

What's Love Got to Do with It? The Second Test

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Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] Let's take our Bibles this morning and open them to 1 John, the first epistle of John, and find chapter 2.

! Our text for this morning will take us from verse 7 of chapter 2 all the way to verse 14. So, follow along in your Bibles as I read. Again, 1 John chapter 2 verses 7 through 14.

This is what John writes, brethren, and ladies you can include yourself in there, okay? I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now.

It's still in darkness, literally. He who loves his brother abides in the light. There is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

[2 : 00] 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 wicked one.

I write to you, little children, because you have known the father. I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you. And you have overcome the wicked one. Okay?

From this passage, the subject. What is the subject here? Well, the subject really could be named with just one word.

Even though this one word appears actually only one time in the entire passage. And it does not appear until we get kind of well on into the passage, several verses on end.

[3 : 01] That one word is love. So the subject is love. This is John's subject. Love. Love is the subject this morning. I'm looking around at the room.

And I don't think that what I'm about to say is going to really resonate or connect with many of you in here. But there are enough of us in here who remember the 1980s classic pop hit sung by Tina Turner.

Because I never thought I would ever mention Tina Turner from the poet. But that classic pop hit entitled, What's Love Got to Do With It?

How many of you remember that song? Well, a whole lot more than I thought. Shame on you for remembering that. I'm sure it was one of your favorites, right?

Back in the day. And I know it was not one of mine. But this famous pop singer from the 70s and 80s.

[4 : 08] I'm not sure if she went on into the 90s or not. And by the way, I use the term singer very loosely here. But... And I hope you don't remember much of the song.

But after singing some very suggestive lyrics about... Well, never mind what it was about. You can use your imagination. But don't use your imagination too much, okay?

But after that, kind of after the opening of this song, she sings, What's Love Got to Do With It? She sings, What's Love But a Secondhand Emotion?

What's love but a sweet old-fashioned notion? The song coming back to you. Well, you know, considering the very overtly sexually immoral content of the song, I think Tina Turner got it right. Love's got nothing to do with it. Nothing whatsoever to do with it. And so why, Pastor, bring this up? Well, I want to borrow the song title and run it by the Apostle John.

[5 : 24] And just ask him, John, in terms of salvation, genuine salvation, in terms of genuine salvation, what's love got to do with it?

And John's answer, of course, is everything. It has everything to do with it. And really, that's John's objective here in this portion of his letter.

In fact, he's going to revisit this subject a number of times before we're finished with this wonderful letter, this first letter of the Apostle John. Love has everything to do with it, with our salvation, with genuine salvation.

Remember, John wants us to experience, as believers, to experience the assurance of our salvation. Remember, that's his goal here. And I call your attention once again to that verse that comes near the end of the letter in 1 John 5, verse 13.

These things I've written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God. What things have I written? All that has been written in this letter. I'm writing these things to you, you believers, those who believe in the name of the Son of God.

[6 : 33] And for what purpose? That you may know that you have eternal life. That's assurance. A no-so of salvation. That's John's goal here, his objective in this letter.

And so John sets before us some tests, so to speak. Some tests. Tests of genuine salvation. This is what John gives us here.

Tests that we need to apply to our lives as believers. Tests also that will help confirm the truth. The truth, one way or the other, about our true spiritual condition before God.

These tests are given here in 1 John. Revealed to us whether or not we really should have any assurance that we are saved.

Truly saved. Okay? Now, last week we looked at what we might call the moral test. In fact, that's not new with me. Some have called it that. The moral test. Remember, John wrote, we know that we know him if.

[7 : 42] If what? If we keep his commandments. We keep his commandments. We live according to his word. That's the moral test.

And this morning we shall look at what we might call, and some have called, the relational test. The relational test.

And really, it's defined, after we get on down into the passage in verse 10, he who loves his brother abides in the light. That is, is truly saved.

So love has everything to do with it, doesn't it? So I want us to consider four truths here, four truths revealed in this passage about love, about love.

And it's a huge subject, and very tempted in my preparations to be much more detailed, but given what John is going to continue to teach us about love, by the time we're finished, we'll have covered, I think, all the bases very specifically about love.

[8 : 51] But in this passage, I want us to notice four things that are revealed to us, four truths about love. And here's the first one. The law that prioritizes love.

