

The Gospel According to John

A New and Better Commandment

John 13:34-35



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“A new commandment I give to you,
that you love one another, even as I have loved you,
that you also love one another.
By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another.”

Main Point

In connection with His death, Jesus inaugurated a new and better commandment that, when obeyed, would make His followers stand out as a distinct and peculiar people.

A New and Better Command

What is the command?



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Love one another.

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Love is the defining characteristic
of God's people as identified by
the two great commandments:
Love God with all your being and
love your neighbor as yourself.

But Jesus amplifies this love...

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This brings new clarity to what it
means to love as Christ commands.

John 15:12-13

“This is My commandment,
that you love one another, **just as I have loved you.**

Greater love has no one than this,
that one lay down his life for his friends.”

Christ's love is most clearly seen
in His death for us.

Laying down your life for others is what marks Christian love, but this is not primarily the *physical* act of dying for another.

It is the continual *dying to self* that is required by a love bent on bringing good to the other.

The greatest good to be brought?

Truth!

Ephesians 4:15

...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ...

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Jesus' command to love one another
does not supplant His command
to love your neighbor, rather it
focuses and intensifies that love in
the context of Christian community.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

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by God **to love one another.**

Galatians 6:10

So then, while we have opportunity,
let us do good to all people, and especially to those
who are of the household of the faith.

Love your neighbor!

Galatians 6:10

So then, while we have opportunity,

let us do good to all people, and especially to those
who are of the household of the faith.

Love one another!

Galatians 6:10

So then, while we have opportunity,

let us do good to all people, and **especially to those
who are of the household of the faith.**

We are instructed to love one another
– to practice a household love,
a family love!

A New and Better Command

What is the command?

What makes it new and better?



John 13:34

“A new commandment I give to you,
that you love one another...

This command was not new in the
sense that it was original.

Leviticus 19:18

**“You shall love your neighbor as yourself;
I am the LORD.”**

So, what makes it new and better?

It is founded on a new
and better covenant.

John 13:34

“A new commandment **I give to you...**”

The apostle to the Hebrews provides for us
a stark contrast between the giving of the
Old Covenant and the giving of the New.

A stark contrast...

Hebrews 12:18-21

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched
and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom
and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet
and the sound of words which sound was such that those
who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.

For they could not bear the command,
“If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.”

And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said,
“I am full of fear and trembling”

The Old Covenant was given with fire, darkness, and gloom because it revealed God's holiness and their sinfulness.

The Law bound them to sin and death: not due to any deficiency in the Law but due to the depravity of the heart.

Romans 7:10

This commandment, which was to result in life,
proved to result in death for me.

Paul goes on to describe the Old Covenant Law as
“the law of sin and of death”
because of the weakness of our sinful flesh.

Romans 8:2-3

But the New Covenant is new and better--
first because of the One who gave it.

John 13:34

“A new commandment **I give to you...**”

That stark contrast...

Hebrews 12:18 and 22-24

For you have **not** come to a mountain...

But you have come ...to Jesus, the mediator
of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood,
which speaks better than that of Abel.

That stark contrast...

Hebrews 12:18 and 22-24

For you have not come to a mountain...

But you have come ...to Jesus, **the mediator**
of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood,
which speaks better than that of Abel.

This command to love one another
is a new command because it is part of the
New Covenant given and ratified by a new
and better Mediator:

One who has ensured and continues
to ensure its fulfillment.

What makes it new and better?

It is founded on a new and better covenant.

It is enabled by a new
and better power.

Jeremiah 31:31-32

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant
which I made with their fathers in the day I took them
by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...”

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which I made with their fathers** in the day I took them
by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...

My covenant which they broke,
although I was a husband to them,”
declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 31:33

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean;
I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit
within you; and I will remove the heart of stone
from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My
statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

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statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

This new heart and new spirit is
the very life of Christ in us, in whom
we abide and by whom we are
empowered to bear the fruit of love.

John 15:4-5

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so 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, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Christ in us is our hope of glory!

Colossians 1:27

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observe My ordinances.**

Romans 8:2-4

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

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He condemned sin in the flesh,
so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us,

**who do not walk according to the flesh
but according to the Spirit.**

Galatians 6:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love...

Christ's new command to love one another is a command enabled by the new life we have in and from Him.

What makes it new and better?

It is founded on a new and better covenant.

It is enabled by a new and better power.

It is modeled after a new
and better example.

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that you also love one another.”

John 13:15

“For I gave you an example that you also
should do as I did to you.”

There were and are many great examples to follow, but Christ was the New and Best example!

He is the perfect image bearer, and we grow up into Him!

A New and Better Command

What is the command?

What makes it new and better?

What makes Christian love
such a distinct and peculiar practice?



It is distinct and peculiar!

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another.

What makes this love
so distinct and peculiar?

Why distinct and peculiar?

Because it is opposed to human nature.

John 13:35

“All men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another.”

This must be a love of a distinct
and peculiar kind.

What is the difference?

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to His disciples,
“If anyone wishes to come after Me, **he must deny himself**,
and take up his cross and follow Me.”

Self-denial sits at the base of obedience!

But our flesh is oriented to ourselves.

Even our acts of kindness and
sacrifice are devoid of self-denying,
Christ-honoring love.

But...

Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ;
and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

Christian love toward one another
is distinct and peculiar because
it is fundamentally *supernatural*.

Supernatural and peculiar Christian love...

Colossians 3:12-14

So, as those who have been chosen of God,
holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion,
kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,
whoever has a complaint against anyone;
just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
Beyond all these things put on love, which is
the perfect bond of unity.

Why distinct and peculiar?

It is opposed to human nature.

Because it is offensive to worldly culture.

In a world sold out to self-esteem,
the message of the cross offends.

Loving messages that offend *self-esteem*...

Ephesians 2:1-2

You *are* dead in your trespasses and sins...*you are* sons of disobedience...*you are* by nature children of wrath.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

In a world bent on autonomy and independence, Christian love -- household love-- will look intrusive and meddlesome.

Ephesians 4:15

...**but** speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ...

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Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend...

And example of “Intrusive” love-speaking...

Matthew 18:15-17

And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private;
if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

But if he does not listen, take one or two more with you,
so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses
every fact may be confirmed.

And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;
and if he refuses even to listen to the church...

It is the distinction and peculiarity of this counter-natural, counter-cultural, offensive love that serves as both a mark and apologetic of the Church.

Concluding Questions:

Are you a part of the household of God
and have you identified with *a household*?

Are you cultivating a special regard --
a familial love -- for the brothers and sisters
of your household?

Are you drawing on the life of Christ in order
to sacrificially love your brothers and sisters?