloved children of God. In the face of God doing such a thing, how do we dare to shun those who we believe to be disobedient to God? What do our arguments and divisions say to the world about the Church and about God? In view of such behavior, our actions become a source of darkness rather than light when it comes to the revelation of the love of God for humankind.

**Make me an instrument of your love, Lord Christ. May all my decisions be based on what is good for others and what will witness to the truth about you. Help me, Lord, to look at all that goes on in my church through the lens of love. Where there is error, let me speak the truth in love. Where there is division, help me to exercise reconciling love. Where there is brokenness, let me apply the healing balm of love. Where there is competition, let me seek cooperation and unity through love. In all things may your love be manifested in my life. Amen.**

*Chuck+*