The law. The law of God. The law of God that prioritizes love. So John speaks here of a commandment. A commandment. He's talking about a commandment, and actually this fits very logically in the flow of the letter, very logically with the preceding verses that we've already studied in this chapter.

Remember back in verse 3. In fact, if you have your Bibles open, you can look at it. Verse 3, By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Commandments.

And He uses the word in the most general sense. That is all of God's commandments. We're commandment keepers. This is how we know that we know that we have eternal life.

We're commandment keepers. We keep God's commandments. Verse 4, He who says, I know Him, that is, I really am saved, and yet does not keep His, and here's the word commandments again, does not keep the commandments, He's a liar.

[10 : 07] A liar and the truth is not in Him. And verse 5, I mean this is repeated a number of different ways. In that passage we looked at last week, in verse 5, Whoever keeps His word, that's just another way of saying, keeping His commandments, obeying His word.

Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in Him. By this we know. By this, by what? The keeping of His commandments, living according to His word.

By this we know, that we are in Him. Alright, so that's the moral test. So, John is not completely starting, totally starting a new subject here.

We're still talking about, he's still talking about, commandments. But whereas, before, he's speaking commandments, in a very general sense. Here, he's getting very specific.

Very specific. And his logic is clear. Obedience to God's commandments in a general sense is a test of genuine salvation.

[11 : 23] And, obedience to a certain specific commandment, I would even use the word supreme commandment, obedience to the supreme commandment is an even surer test of genuine salvation.

Alright, so what is this supreme commandment? It's the commandment of love. The commandment of love, though John does not identify it until, again, until verse 10.

This is what he's talking about, this new commandment. And, in verse 7, John writes, brethren, which, again, is inclusive of all believers, male and female, I assure you, ladies, you're included in here, okay?

I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

Alright, so, write off, talk about a commandment, it's a commandment of love, and it is not a new commandment, in fact, it is a very old commandment, isn't it?

[12 : 38] In fact, our scripture reading this morning takes us way back almost to the beginning of the Old Testament, to the giving of the law, and that law given is the commandment of love.

Love your neighbor as yourself. This is what God, through Moses, spoke to his people in Leviticus chapter 19 verse 18. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

I am the Lord. Just to punctuate the fact that you'd better obey this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. That's a very old commandment, isn't it? Very old commandment.

Now, we can get on into the New Testament and Jesus affirmed this old commandment. It's not old in the sense of outdated. It's no longer, you know, mandatory.

It's no longer in effect. Jesus re-verified this old commandment in a number of places actually recorded in the Gospels, but in Matthew chapter 22 verses 38 to 40.

[13 : 42] Remember this lawyer, Jewish lawyer, that means he's just an expert in the law of Moses. He came to Jesus wanting to test him, wanting to trip him up really. And in this passage he asked the question, Teacher, which is the great commandment and the law?

And Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.

Remember that Jesus said that? He didn't stop there. And the second, and the second is like it. The second great commandment is like it.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. That's a quote from Leviticus 19. 18. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And then he concluded this by saying, On these two commandments, love God, love your neighbor.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. All the law and the prophets. That's old. The law and the prophets.

[14 : 50] And the commandment is old. Right? No, it's not new. It's old. But John really means something else here.

I mean, he does mean this, but he means something more specifically. John means that this commandment of love is not new to you believers.

It's not new to you. Now, that sounds like it's saying the same thing, but this is a little bit more personal in it. It's not new to you, this old commandment.

He said, it is an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. Now, not from the beginning in terms of creation, okay? Not even from the beginning in terms of the giving of the law through Moses, although it is old.

You know, 1,400 years ago for John's first readers, 3,400 years ago, give or take a few years, for us, this law was giving. But he's not talking about the beginning in that sense.

[16 : 00] But rather, John says the beginning in terms of your first introduction to the Word of God. In fact, really, very likely, he's talking about the beginning of their walk of faith with Christ.

Going back to their conversion, that's the beginning for them, their new birth. John said, the old commandment is the Word which you heard from the beginning, that is the beginning of your life in Christ.

You've known this all along. It's not new. Love God, love one another, this is not new, so don't act like it is new.

He's really kind of rebuking them. He's kind of getting on us here. Don't act like you didn't know this. It's an old commandment. It's old certainly in the sense you can go all the way back to the law of Moses. It's from the very beginning of the beginning. This is God's law, but you should know this because you learned this, you heard this, you've had this commandment from the very beginning of your walk as a believer.

