

1 John
Do Not Love the World
1 John 2:15-17
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Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas

You don't hear much in today's church about the concept of worldliness. In fact, you can go a long time without hearing anything about it at all. And I think that's tragic because although the word itself is not biblical, the concept certainly is. The Apostle John writes in our text this morning, "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world."

Now, that seems like a fairly straight forward command, but it is fraught with potential confusion and misunderstanding. In fact, throughout the history of the church, there have been several terribly flawed definitions of what worldliness is, and it's led to some terrible fruit. Let me give you just a couple of examples. First of all, there are some who have defined worldliness as regularly associating with the sinful people in this world. That has led to isolationism and even, in its extreme form, to monasticism.

Here's how it started. With the conversion of Constantine back in the days of the Roman Empire, the Church of Jesus Christ suddenly found itself intermingled with a pagan Roman culture. Christians tried desperately to resist being swept into the debauchery that was rampant in the Roman world because, of course, most of the people in the Roman Empire weren't truly converted, they just were sort of baptized into the visible church. And so, it was all mixed and mingled together, and so, true Christian people tried desperately to keep from being sucked into that lifestyle. They started to do that by separation, but eventually and ultimately by total isolation from the world around them in monasticism. Of course, that is not a biblical concept. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, verses 9 and 10, Paul writes this:

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

If you weren't **going to** mingle with sinful people, then you couldn't live in the world. And he says, "Of course you're not **going to** do that." Of course, Jesus our Lord, was a perfect example. He ate with sinners and was taken to task for it by the Pharisees.

Another wrong approach or wrong definition of worldliness is practicing behaviors that are not directly addressed in Scripture, but which the Christians around me think are wrong. That's how a lot of people define worldliness. This, of course, led to legalism. As one author put it, "This passage has been used to denounce everything from buttons to beer." I personally have encountered people who believe that you shouldn't do things that comfort your body, like even taking too hot a bath, because that's pandering to the flesh. I've traveled in certain places in Asia where, when I was there, there were a number of Christians who believed that it was worldly for Christians to wear deodorant. I'm so grateful we don't believe that.

This is a failure to understand that there are those things that are, "...thus saith the LORD, 'Thou shalt,' and thus saith the LORD, 'Thou shalt not,'" and everything else is an issue of conscience that falls into the instructions of Romans 14 and 15, and 1 Corinthians 8 to 10. As Paul puts into Romans 14:14, "I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; (He didn't mean nothing; he meant nothing that isn't stipulated in Scripture.) but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him and it is unclean." So, those are individual decisions; that doesn't define worldliness. Your idea of what Christians should and shouldn't do, your conscience decisions don't define worldliness, either that you are not or that others are.

A third wrong way to approach this issue of worldliness is thinking that worldliness is engaging in non-sinful but pleasurable human activities. This led throughout church history to asceticism, punish the body, refrain from things that are perfectly right, but pleasurable. This led some to reject marriage, it led others to marry but to reject sex in marriage, it led to rejecting things like music that wasn't spiritual, literature that wasn't from Scripture, and so forth. Of course, this already began, this whole idea, began in the New Testament era. Paul addresses that in Colossians 2.

A fourth wrong way to define worldliness is to create your own definition to justify your choices; this is called rationalization, and this is very common. Worldliness is not what I do; it's what you do. The most egregious example I've ever heard of this where there's sort of this redefinition to justify yourself, was not by an evangelical Christian, but by Imelda Marcos, who

along with her husband, misappropriated \$2 billion from the Philippine state treasury. Her indulgence is legendary! This is a woman who went on \$7 million shopping sprees and had \$3 thousand pairs of shoes in her closet. After all of this misappropriation was exposed, Imelda Marcos famously said, “I was never attached to power or valuables. I have not attachment to worldly things.” Hmm, there's a redefinition if I've ever heard one. But the truth is, we're all good at rationalizing our behavior.

