

Abide pt3

Ryan Abernathy / General

Abide / 1 John 2:7–14

Sometimes we all need a reminder of who we are and we are supposed to do. This repetition helps us to build habits that become second nature. And yes I am going to use a football reference lol

Growing up in Texas is football on a scale known in only a couple of other places in the US. Football in Texas is a religion and the discipleship starts early. You can see it in the Pop Warner leagues all across the state and the stronger those leagues are, the better the HS teams connected to them. Yes there is an unofficial farm system in TX football lol.

And the reason for that is muscle memory. MS coaches staff the PW leagues in their communities. They are tasked with teaching the basics of the systems being run in the HS Varsity level. By the time a kid makes it to their senior year in HS some plays and schemes are so second nature that they may only be communicated with a word or hand signal and everyone knows exactly what to do. They have been reminded literally thousands of times.

That same practice should be the same with our following Jesus- we do some actions and think some thoughts so many times that it becomes muscle memory- and when it doesn't it feels unnatural and so out of place that we move to quickly rectify the misstep.

That's where John is going in these verses today- building off the end of verse 6- walking in the light- he reminds them of the most elementary principle of being people in the light- love for others.

(Read [1 John 2:7-14](#))

So verse 7 is the beginning of the reminder- the “word” we have heard. And what is that old word? That God loves us and has come to save us- to deliver us from darkness into His light, to invite us to abide with Him.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

The command John advocates is not some new, novel ethical ideal divorced from the heritage of the believing community. **John’s opponents had minimized the importance of ethical behavior. John uses these verses to illustrate that this command is not one more restriction that has been placed on those who have believed, and he shows that these commands are not contradictory to the apostolic message.** This message is, in fact, embedded in the apostolic witness they had received from the beginning of their Christian experience. It is the good news that contains both the record of God’s saving work in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the instruction about how those who have received God’s grace are to live in this fallen world. **These ethical commands had always been a part of the Christian community**

Derek Webb quote regarding Martin Luther- *“There’s a great quote by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. He had a church that he was the pastor of and some came to him and said, “Pastor, why is it that week after week after week all you ever preach to us is the gospel?” – implying that “we’re ready to move on to something else. Certainly we know this by now.” Luther’s response was, “Well, because week after week you forget it, because week after week you walk in here looking like a people who don’t believe the gospel. And until you walk in looking like people who are truly liberated by the truth of the gospel, I’m going to continue to preach it to you.” And, until his dying day, he did.”*

We need to be reminded of the Gospel all the time, because without the Gospel we cannot do what God calls us to- in our own power, in a sustainable way. Without the indwelling power of Jesus- resurrection power- we cannot put the Gospel into action.

And that leads John into the next verse where he tells them that there is an implication of the Gospel that comes with it that we are now walking in the light!

We have said since week 1 of this series- and in our kickoff sermon on 1/1- that the biggest challenge we face coming out of where we have lived this past 3 years is the call to change. That we must begin the hard soul work of being liberated from the cages we have allowed to be erected in our minds and hearts as a result of nearly 3 years of living in fear. That is a TALL order, but is far easier to do in the light! (*navigating in the darkness vs the daylight- the sandbar on our first retreat*)

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

The law of love is new in the sense that it is seen in Jesus and established by him through his death and resurrection. This command is also new in that Jesus by his obedience fulfilled the whole of the law and gave it “a depth of meaning that it had never known before” (John 13:34b, 35). **Finally, this command is new because for those who believe it makes possible a new and eternal life in which they are motivated by the grace of God to fulfill the law of self-sacrificing, Christlike love**

So, John preps them to HEAR the new commandment, and then he unveils it across 3 verses- v9-11.

We are to love our fellow Christian brothers and sisters.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

He will give evidence of his abiding union in the light as he meets the challenge and opportunity to develop Christian character and conduct that is in step with confession and the command of love

Now at face value, this sounds easy, Of course, I love the people I go to church with. But take a minute and be honest. **Do you?** *Who do you avoid? Who do you try to avoid falling into conversation with? Who are you least likely to help? Least likely to ask for help? Who are you keeping a record of wrongs against? Who have you not forgiven, and they know it? Who do you need to ask for forgiveness and you know it?*

I could go on.