[17:24] So don't act like this is something new. So let me ask you something, why is it that God's people sometimes act as though they did not know this? I mean the command, God's command to love one another unconditionally and we're going to, of course, we can add to this actually means to love God as, or love others as Christ loves others.

Why is it that we act as though that's new, that's something we didn't know? You know, Christians can sometimes be the most unloving of people.

I mean we really can, I've witnessed it. And it's not Christian to act unloving. And Christians can do it. Toward people who are different, a little bit different than you are, than we are, or toward people who are difficult.

You know, some people are difficult, aren't they? Or toward people who are, by our own judgment, deficient.

I mean, why is it that we think that it's okay to not love them? this is a big problem in the church.

[18:56] Jesus said, love one another, loving one another is what? It's the second greatest commandment, second only to loving God with all your heart, soul, might, and strength.

It's the second and greatest commandment. And the way we act sometimes, you would think that we had never heard that before. I mean, let the conviction fall where the Holy Spirit wants it, okay? I think it falls on all of us. John repeated this in 1 John 3, 11. That's why I said we'll be revisiting this subject a number of times as we go throughout this study.

But he said there in 1 John 3, 11, for this is the message that you heard from the beginning, beginning of your walk of faith. What? That you should love one another.

See, the law that prioritizes love. And don't forget that John has already said by this we know that we know him. What?

[19:58] If we keep his commandments. And love is one of them. In fact, it is the first and second greatest commandment. It leads the list.

Let's take this a step further this morning because John does. John doesn't overgeneralize this, this love.

And so far I've been very general in this. And so I want you to notice the second thing, the Lord who personifies love. The Lord who personifies love.

The law that prioritizes love. But let's take it a step further, a huge step further. The Lord, that's Jesus, the Lord Jesus who personifies love itself.

Now this may sound a little strange when you get to verse 8 because in verse 8 John writes again, a new commandment I write to you. Now wait a minute. I mean, I thought John just said, I write no new commandment to you.

[21:03] Isn't that what he said? Verse 7, that's what he wrote in verse 7. Yet with the very next breath he says, a new commandment I write to you. So what's going on here?

I mean, how can an old commandment at the same time be a new commandment? How can an old commandment become a new commandment? And the answer is really quite simple.

The coming of Jesus Christ makes it new in a number of ways. Makes it brand new. In fact, Jesus himself called it a new commandment.

Christ. He did so with his coming. And it's new in a number of ways, but it's new primarily because Jesus Christ, the Christ, the very Son of God, when he came, he came as the very personification of love itself.

He is love. love. And he, when he came, he expressed the full revelation of this truth.

[22:12] What love is. Look at verse eight. A new commandment I write to you, which thing, this thing, this new commandment is true in him.

I don't just pass over that too quickly. In him. See, love to this point, to the point of when Jesus came, just before Jesus came, love was merely a command.

It's just a command. With the coming of Jesus, love becomes a person. Becomes a person. So love is no longer just some abstract law or precept revealed in scripture.

It's not just that anymore. Love is now a flesh and blood person. That makes it new. New in a number of ways.

Because with the coming of Christ, when Jesus came, in Jesus there is now a new priority on love. New priority on love.

[23 : 28] Jesus said, the whole of the law and prophets, that is the whole of God's word, hangs on this new commandment, on this love commandment.

It's a new priority that was never really made before. But with the coming of Jesus and Jesus' statement, love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, love your neighbor as yourself, do those two things, upon those two laws, all the law and the prophet hang.

Hang on it. Depend upon it. In fact, to disobey that command, to love God and love your neighbor as yourself, is to break all of God's law.

Break all of it. Likewise, loving God and loving others will result in the keeping of God's law.

All of it hangs upon that. What's love got to do with it? Everything. Everything. So, with the coming of Jesus, there's a new priority on love.

[24 : 37] But I would say, secondly, in Jesus, there is a new quality of love. A new quality of love.

love. I mean, think of it. His humble sacrifice upon the cross is now the new standard for love.

It doesn't mean that we all have to go die on a cross for somebody to show our love. It's just simply defining this new quality of love.