A **a** fifth wrong approach to this issue of worldliness is simply dismissing the concept of worldliness as if it's trivial or unimportant. Sadly, this is what most of the Church of Jesus Christ is doing today. This is a denial of either the Scripture's clarity, or the Scripture's authority, or both, because the Scripture speaks to this issue. In fact, in the passage that we come to today, John deals with the issue of worldliness. He defines it, and he warns us about its corrupting soul-destroying dangers.

We're looking at a section that begins in 1 John 2, verse 7, and runs down through verse 17. As I've noted for you, the point of this section is this, you can know that you have eternal life, you can know that you're a true Christian, because you have a new love for God, and a new love for His people. This paragraph presents two great truths about love. First of all, in verses 7 and 8, “The Divine Priority of Love;” it's an old commandment; it's a new commandment; it's an eternal commandment.

And then we're looking at “The Believer's Commitment to Love,” in verses 9 through 17. “All True Believers Have a New Love for God's People;” that's what we saw in verses 9 through 11, and “They Have a New Love for God,” verses 12 to 17. Now last time, we saw that the true Christian knows and loves the Father and everything the Father loves. That's the message of verses 12 to 15. If you're a Christian, you know that your sins have been forgiven, you know that you know the Father, you've come to know Him as Father, and you are growing in your knowledge of His Word to the goal of a full, mature, experiential knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the goal of the Christian life and experience. And it's accomplished through the Scripture and the Spirit; and if you weren't here last time, that passage is so

foundational to understand what's going on in your Christian life, that I encourage you to go back and listen to it if you missed it.

Today though, we come to the next part of this section, verses 15 to 17, and here we learn this, “The True Christian Does Not Love the World or Everything the World Loves.” Now, I could have said that negatively and it would be equally true. That is, the false Christian, the person who says, “Yes, I'm a Christian,” but isn't. “The False Christian Does Love the World and Everything the World Loves.” That's equally true in this passage, but I've made it positive because I think it's expressed to true believers. He's telling us how we should not respond. And so, the true Christian does not love the world or everything the world loves. Let's read it together. Chapter 2, verses 15 to 17:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also it's lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

The theme of these three verses is this, in contrast to a false Christian, again, that's someone who says, “Yes, I'm a Christian,” but in fact has never been regenerated, has never been changed. In contrast to a false Christian, this passage tells us that a true Christian does not love the world and its lusts. Let's look at it together.

The structure is pretty clear; it begins in the first part of verse 15, with what we can call “A Categorical Prohibition,” a categorical prohibition. Notice the command, verse 15, “Do not love.” Now in Greek, the structure of this imperative could mean one of two things. It could mean, ‘stop this pattern that you're already practicing; you're already loving the world, stop it.’ That's possible, but the other option is far more likely in the context. It's this, ‘Don't ever start this pattern, don't let this be something that's in your life,’ and I think as you'll see in the context, only the second one of these is truly allowed, although some commentators opt for the first. John is not saying to these people, “Stop it,” instead, he's saying this, “If you're a Christian, don't ever start a pattern of loving the world.”

Now, the word for love here is '*agapao*,' you recognize that word. It's the Greek verb from which we get the familiar Greek noun '*agape*.' Now, why does John choose the word '*agape*,' for loving the world here? He chooses that word; remember, this is not always holy love; I pointed that out to you last time. He chooses it here because it has a nuance that fits this context. This word is not an uncontrollable emotion that comes over you, but this word primarily is used for a decision of the will. Often, it's used for loving God, loving others, loving Christ. But here, it's loving the world and it's because this word conjures up, not something that just happens to you, but a decision you make.

The key elements of this word in this context are 'affection' and 'devotion,' affection and devotion. Don't forget those two words. That's the key of what he means when he says, "Don't love the world," affection and devotion. And we'll see that unfold as we go along. So, what he's saying here is, "Don't allow yourself ever to have an affection for or to be devoted to two objects." What are the objects?

