

LOVE NOT THE WORLD (1 John 2:15-17)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

I. The command stated (15a).

A. John tells us to not love the world.

B. What does he mean by the world?

1. He is not talking about the people in the world, or else we couldn't evangelize.
2. He is not talking about the earth itself because God created it for us to enjoy.

C. John is talking about the world, or sphere, the meaning of the word translated world, in which Satan dominates.

1. We have long heard the phrase, "the wide world of sports."
2. This is the sphere in which sports dominates.
3. The world that John is speaking of is that area in which Satan dominates.

D. Someone might say, "Well, John 3:16 says that "God so loved the world."

1. "World" there means mankind.
2. This is not the world of this passage.

E. John does not stop with the sinful realm of Satan but also included those things that make up that realm.

1. There is nothing in that sinful realm that we are to enjoy.
2. He makes a distinction between the general and the specific.
3. We can't love any aspect of the world and say that we love God as well.

F. The word love indicates that in which you find joy.

1. The world of sin should bring no joy to us at all.
 - a. It was this world that Moses recognized when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, Heb 11:24-25

2. It is a world to be avoided and shunned by Christians.
3. Paul would say, "Abstain from every appearance of evil."

II. The cause presented (15b).

- A. Someone might ask John, "How come we can't love any part of the world?"
- B. The reason is simple: we can't love the Father if we love the world.
- C. The cause of the command is that the two loves cannot coexist in anyone's life.
- D. God wants us to be holy and this is stated throughout the New Testament in a multitude of passages.
 1. Holiness is separation from sin.
 - a. Paul addresses this in 2 Cor.6:14-15. He says, *For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*
 - b. Then he goes on to say in vs.17, ¹⁷ *Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean,*
- E. We can't love a sinful world or any item in that world and be holy.
 1. Jesus told us that we cannot serve two masters.
 - a. *You will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. Matt 6:24*
 2. And James tells us that if we are friends with the world then we are enemies of God. James 4:4
- F. We must obey the command to not love the world in order to love God.
- G. The world wants us to sin, it tempts us to sin.
 1. It is the sphere in which Satan rules.
 2. Therefore we are to have nothing to do with it in order to have a right relationship with God.

III. The categories of the world (16).

- A. Just as there are categories of maturity, there are also categories of sin.
1. These categories are not broken down into levels the way maturity can be.
- B. There are three ways in which we are tempted. All sins fall into one of these three categories.
1. The lust of the flesh is the first category.
 - a. The flesh is the area in which our evil desires dwell.
 - b. Paul lists the lusts of the flesh for us in **Gal. 5:19-21**. Here's the list:
adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like
 - c. These things constitute the disease of the soul.
 - d. They include sexual sins, social sins and religious sins.
 3. Paul tells us that those that engage in such things will not inherit heaven.
2. Next category: The lust of the eyes.
 - a. This carries the idea that our desires are aroused by that which we see.
 - b. We teach our children the song, "Be careful little eyes what you see". This is an extremely true song.
 - 1) Look at the devastation that sight brought to David in his sin with Bathsheba. **2 Samuel 11:1-17**.
 - 2) Or Achan, as he saw those items in Jericho (**Joshua 7**).
 - c. Our eyes can get us in a great deal of trouble if we allow them to do so.
 3. The third category is the pride, or vainglory, of life.
 - a. The Greek lexicon defines pride this way:
 - 1) empty, bragging talk
 - 2) an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights
 - 3) a disrespectful and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthy things
 - b. It carries the idea of trusting self over God.

C. It is interesting to note that Satan used all three of these against Eve in the Garden, long ago. Go back to **Gen.3:6**

1. **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh) and that it was a delight to the eye (lust of the eyes) and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise (pride of life)...**

2. All three avenues were present at the first temptation.

D. They were also present when we have the recorded temptations of Jesus by Satan in **Matt.4.**

1. **Make the stone into bread** - lust of the flesh.

2. Cast yourself down and the angels with rescue you - pride of life - show your abilities to the world and be proud of them.

3. I will give you all that you see - lust of the eyes.

E. These are very powerful methods Satan uses against man.

IV. The consequences of our choice (17).

A. We have a choice to make: love the world or love God.

B. There is no middle ground.

C. One shows a love for others that sacrifices and the other shows a love for self.

1. Sin is rooted in selfishness.

2. Every avenue of sin deals with pleasing self and being selfish.

D. If we choose the love of the world, we are choosing that which is brief in nature and that does not last.

E. Loving God, which John defines for us as doing God's will, allows us to keep on abiding for eternity.

F. All that is held dear in this world is in the process of passing away.

1. Even we are deteriorating.

2. Peter tells us this in **1 Peter 1:24**. because **"All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,**

3. Physical things we leave are deteriorating.

Conc.

A. What it all comes down to is this: We are choosing spiritual death or eternal life.

B. What will it be for you: spiritual life or spiritual death?

C. Life can be yours tonight if you will obey the Lord.

1. If you will come in faith, repenting of your sins, confessing Jesus as God's Son, and being baptized for the remission of your sins, you can choose spiritual life.

D. If you have done this, and have let Satan back into your heart, you can remove him and come back to God.

1. He has promised to forgive if you will only ask.

e. Give God your love, not the world.

IF SUBJECT, COME