It's self-sacrificial. In fact, if it is not that, it's not real love. It's not true love. It's not loving people as Jesus loved people.

Because Jesus died for us upon the cross. It's self-sacrificial love. It's agape love. You know, you've heard it many times before that agape is uniquely and decidedly Christian.

[25 : 36] That kind of love is Christian. You can't experience and express that kind of love in the way that it must be expressed if you don't know Jesus.

Jesus, you see, with his coming, he gave us a new quality of love. He taught this in a number of ways. For example, in John 13, Jesus, remember, humbled himself and he washed his disciples' feet, even the feet of his betrayer.

And he knew he was the betrayer. And he washed his feet, Judas. But a little later, he says to them, a new commandment I give to you.

That sounds very much like what John said. In fact, it is exactly what John is talking about. A new commandment I give to you, Jesus said, that you love one another. Love one another.

How? As I have loved you. See, I just showed you. And pretty soon I'm going to show you in the supreme way when I die on the cross for your sin.

[26 : 46] So love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, that you're true believers, if you'll have love for one another.

New quality of love. That's how John could say this is a new commandment. It's a new thing.

Because Jesus has come, the very personification of love.

And I would say a third thing, in Jesus there is a new diversity of love. This was a very important lesson for the Jewish people when Jesus came.

And it still applies to us today because remember in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus redefined the word neighbor. Who is my neighbor?

That's what one of the Jews said. To the Jews of that day, their neighbor was their fellow Jew. And then, only if that fellow Jew was living, you know, as they should according to the law.

[27 : 56] But Jesus greatly expanded that, didn't he? Through this thing that he did for the Samaritan woman.

Because now neighbor includes anyone and everyone. Anyone, everyone, even our enemies. peace. And I would add a fourth and most important of all, in Jesus there's a new ability to love. New ability is a brand new ability to love. That we didn't have before. Can't have apart from our relationship with Christ. I want you to notice what is tagged on to this.

This great verse 8, look at it again. A new commandment I write unto you which thing is true in him. The truth is in him. It's in Jesus. It personifies this very truth.

But now watch this. Which thing is true in him and in you? And in you? You say, I just can't love everyone.

[29 : 07] I just can't do it. There's certain people I can't love. I can't love everyone. Yes, you can. Yes, you can. If you're saved, you can.

Truly saved, you can. Because you have it in you to love anyone and everyone regardless and to love them unconditionally, to love them as Jesus loved them. What did John say?

Because what? Because the darkness is passing away. That is, the power of your old nature, the dominance of your old sinful nature is passing away.

And the true light, and that's, I know it's not capitalized in our text, but it's a reference to Jesus. The true light, that's Jesus in you, is shining, already shining.

So the old, the power of the old nature, the sinful nature is passing away and the light is shining. It could hardly be a better description of a believer in this world today.

[30 : 17] A true believer. And really herein lies the test. Remember, this is a test. Is the darkness passing away in you? Or is it not?

Perhaps even becoming darker. Is the darkness passing away? that is the power of the old nature, sinful nature, passing away and is the true light, the light of Jesus, the life of Christ, shining in you? See, there is the test. I want us to look at a third thing here. light. The light is number three, the light that is proved by love.

So the law that prioritizes love, the Lord who personifies love, and now the light, the light that is proved by love.

Proved by love. John says in verse 9, look at it, he, and you could add or she, who says he or she is in the light, that means says I'm saved, I'm a Christian, one who says I'm a Christian and yet hates his brother or sister, is in darkness until now, that is, is lost, still lost.

[31 : 56] In fact, some translations render it that way, is still in darkness. You've not left the darkness, you're still in it. That's pretty strong, those are pretty strong words, aren't they?

Pretty absolute. And, you know, we really don't like absolutes. And you look at this passage, and, you know, we want other possibilities other than light and dark.

We want shades of gray in between there because we kind of want to fit somewhere in there. You know, all right, I don't want to be associated with the darkness and maybe I'm not perfect light.

I want to be, I'm somewhere in between, but John doesn't give us an in between. We don't like absolutes like that. Not only that, but we want other possibilities other than love and hate.

Right? We want some in between these extremes. Somewhere in between there. But John loves absolutes.

[33 : 11] You can't read this letter without picking up on that. He loves it. I mean, there are no gray areas with John. There are no shades between love and hate.

and he's basically saying, if you claim to be in the light, as you claim to be a Christian, but the pattern of your life is not loving people like Jesus loved people.