Let's look at verse 15, "Do not love (number one) the world; (number two) nor the things in the world." Now, the first object that we are never to have an affection for or be devoted to is 'the world.' The Greek word is '*kosmos*.' There are a couple of other words for 'world' in the New Testament that are used occasionally, but here the word is '*kosmos*.' It's used six times in these three verses, and it is by far the most common word for 'world' in the New Testament. It occurs over 180 times. Its basic meaning is 'order or arrangement.' It describes an 'ordered system as opposed to chaos.' But it's this word 'world' that immediately gets us into trouble and has led many to the misunderstandings I talked about earlier. Because '*kosmos*,' like our English word 'world,' has several different senses in which it's used even in the New Testament. Let me give you a little list.

Here are the different ways the word '*kosmos*' is used specifically, and I am going to give you some references as well. I'm not **going to** deal with this in detail, I just want you to see this.

- Sometimes, the word '*kosmos*' is used to describe the universe, Romans 1:20; Acts 17:24.

- Other times, it's used of all intelligent life, including both men and angels, in 1 Corinthians 4:9.
- At times, '*kosmos*' is used just for the earth, Romans 4:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10, for the planet that we live on.
- A fourth way that it's used is for mankind as a whole, all of humanity, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world."
- Sometimes it used, fifthly, as a way to speak of fallen humanity in its opposition to God, 1 John 5:19.
- There's a sixth way though, that is really the focus here, and it's this, an organized system created and ruled by Satan, that dominates fallen humanity, and is alienated from and hostile to God. That's the sense of the word 'world' that John uses frequently in his Gospel, it's not the only way he uses it in his gospel, but he uses it frequently in his Gospel. He uses it frequently here in 1 John, and it is the sense that he uses in our text this morning.

Let me give you a couple of definitions beyond the one I just gave you. Here are a couple of other ways to understand that sixth sense that I just gave you of the word, 'world,' the one that's used in our text. Burdick defines world in this sense in this way:

The term involves all that goes into making up the organized system of evil on this earth. (And then he gets specific, listen carefully.) It includes such elements as all unregenerate men, their thoughts, attitudes, purposes and desires, all influences and forces that are opposed to God, and the patterns of evil practice that characterize life apart from God.

In other words, wherever there is evil on this planet, it falls under this word, it's part of the '*kosmos*' in this sense, it's part of that evil world system that Satan has created.

Here's another definition from Harrison in the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology:

It is the powers of spiritual evil, which have Satan as their head and appear to be organized on a vast scale and with great efficiency. These powers dominate the life of unredeemed humanity. Satan rules a kingdom, which is opposed to the Kingdom of God.

Now, he is borrowing from our Lord's words in Luke 11, verse 18. In that passage, Jesus refers to two kingdoms. He said, "There is Satan's kingdom, and there is the Kingdom of God." (Paraphrase.) Satan has a kingdom! And that kingdom is the 'world' in this sense.

If you want a simpler definition than the ones I've given you, you can't really improve on John Calvin's from the Institutes of the Christian Religion. Listen to what he says, "Whatever is opposed to the spiritual Kingdom of Christ is the world." Let me read that, again, "Whatever is opposed to the spiritual Kingdom of Christ is the world," in the sense of the word, the way it's used here.

Now, I don't want to teach you everything the Bible has to say about 'world' in this sense, but I do want to give you a little list of what the Scripture says about the 'world' in the way we're describing it here in this sense of the word. I just want to give you a brief list with the references and you, if you choose to, can study them later. This slide will be posted online, you're not **going to** capture probably all of this, but it'll be posted online with the message. So here's a summary of some of the major propositions the Scripture makes about the 'world,' the '*kosmos*,' in the sense of this evil world system.

- First of all, it is under Satan's control. In John 12:31; 14:30; and 16:11; in all three places, our Lord called Satan, "The ruler of this '*kosmos*.'" He doesn't mean the earth, he doesn't mean the universe, He means the evil system that he has constructed and composed, his kingdom. Look at 1 John, chapter 5, just a few pages over; 1 John 5, verse 19, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Again, he's talking about, not just unredeemed humanity, but that system that he has enslaved unredeemed humanity in.