And there are serious implications for not practicing this agape-unconditional love, and its implications- for you, for me, for us.

First, we walk in darkness. We are spiritually under cloud cover. We are not able to see what God is doing and to follow Him, because our lack of love for our fellow follower of Jesus we are revealing our hearts- we do not know Him!

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

Those who hate their brother differ from the children of God in that they are still in the darkness and may even love being in that state (John 3:19). **The gravity of this situation is that the one who claims to be in the light but does not love his brother is deceived and in reality is a member of the kingdom of darkness**

Second, if this is a case of unforgiveness, we are causing others to stumble. You are influencing the way others see that person or those people by how you interact with, speak about, and withhold love from them. You may even be causing another person to walk in darkness.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

A believer lives in the light, the very life of God, and gives evidence of his position by loving his fellow believers. This life, lived in this manner, provides no occasion for offense. Christians can walk without stumbling because they see where they are going and the result is they do not cause others to fall.

Third, you are blinded. You are not on the right path, and you cannot find your way back to that path until you deal with this broken relationship.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Learn the New Command and Love Others (2:7–11)

Spiritual darkness is not a passive reality. It goes on the offensive. Darkness attacks those living in it so that they become increasingly trapped in this realm of confusion and blindness. In a real sense what we do is what we become. How we live is who we are. **The longer one remains in this realm of darkness, the more difficult it becomes to see the sin that is in one's life, and the less likely one is to see his need to confess his sins so that fellowship with God can be restored.** Habitual hatred leads to more hatred, and the possibility of loving becomes less and less likely

Man, that is some tough words from [John. I](#) know my toes were stepped on when I taught thru this for Heavenward Chapel, and they are also stepped on today. And truthfully, when we consider broken relationships, all of us, probably have some work to do. And if we look at the level of work we need to do, we may feel like it is daunting- how can this be repaired?

So, John ends this section with a reminder to the church about what they have already overcome (read v12-14)

There is repetition of ideas here for emphasis, and the references are to the whole church (children) leadership (fathers) and new believers (young ones or men)

And what does John remind them of? What makes them capable of loving others and walking in the light:

- they have been forgiven- The first and most fundamental word of encouragement that John can give to all members of the church is that **in the past they were forgiven of their sins and that this forgiveness remains effective in their lives.** “Have been forgiven” is in the perfect tense (John will use a perfect tense form six times in these verses). This forgiveness occurs because the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ made the mercy and grace of God available to those who repent of their sins and believe in the name of Jesus

Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 104.

- they know Jesus and thru Him the Father- The knowledge they have is indicative of **a deep, ongoing spiritual relationship (“have known” is in the perfect tense) that is grounded in the historical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not in intellectual speculation that perverts the true picture of who Jesus is, the eternal Son of God.** That he overtly draws attention to the Father in the latter part of this verse further supports the Christological understanding here (Akin, IBID)
- they have overcome the evil one and his power- *We must note that while it is likely that the term “young ones” refers to a specific group within the community, this reality should be a part of the life of every believer at any stage of spiritual development,* for the Christian life is characterized by a constant battle against evil. **This battle is shown in the ethical and spiritual struggle that is present throughout the epistle.** The Christian can take heart in the midst of this battle because the victory is assured through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and in the resurrection (Akin, IBID)

- and they are able to abide with God, because they abide in His Word- The second reason for their victory over the evil one is that the word of God abides (present tense) in them. The word “abides” probably refers to the word of life or divine message revealed by and in Jesus Christ, though it may refer to the love command...**It is through constant contact with the word of God that the believer has communion with the Father and gains direction and spiritual energy for the battle (Akin, IBID)**

You can forgive. You can love unconditionally. You can walk in the light. The question is WILL you? And the warning is, we cannot progress in our walk while we are blindly casting about for direction because we have chosen darkness over light.