

# Do Not Love the World

*A brief examination of 1 John 2:15-17*

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## **Greek Text:**

1 John 2:15-17 <sup>15</sup> Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· <sup>16</sup> ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν. <sup>17</sup> καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

## **Author's Translation:**

1 John 2:15-17 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 stuff – is not from the Father but it is from the world. The world is passing away and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

## **I. Definition: WHAT is the world?**

In this heartfelt, pastoral, and passionate letter written by John the Apostle to his beloved flock, he eagerly desires that they may have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). This would then produce immense joy for them and for John, their shepherd (1:4). He desires that true believers would understand that their sins are forgiven (2:12), they know the one, true God (2:13) and they have overcome the evil one (2:13b) and they are strong as the Word of God abides in them (2:14).

In this same context, after just assuring them that their sins are forgiven and that they are strong for they are in Christ. Moreover, the Word of God abides in them as they remain in the truth. Yet John feels the necessary impulse to warn his flock not to love the world.

There are three phrases that clarify what the Apostle John means when he speaks of the world in this particular context.

- 1. Lust of the flesh.** This refers to the strong desires that are sourced in and produced by the sinful flesh. Even though believers are conquerors because Christ has conquered sin, death, hell, and Satan in their stead, every single Christian still wages war with the relentless enemy of the flesh. Whatever the sinful flesh longs for must be shunned by the Christian. Such deeds that the sinful flesh passionately desires can include: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these (Gal 5:19-21). Whatever the lust longs for that leads the believer astray from the Lord and from holiness must be rejected, shunned, and intentionally avoided.

- 2. Lust of the eyes.** This phrase speaks of the eager longing and desire that comes from sinful eyes. Whatever it is that eyes long for, desire after, crave for, look at, and stare at that is opposed to Jesus Christ should be rejected. Such lusts from the eyes can refer to sexual lust, greediness, coveting, and sinful jealousy. Whatever becomes such a strong, intense craving that can easily control the heart and mind that might drive a wedge between the Christian and his Savior must be put to death.
- 2. Pride of life.** This phrase might refer to the boastful pride and haughty arrogance that comes from having the worldly “stuff” – goods of this world. The material goods that make up “life” and the subsequent pride, comfort, security, and self-autonomy that may come from having the goods can easily lead a person astray from the Lord. Jesus himself said that it is hard for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 19:23).

## **II. Examination: IF ANYONE loves the world.**

Do not forget that the beloved Apostle John writes to a *church*. And he tells them in this letter that if anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him. This must prompt all of us to examine ourselves. We must ask ourselves if – or, perhaps, if we are honest “where” – we are loving the present world. What is there of the world that we delight in, cherish, love, live for, and treasure more than Christ? If anyone! This is not only speaking of the out and out sinner and the blatant blasphemer. These are affectionate words from John to his flock in Ephesus. Yet there are some who quite easily fall prey to loving this present age.

## **III. Verification: THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD lives forever.**

The person who does not love the world has glorious promises given to him in the Bible. The one who does the will of God abides forever. The one who obeys God is the one who remains forever. John wants his readers to understand that the opposite of loving the world is doing the will of God. No one can love the present world *and* do the will of God. As light and darkness oppose one another, so the present evil age is opposed to the light of God. This statement echoes what the Lord Jesus Christ said in His Sermon on the Mount: “not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven*” (Matt 7:21). This speaks of the person’s life, the pattern of life, the fruit he bears, the unveiling of his heart through his actions. The one who does the will of God, John writes, abides forever. The child who obediently follows God and His passions, not the lusts of this world, will remain forever and ever in the unending love, securing grasp, and eternal embrace of God.

Yet a warning is necessary! Do not be deceived! John writes and says that the present world is passing away along with its lusts. This world is passing away, it is transient, it is temporary, and subject to burning. And the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boasts of this world’s stuff also will pass away. They are transient, temporary, and non-lasting. If one lives for the things of this world then he is a son of this age and thus he will not remain forever with God.

Should not the child of the electing King worship Him more than all else? Should not the heir of eternity strive to live for his *real* home? Should not the recipient of particular, preserving, and redemptive love follow his Lover? One who was left to die on the side of the road and yet saved, rescued, and loved by a traveling family and brought to the house with the full blessings, the full inheritance, the full status, and the permanent blessings would eagerly desire to leave everything behind and submit to the head of that family out of genuine love because his life was spared. Should it not be so with the child of God who was in fact dead and yet the life-giving God regenerated him and gave eternal blessings. Let us love *this* God!