You see, the evil world system appears to be chaotic. It appears to be defined by massive conflict and confusion; read your newsfeed, read the newspaper, read whatever source you look at, (for) news, and you'll see that it doesn't appear to have any organization whatsoever, what's going on in the world. But the Bible says there is a mastermind behind it! Let me put it to you this way, the apparent chaos is in reality, '*kosmos*.' You see, the evil world system that we live in, and are surrounded by is not

out of control, it is not random, it is not prompted by individuals; instead, it is directed; and it is not directed by the President of Russia or the President of China. It is directed by Satan; it is his kingdom. So, it's under his control; he is the ruler of this world.

- The scripture goes on to say that the world lies in darkness and in sin. Peter tells us that the world “defiles...entangles...and overcomes,” 2 Peter 2:20.
- In 2 Peter 1:4, he says it's “lust corrupts the souls of people,” (Paraphrase).
- In John, John tells us that the world hates Christ and therefore hates His followers as well.
- Neither Christ nor Christians belong to the world. We are not “of the world, we are in the world but not of the world.” John 17:14, 16; 1 John 3:1.
- This world system, and this is key, is supported by, its undergirded by satanically inspired human philosophy, religion, and pragmatic viewpoints. In other words, it's all propped up by these satanically driven and inspired religions and ideologies and philosophies, 1 John 4:5. Paul calls them in 2 Corinthians 10, “...fortresses of human thought.” We'll encounter this same idea in 1 John 4:5, the world listens to those who are not from God. Why? Because they're listening to their own! What do they listen to? Philosophy, religion, all kinds of thoughts, ideas, vantage points. Just go out on the internet; you'll read it all. Where does that come from? It's satanically inspired.
- The world does not know God, John 17 says, nor does it know or believe in Jesus Christ, John 17:25; 1:10; 7:7.

So, look at that list. John says, “Don't love the world,” and that's the world he means, “Don't love that world.” Or, as James puts it in James 1:27, “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is...to keep oneself unstained by the world,” that world.

John adds a second object that we're not to love. Go back to our text, 1 John, chapter 2, verse 15, “Do not love the world, nor the things in the world.” Now he explains what these things are in verse 16. Notice, “...all that is in the world.” Here are the things in the world: one, “...the lust of the flesh;” two, “...the lust of the eyes;” and three, “...the boastful pride of life.” Now we'll define those in just a minute.

But just notice right now, that **those are** the things in the world we're not to love. Verse 17, he calls them the world's lusts. "The world is passing away, and also it's lusts;" so the things in the world are "...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, and the lusts of the world." So, John says, "We are not to love the world system Satan has created, or the primary features of that system, the distinguishing marks of that system, which are, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life." We are, not to have an affection for, or a devotion to anything that's a part of the world system Satan has created and that stands opposed to God and His will. John says, "Don't love the world or the things in the world." (Paraphrase.) That's a categorical prohibition.

The next part of our text, we discover, "The Compelling Reasons." He's given us that categorical prohibition, but he goes on to explain why. There are three reasons we must not love the world, nor what's in it. Actually, there are four reasons. First of all, "Loving the World Is Mutually Exclusive with Loving God," loving the world is mutually exclusive with loving God. Look at the second half verse 15, "...If anyone loves the world (If anyone, and clearly he's implying here, including someone who claims to know Jesus Christ. If anyone is habitually having an affection for, and a devotion to the world in this sense, then verse 15, goes on to say.) the love of the Father is not in him"

Now, the love of the Father is a sort of an ambiguous phrase; it could be understood several different ways, but not in this context. Because clearly, it's the contrast, you either love the world or you love (What?) the Father. That's what he means here. It's clear in context that the expression "love of the Father," is not the Father's love for the person, but the person's love for the Father. Notice John doesn't say, "This person who loves the world does not love the Father." That's true, but he actually says something more comprehensive; he says, "...there's no love for the Father in him;" it doesn't even exist in him, search his soul and you won't find a trace of the love of God. You can't love the world and love God at the same time. They are mutually exclusive!

