

## 1 John Lesson 4 Articles

In the previous paragraph (1 John 2:3–6), John has been talking about “the commandments” in general, but now he narrows his focus down to *one single commandment*. In the Old Testament, the command that God’s people love one another was only one of *many*, but now this old commandment is lifted out and given a place of preeminence.

How is it possible for one commandment to stand head and shoulders above all the others? This is explained by the fact that love is the fulfillment of God’s Law (Rom. 13:8–10).

Parents must care for their children according to law. Child neglect is a serious crime. But how many parents have a conversation like this when the alarm clock goes off in the morning?

*She*: “Honey, you’d better get up and go to work. We don’t want to get arrested.”

*He*: “Yeah, and you’d better get up and get breakfast for the kids, and get their clothes ready. The cops might show up and put us both in jail.”

*She*: “You’re right. Boy, it’s a good thing they have a law, or we’d stay in bed all day!”

It’s doubtful that the fear of the law is often the motive behind earning a living or caring for one’s children. Parents fulfill their responsibilities (even if grudgingly on occasion) because they love each other and their children. To them, doing the right thing is not a matter of *law*—it’s a matter of *love*.

The commandment “Love one another” is the fulfillment of God’s Law in the same way. When you love people, you do not lie about them or steal from them. You have no desire to kill them. Love for God and love for others motivates a person to obey God’s commandments *without even thinking about them!* When a person acts out of Christian love he obeys God and serves others—not because of fear, but because of his love.

This is why John says that “Love one another” is a new commandment—it is *new in emphasis*. It is not simply one of many commandments. No, it stands at the top of the list!<sup>1</sup>

John’s Gospel describes a special relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son. It is a mutual intimacy based on subjection and equality. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus speaks what He hears the Father saying, does what He sees the Father doing. Jesus does not act on His own, but on the will of the Father.

This intimate fellowship and servanthood sets the pattern for the relationship between Jesus and His followers. This intimate association was not the absorption of the individual (as in eastern mysticism), but an ethical, moral lifestyle of emulation. Fellowship was (1) cognitive (the worldview of the gospel as the Word of God); (2) relational (Jesus was God’s promised Messiah to be trusted in and leaned on); and (3) Christlikeness (His character reproduced in godly believers).

Jesus is the ideal man, the true Israelite, the standard of humanity. He reveals what Adam should have, and could have been (humanly speaking). Jesus is the ultimate “image of God.” He restores the fallen image in mankind by (1) revealing God; (2) dying on our behalf (substitutionary atonement); and (3) providing humans an example to follow. The term “abiding” (*menō*) reflects the goal of Christlikeness (cf. Rom. 8:29), the restoration of the Fall (cf. Gen. 3).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 486–487). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Uteley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 205). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.