

Visible Christianity

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: I John 2:7-11.
- B. Christianity is often rejected because of how it is caricatured.
- C. It is the ministry of John to call his readers back to fundamental things.
- D. The caricature of Christianity says that it is primarily concerned with behavior and that the attitude toward life is primarily negative, but real Christianity is concerned with being and what is positive.

II. The love of God is being perfected in the one who keeps God's will.

- A. The goal of the Christian life is to cause us to love as God loves.
- B. The single desperate need of humanity is love, but the twisted paradox is that it is increasingly hard to give what another one needs.
- C. A tremendous solution has been found in this dilemma through the death of Jesus.
- D. The old command was to love one's neighbor as himself.
- E. This old commandment is new now.
 - a. It is new because it is to be exercised as Jesus loved--the process is new.
 - b. The disciples were not easy to love, yet Jesus loved every one of them. (Luke 17)
 - c. Jesus loved these men by the Holy Spirit that poured out love into His heart. (Romans 5)
 - d. In the light of the new power given to believers, it is now possible to love.
- F. One can measure his progress in love by looking to his attitude toward his fellow Christian.
 - 1. Hate can be expressed by indifference.
 - 2. To hate one's brother is to remain in the darkness.
 - 3. There is a difference between walking in the darkness and being in the darkness.
 - a. To be in the darkness is to be a nonbeliever.
 - b. To walk in the darkness is to experience the effect of the darkness.

c. A hate of one's brother can easily lead to disaster.

d. When we give away to hatred, we inevitably harden our own heart.

G. The Christian has the ability to forgive and must do so.

E. The proof of a believer abiding in the light is his love for the disagreeable believers among him.

Application questions:

1. In what way has the old commandment to love become new through Jesus?

2. Who has been a model for you in your life of this kind of love? What have they done to express it?

3. How does your progress measure up when you reflect upon how kind you have been with your words and deeds toward those disagreeable Christians in your midst? What will you do this week to reach out to one of those believers not to change them but to love them where they are?