This is what our Lord said in Matthew 6, verse 24. You remember, He said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and

despise the other (And then He says.). You cannot serve God and wealth.” You’ve got to choose whom you're going to serve and whom you're going to love.

In 2 Timothy 4:10, we read about Demas, one of Paul's traveling companions on his missionary journey, and it says, “...Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me.” Why? Because you have **got to** choose. You can't love God and love the world too. And Demas, having decided he was going to love the world, abandoned Paul.

James, chapter 4, verse 4, puts it this way, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever **wishes** (chooses) to be a friend of the world, makes himself to be an enemy of God.” So, you don't have to actively choose to be God's enemy; just choose to love the world, and you've declared yourself by that choice to be an enemy of God.

John Calvin puts it this way, “There is no medium between these two extremes. Either the world must become vile in our estimation, or it must retain our immoderate love.” So, the first compelling reason that we shouldn't love the world is because loving the world is mutually exclusive with loving God.

There's a second reason, and that is “Loving the World Is Primarily Expressed by Sinful Lusts,” loving the world is primarily expressed by sinful lusts. Look at verse 16, “For (That's because; here's why love for the world excludes love for God.), For all that is in the world, (Notice the word ‘all.’ The next three phrases define the world we shouldn't love. “(One), the lust of the flesh, (two)...the lust of the eyes, and (three) the boastful pride of life.” Folks, there is the world's trinity. We just sang a few minutes ago about the Trinity we love and worship; here is the trinity the world adores and worships. These are the essential traits of the world system that Satan has created. Let me put it to you this way, “Look whatever you want in our world and wherever you find evil, it will trace back to one of these three or some combination of these three traits.” This is the world system Satan has created in its essence. And notice, they're all inside; they're not external. And that's crucial to understand because we’re tempted to make

light of worldliness by making it something ‘out there.’ It's not! Worldliness is not primarily external; it's what happens in the heart.

Now, before we look at these three, let me make one other comment and that is that while not exact, I think these three lusts, in this passage, have legitimate parallels with the temptation of Eve in the garden and the Temptation of Christ in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 4. And I'm not **going to** take time to develop that today; if you're interested, you can go listen to the series of messages I did on the temptation of Jesus from Matthew 4, but just note that there are parallels.

So, let's look at these essential traits that summarize the world system. First of all, he says in verse 16, there is “...the lust of the flesh,” and I've entitled that self-gratification, “the lust of the flesh.” The Greek word translated ‘lust’ is a word that's occasionally used in the New Testament for ‘desiring or craving something good.’ For example, Luke 22:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:17. For those of you who dabble in Greek, or know Greek, it's ‘*epithumia*.’ But most of the time when this word occurs in the New Testament, it's used of craving something evil, and it's evil for one of two reasons. Either it's something that God has explicitly forbidden in His Word, or it's something that God allows, but we are evil in craving it in excess, or in getting it in a way that's contrary to God's word. So, mark that, it's craving something evil, and it's evil either because it's directly explicitly forbidden in the Word of God, or it's something good that God allows, but we are craving it in excess to what God allows us to have, or we're craving it in a way that's contrary to the way God intends for us to receive it.

Now, notice, this specific craving is called “the lust (or craving) of the flesh.” This is the craving which has its origin or its source in the flesh. I think the word ‘flesh’ here has several nuances it could be, but the most obvious one and by far the vast majority would say, and I have to agree, this is talking about man's fallen nature, not the body, but man's fallen nature. It's the same thing James says, right? All of the things that tempt us externally are only temptations because they are responding to or we are responding to them out of our lust. And what is the source of those lusts? Our flesh!

Now, the definition of “the lusts of the flesh” is in Ephesians, chapter 2, go there with me. Here's a definition of what it means to crave after your fallenness, to crave what your fallenness craves. Verse 3, he's describing here, what all of us were before Christ and he includes himself. Notice, Ephesians 2:3, “Among them we too all formerly lived.” So even as a Pharisee, Paul says, this was true of me. “We all formerly lived (Notice this.) in the lusts of our flesh,” there's the expression. Now notice how he goes on to define it, “...indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” Literally, the Greek text says, “indulging the wills (plural), indulging the wills of the flesh and the thoughts,” indulging the wills of the flesh and the thoughts. So, in other words, the lusts of the flesh is indulging the wills of the flesh and the thoughts. What does he mean?