If you don't love people like Jesus loved people, by the way, that's what John means by hating your brother. that's the positive way of saying the negative.

Not loving people like Jesus loved people is the same as hating them. I know you don't like the absolute, but you say, well, it's got to be somewhere in between there.

That's not. It's all or nothing. All right, so again, he's saying, if you claim to be a Christian, but the pattern, the norm of your life is not loving people like Jesus loved people, then you're still in the darkness.

[34 : 32] You're still in the darkness. You're not saved. And if you got to take issue with that, take it up with John, not me.

I mean, this strikes hard at my heart. So, you know, you might ask the question, can a Christian hate someone? Still be a Christian? Yeah.

We can commit the sin of hate. There isn't any sin of the flesh that you're not capable of committing. Believe me. We can commit the sin of hate, but not for long, not without conviction.

Conviction of the presence of God in your very life and heart. That's the Holy Spirit. You can't do it without conviction and without eventual confession. Those things will follow as they do with every sin.

I'm not talking about sin as we are committal of a sin or an act of sin, one act of sin, or even a struggle with a certain kind of sin.

[35 : 46] We're talking about the ongoing pattern of your life, persistent way of thinking and living.

So, a Christian, yeah, can commit the sin of hate. But remember what John said in chapter 1 verse 8, if we say that we have no sin. So, if you're not loving someone, some particular person, because of who they are, what they've done, or whatever your criteria is, if you're not loving that person as Christ loves that person, then there's something wrong.

number 1, it's sin, and if you're a true believer, you're going to confess it as such. So, you can't go around saying, you know, I don't have any sin in this matter.

It's sin not to love people as Jesus loves people, or as John puts it, to hate people. It's sin. And so, he says, remember there in chapter 1 verse 8, if we say that we have no sin, and hating people is sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, that's proof of something else, isn't it? We confess it as sin, then what? He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[37 : 19] But on the other hand, if we can hate someone, or to put it in John's term, not love, people as Jesus loves people, and we can do so without any qualms about it, even justifying it to ourselves, saying we have a right to do that, or it's really not sin given the circumstances, or whatever it may be, or it's not sin for me because it's just the way I was brought up, or it's my environment, or I have red hair, or whatever.

Sorry, redhead people. If we can do that, then it's proof of lostness. That's what John is saying.

It's proof of lostness. It's proof of darkness. Verse 10 says, he who loves his brother, loves, that is, loves as Jesus loves, abides in the light.

He's saved. Love is the proof of it. But you know, you say, I have every reason to hate that person. I mean, just look what they did to me, or said about me.

Look at the way they believe. Look at the lifestyle. I have every reason to hate that person. No, you don't. Oh, pastor, you don't know my set of circumstances.

[38 : 44] I don't care. You don't have a reason to hate anyone. Anyone, no matter what the circumstances. If you are abiding in the light, if you are truly saved, you never have a reason to hate someone or anyone.

What did John say in verse 10? Look at it. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. You know what that means?

It means there's no cause to commit this sin, this sin of hate. I mean, if you really abide in the light, then no matter what happens, you have no cause to commit the sin of hate, the sin of not loving someone as Jesus loves people.

But if you can justify breaking this commandment to love your neighbor as yourself, then John says in verse 11, he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

So the law that prioritizes love, the Lord who personifies love, the light, the salvation, the reality of light in you, that is proved by love.

[40 : 16] love. And then there's one more thing. The life that produces love. The life, the real life, the spiritual life, the life of God that produces love.

Because we come to this point with quite a dilemma. we think, this is not even possible.

I mean, how can we fit into this? So John wants you to know that your ability to love people like Jesus loves people is not in you by your own nature.

not something you can just drum up and discipline into your life. You might be able to do it in some circumstances and grit your teeth and love a person.

You know, we can kind of discipline really a lot of these things into our life, at least for a time. That's not what, that doesn't prove anything. thing. And so John wants you to know that the ability to love people like Jesus loves people really comes from outside of yourself.

[41 : 47] It's not something you have in you that is in your flesh, in you as you. It comes from outside of us. And so as I've said already with the last test, loving others does not produce genuine salvation in you.

Not at all. It's just the other way around. Genuine salvation, life, is what produces love for others in you.

