

2 John 1:4-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/2john/2john-1/2-john-14-6/>

John affirms that some believers are walking in the truth by loving one another, while others are apparently in need of reminder: God calls us to love one another. It is not a new commandment that they don't know. It is a fundamental aspect of walking with God that all believers should practice for the benefit of themselves and others.

Continuing the theme of “truth” John states matter-of-factly: *I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth.* The *children* here refer to the believers in the church, the *children* of the “chosen lady.” The fact that John writes *some of your children are walking in truth* implies that not all are *walking in truth*. He will warn those who are following the truth to be careful not to be led astray by those who are not *walking in the truth*. The primary *truth* John highlights is the *truth* that Jesus commanded believers to *love one another*.

The *children are walking in the truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father.* To walk in the truth is to walk in obedience to the commandments of the Father. This is because what the Father says is true. And when the Father tells us to do something, it is because it is for our best, for us as well as those with whom we are connected; whether or not it appears that way.

John now makes a request of the *lady*, the members of the church. He says *Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.* Presumably, the believers in the church who are *walking in the truth* are also practicing *love* toward *one another*. That was what God commanded. So now John asks the rest of the church to do likewise.

It is interesting to note that John does not ask the rest of the church to walk in truth. Rather, he asks them to love one another. This is because loving one another is a practical out-working of walking in the truth. The way to tell whether someone is walking in the truth is to observe whether they are loving others.

John notes that *it is not as though he was writing them a new commandment.* This is something Jesus made clear, and it was a command at the founding of the New Testament church. John recorded Jesus' words in his gospel:

“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.”
(John 15:12-13)

John does not stop with the mere request. He also describes what this means. He explains that *this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.* To love one another requires that we walk in obedience to God's commands. This makes perfect sense, because God's commands tell

us how to love others. God only commands for us to do things that are true. When believers walk in God's commands, we walk in the truth.

Jesus stated this when He was asked about the greatest commandments. He answered:

“‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40).

This makes clear that anyone who desires to obey God will do so by loving others in the same way they love themselves. The command to love others as we love ourselves presumes that we love ourselves. It is our instinct to seek our own self-interest. To obey God's commands requires making a choice to also seek the welfare of others.

The Ten Commandments basically follow the outline of the two greatest commandments, as spoken by Jesus. The first four of the Ten Commandments can be summarized by “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” And the last five commandments basically explain what it looks like to love your neighbor as yourself. God's intent for humanity is based on voluntary love and harmony. Love requires freedom; no one can be coerced to truly love. True love is seeking the welfare for others in truth.

As John has already said, there is nothing new about the commandment to love one another. John notes that *This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it*. Jesus did not give the commandment just to put it on tee shirts and bumper stickers. He gave the commandment *that you should walk in it*. The command does no good to the community unless it is followed. To *walk* requires making a choice to act, then taking an action. We choose to *walk* when we decide it is in our best interest to go somewhere, then we choose to stand up and take one step. Then another. In the same way, to “love one another” requires believing that obedience to this command is in our best interest, then taking a step of action to love. Then another. Then another. One step at a time. This is walking in truth, and it is walking in love.

Biblical Text

⁴I was very glad to find *some* of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment *to do* from the Father. ⁵Now I ask you, lady, not as though *I were* writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. ⁶And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.