He means number one, that to give into the lust of the flesh is to do whatever your flesh wills. And I think he's using ‘flesh’ in the second word as the body. And again, I'm on good ground there; many commentators, when I taught through this, many commentators would agree with that, and there are lots of reasons, and I argued those in that message, and you can go back and listen if you want. But what he's saying here is the lust of the flesh is characterized by doing whatever our bodies will, whatever our bodies want in a sinful way. It's not talking about the good and normal things God has given us but doing it in a way that's sinful. And then he says, “We also sinfully did whatever our thoughts willed or wanted.”

Here, he's talking about the sins of the mind. At the lowest level, the sins of the mind are things like jealousy, pride, anger, envy, bitterness; we gave ourselves over before Christ to those thoughts. Our thoughts wanted those things, and we just let our thoughts run, we nursed them. At a higher more acceptable level are sins of thought like ambition, a desire to get rich, a desire for position, power, influence, success. And at the highest level, we can sinfully crave, our thoughts can sinfully crave for knowledge, for philosophy, for the arts, but all of those disengage from God. These things dominate and control unbelievers.

Now, understand there are God-given desires behind the lusts of the flesh. There are legitimate physical desires for food, the physical relationship in marriage, sleep. As far as the mind, the desire to work hard, the desire to be creative, those are God-given desires. But our fallenness

perverts those desires and makes them all about self-gratification. The lusts of the flesh is craving and pursuing satisfaction of the mind's appetites and the body's appetites contrary to the Word of God. That's the lust of the flesh; it's living for self-gratification.

The second essential trait that dominates the world system that we're not to love is notice, "...the lust of the eyes," and I've called this self-fulfillment, the lust of the eyes. It's the same Greek word for lust, or craving, but here, it's the craving of the eyes. Now, this craving, this lust manifests itself in two ways. First of all, it can be a craving to have or possess what your eyes see. So, it's like Eve, you know, Eve saw the fruit, that it was a delight to the eye. Or Achan, you remember, saw among the spoils, gold, silver, and a beautiful robe from Babylon. David saw Bathsheba as she bathed. And in each case, what they saw with their eyes turned into a craving to have; that's covetousness. That's the 10th Commandment, a desire to possess to have; that's one expression of the lust of the eyes.

The other expression of the lust of the eyes can be a craving, not to have or possess, but a craving to find pleasure, sinful pleasure, in what the eyes see. In other words, it's not necessarily that you're seeking to have it; you want to find selfish ungodly pleasure in what you see. Sometimes, we call this "feasting your eyes on something," that's the idea.

A huge proportion of the sin that happens in this world is a response to the lust of the eyes. I mean frankly, most of the advertising world is built on the principle of the lust of the eyes; they want you to see something you don't have and long to have it, and they want to make it desirable to you. The same thing is true with things like pornography. Satan has structured the entire world system in which we live with a desire, a craving, and a desire to satisfy that craving through the eye gate. It happens from what we see in the real world; it happens from what we see in the digital world, and it even happens from what we see in the eye of our mind. We are constantly driven to covet through the eyes, or to seek selfish sinful satisfaction in what we see. So, sinfully craving to have or possess what we see, or to find sinful pleasure in what we see, that is the lust of the eyes. And in the end, it's really all about self-fulfillment, and that's why I've put that label on it.

A third essential trait of the world system is called here in verse 16, "...the boastful pride of life." And I've labeled that self-promotion, the boastful pride of life. The Greek word translated 'boastful pride' occurs only here, and in James 4:16, in the New Testament. It means 'arrogance, pretentious pride.' The word 'life' is 'bios,' like biology. The word can describe life itself, or it can describe the means necessary to support life in the world, your work, your resources, and that's almost certainly its meaning here. So, the pride and arrogance behind this temptation has to do with your external circumstance. It's the desire to outshine others; it's about self-promotion.