Love for God too. It's genuine salvation that produces those things. Spiritual life. love. And again, that's something that comes to you from outside of yourself.

It comes to you from God. And so John always kind of takes us back to the foundational truths of genuine salvation. He's already done that a couple of times in this short letter.

It kind of, you know, it kind of begins with a subjective test. And it is subjective. do you love people the way Jesus loves people? Well, that's kind of a subjective test.

[43 : 05] And so John doesn't want to just leave it there. And so John gives us an objective truth. The objective truth. And so he's really basically saying this, if you love people the way Jesus loves people, it is only because of something God has done in you.

It came from him, from outside of yourself. That's something you can create in you. That's something you can discipline into your life. It comes from God by virtue of your salvation. And so look again in verses 12-14 and we're not going to spend a lot of time on this passage because really John's point is so simple, so very simple.

And the way that it's written, it kind of looks like a poem. In fact, it is kind of presented that way in nearly every translation of Scripture.

The way it kind of appears on the page, well this is poetry. But really the point of it is very simple, very straightforward. I want you to look at it again.

[44 : 27] I write to you little children because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. That's really what you ought to focus on there. I write to you fathers because you have known him who is from the beginning.

You know God the Father. I write to you young men because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you little children because you have known the Father.

I write to you fathers because you have known him who is from the beginning. I have written to you young men because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the wicked one.

It seems a little complicated doesn't it? What you know this repetition little children and father and young men and children and father and young men and you know what I write and I have written and you know causes scholars to to just get in a tizzy because they try to focus on these minute little things here and spend a lot of energy and time trying to figure out what is really very obvious so let me just cut to the quick here when John says and by the way not everyone agrees with this my interpretation I think I'm right but when John says little children what group of people in the church is he referring to is he talking about the little kids in the nursery or little kids in you know their own little church service talking about some who are here or is he talking about those who are the youngest in the faith that is the most immature among us those are a couple of possibilities that people have come up with but when

John says little children he's just referring generally to all true believers in the church that's that's who we are we're little children precious children children of the faith John liked to use that term sometimes he means one thing here he means a very specific thing or a very general thing he's just talking about all believers in the church little children I'm writing to you church all true believers no reference to age no reference to levels of spiritual maturity you're all God's children through faith in Jesus Christ when John says fathers and then young men he's being more specific but still very general he's referring more specifically to all true believers in the church both old and young both older and young which still includes all of us you either fit in the category of older or fit into the category of younger and it's not again a reference to levels of spiritual maturity it is more a reference to age grouping and you know we could paraphrase this very simply and say this way

[48 : 15] I would say I write to you true children of the faith both young and old that's that's all of us and by the way children is gender inclusive the word children gender inclusive male and female so he's referring to all of us male and female all believers fathers and young men certainly the words are masculine but it is simply a designation for age categories older and younger he could have easily said mothers and young women and make the same point true believers in the church young and old I'm writing to you and what does

John say is true of all genuine believers male and female both young and old what does he say is true of all genuine believers this is the focus we ought to have on this passage he's saying at least four things as we kind of group it together because he repeats himself and we bring it all together these four things and they're logical and they're kind of progressive he's saying first and foremost all your sins little children both old and young all your sins have been forgiven they've been taken out of the way they've been forgiven for Christ's sake not for your sake but for Christ's sake and because of that you know God the father you know him intimately because you can't know him when there's sin still there sin is still the sin has been taken away the sin has all been forgiven and so you know the father this is true of every true believer right do you know that secondly he is

saying and because you know

God the father intimately you have that relationship with him you've overcome the wicked one you're not overcoming him you have overcome him he has no power in your life anymore you can allow him to have influence but that's your power so think about it this is the objective truth we can even call this the theological test some have here's what's true of you you born again believers my children little children precious children of God through faith in Christ both old and young your sins have all been forgiven you know God and you have overcome the wicked one and then third because you have overcome the wicked one you're strong you're strong you're spiritually strong don't let anybody try to tell you otherwise we use spiritual weakness more as an excuse than we do anything else and then fourth you're strong because the eternal word that's Jesus Christ abides in you he abides in you this is a great way to cap this off therefore if these things are true of you there is no one you cannot love no matter what no one no matter who they are no matter what they've done there is no one you cannot love you