Let me give you some ways this boastful pride of life expresses itself. It's taking pride in, sinful pride in, and promoting yourself because of something that's true about you. Maybe it's your birth, your family, the influence you have, the followers you have in real life or social media, the people you know, the clubs you belong to, the university you attended. This temptation can be about wealth, power, position, clothes, personal appearance, the car you drive, the house and neighborhood you live in. We can engage in the boastful pride of life by taking sinful pride in our education, our intellect, the level of culture in which we live, the honors that we've received, the achievements we've accomplished. It's a craving to show off before others, your possessions, your abilities, your achievements; it's the ambition, in the end, to be greater than others in whatever way fits you and your circumstances. Dodd describes it or summarizes it, "As base desires, false values, and egotism."

Now, this desire for self-promotion, can also prompt people attached to the Christian faith, to adapt their view of truth or even the gospel to fit with the contemporary thinking, to fit with the spirit of the age. And this happens every day; happened in the first century with the false teachers, I mean, they were all about fitting more into the Roman culture. And they were willing to use the gospel and the Scripture like, to use a theatrical term from the stage, like a wax nose, just adjust it however you want to fit in. Let me tell you, that is happening at a massive level in today's Christian church. Let's change the structure and look of the truth so that we look better. Folks, that's the boastful pride of life, that's all it is.

In the end, the boastful pride of life is craving and pursuing personal glory at the expense of God's glory. You see, within each of us, there's a God-given desire to glorify God, we were made to glorify God, but our fallen hearts take that God-given desire and pervert it; we warp it into a desire for personal glory. And every time that we are tempted to promote ourselves, our status, our position, our accomplishments, our spirituality, it's that temptation. Rather than solely seeking the glory of God, it is the temptation to self-promotion. It can be overt, but most of us are pretty good at subtle self-promotion. I mean, face it, there are very few Muhammad Ali's in the world who say, "I am the greatest!" Instead, we simply throw a string of comments into our conversation or into our social media posts, humble brags to show how great we really are. This even happens with people who are trying to be spiritual.

The Jewish religious leaders of the first century are described this way in John, John 12:43, "...they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." You know what the word 'approval' is in both those cases, it's the Greek word 'glory.' They loved the glory of men, the glory they got from other people, rather than giving glory to God. There's the heart of this temptation. The boastful pride of life is craving and pursuing personal glory at the expense of God's glory. Folks, that's what the world is that Satan has constructed; that's what it's all about. And you and I are not to have an affection for those things; we are not to be devoted to those things.

We've seen two reasons why we should never love the world. It's mutually exclusive with loving God, it's primarily expressed by sinful lusts. Very quickly, let me give you two others. Number three, "Loving the World Is Being Totally Consumed with Satan and His Kingdom," loving the world is being totally consumed with Satan and his kingdom. Verse 16, "For all that is in the world, (Skip to the end of the verse.) ... is not from the Father, but is from the world."

You see, the world system and its lusts, literally the Greek text says, "are not out of the Father," they don't find their source in God. Their source is instead, out of or from this world. This is John's way of saying, "They all belong to the darkness, not the light." And ultimately, the world and its lusts have their source in the author of darkness, Satan himself. So, do you see what I'm

saying? To love the world and the things that are in the world, those things we just talked about, is really to be consumed with Satan and his kingdom. That's unthinkable for a believer!

There's a fourth reason we should never love the world, and that is, "Loving the World Is Incredibly Short Sighted Because of Its Coming Destruction," it's incredibly short sighted because of its coming destruction. Verse 17, "The world is passing away, and also its lusts..." You know, at the cross, Christ defeated Satan and the world; He has overcome the world, but He's allowed it to continue to exist, even though it's a defeated enemy. But ultimately, Christ will destroy the world system that Satan created when He returns at His Second Coming. But it's already begun to disintegrate. Notice it's "passing away." The word means to 'go out of existence, to disappear.' What's he saying? He's saying, "Listen, the world and its lusts are temporary." They're temporary in several ways. They're temporary because they offer no lasting satisfaction. You know that. You know that these things promise so much and deliver so little.

But evil is also inherently self-destructive. It destroys not only everyone it touches, but because it destroys everyone it touches, it ultimately is self-destructive. And all who are consumed with the world and its lusts will pass away with it. There's only one kind of person who's going to endure, verse 17, says, "...the one who does the will of God lives forever."

Literally, let me translate this for you from the text. Literally, and this is a very literalistic translation, "The one who, as a continual practice, is doing the will of God is remaining forever." That doesn't mean we earn salvation by doing God's will. As we've already seen from chapter 2, verses 3 through 6, doing God's will is just a test of the genuineness of our profession of saving faith in Christ. It's like Jesus said in Mark 3:35, "...whoever does the will of God, he is My mother and my brother and my sister" (paraphrase). 1 Peter 1:14, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were* yours and your ignorance." That's who you used to be when you didn't know better. 1 Peter 4, verses 2 and 3:

...Live the rest of the time in the flesh (That is, in your body here.) no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient...to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles.

Listen, you did that long enough. Stop that! Live like the new person you are in Christ. So, there are the reasons we should never love the world.

What are the lessons? Very quickly, I want to give you three lessons from this passage.

Number one, this is a test. It is a test of whether you are a true or false Christian. You see, it's this simple. Your affections and devotion are either on God or they're on the world; there are no other choices. There's not another selection on this multiple-choice test; that's it. Your devotion and affection is either set on God, or it's set on the world that Satan has created, that world system controlled by those things we just looked at. You love one or the other. It's impossible to love both. So, ask yourself this morning. Where is my affection and devotion? Is it God and Jesus Christ? Or is it the things we just looked at? It's a test. I hope you'll take it honestly.

Number two, this is a warning. It's a warning to guard those of us who are already believers against the temptation to have an affection and devotion to the world and its lusts. You see, Christians don't love these things. We don't live for these things, but we can be tempted by these things, and we can sin in these ways. We can sin by cultivating and indulging these cravings that characterize the world. And this is a warning, "Don't do that." Look at the reality.

And thirdly, there's an encouragement here to all Christians, and that is that all true Christians will overcome the world, by our faith in Jesus. I love what John 16:33 says, Jesus says, "...take courage; I have overcome the world." Our Lord has beaten the world, He's beaten Satan; it's done! It's just the mopping up operations; the war is over; and by God's grace, we can overcome!

1 John 5, "For whatever is born of God (That's us. If you're a Christian, you've been born of God. Whatever is born of God literally, is overcoming.) **overcomes** the world; (As a continual victory, a continual reality; we are overcoming the world.) and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith." Not our faith as something that has power in itself, but our faith in Christ, the One who's overcome the world.

So, here's the good news, Christian. Listen, your battle against these things is going to continue as long as you draw breath on this planet, until our Lord comes. But He has overcome the world; and by your faith in Him, the world will never crush you; it will never destroy you. You will never give in and be destroyed, your faith be destroyed, because "faithful is the one who is in you and greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Let's pray together. Father, thank you for these amazing truths. I pray you would help us to take the test honestly, and sincerely, to see where our affections and devotion really lie, whether on you, the things that you love, or on the world, and the things that it loves. Lord, if we pass the test, encourage us, remind us that we will never ultimately be defeated or destroyed by the things in the world, because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world, and He has overcome the world." Help us to battle on, knowing that the real victory has been accomplished at the cross, and the day is coming when our Lord will destroy the kingdom of Satan entirely; He will crush it beneath His feet

Father, for those who are here who failed the test, who have to admit that they don't really love you; they really love these things, and they live for these things. Lord, help them even today to throw themselves on your mercy in Christ, to find forgiveness in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and cry out to you for a new heart. And may they respond even today. We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.