

## 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15-17 Part 1: Do Not Love the World

**15 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.**

### Do not love the world

An obstacle to the spiritual growth which can hinder the progress toward spiritual maturity that we talked about last week is having a love for the world. John is concerned that his flock's love for the world will prevent them from surrendering to the leading of God the Holy Spirit in their lives.

John doesn't say abandon the world, leaving it to its own devices. In John 7:15 Jesus says **15 I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one.** Just as Jesus did not ask that His disciples be taken out of the world, only protected from Satan, John is linking together victory over the evil one with rejecting the love of the world that characterizes those who are still overcome by sin.

### The World

When John says "the world", he uses the Greek word Kosmos, which just means orderly arrangement, an order of things, so basically the worldly system under the temporary authority of Satan. He means the corrupt system set up by the enemy that dominates most people's life in the world. It is this same world from which the disciples have been separated by God. God gave us to Jesus as an inheritance out of the world John 17:6 **6 "I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word.** John 17:14 lets us know that we will always be separate from the World as followers of Jesus **14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** It hated Jesus and hates His followers. John 15:18 **18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.** The world hates us because we belong to Jesus, and we no longer belong to its corrupt system. And the closer that we get in our relationship with Jesus, the more the world recognizes that we are not participating in their worldly system, and so they resent and hate us. It is this evil system that Christ has overcome, and we as His followers MUST overcome. Victory over this worldly system is supposed to mark our lives, as we grow in Christ, so it makes sense that a child of God should not love the worldly system.

A person is either in the World or in Christ. How did the Young Men in our verses last week overcome? 1 John 2:13 **I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.** Their growth in spiritual maturity was evidenced by their victory over the world, and especially over the evil one and his minions, when they are tempted. It's their rejection of the world and commitment to Jesus that makes them pure. The faith that we have in Jesus, that He can be trusted with our lives, and that we will see Him face to face some day is a purifying hope. **1 John 3:3 says 3 And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.** This rejection of the world and complete faith in Jesus is key to overcoming. In Revelation 12:11 how do they overcome Satan, the accuser of the brethren? **11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.** Again they overcame because of their faith in Jesus' atonement sacrifice on the cross to save them, and their committed life to Him, walking with Him by the Spirit, even when they were threatened with death if they did not deny Him.

### Or the Things in The World

There is the tendency to tell ourselves that we're not in love with the world, and then spend our lives accumulating stuff. When someone asked Jesus in Luke 12:13 to spend his time settling legal disputes over money and possessions, Jesus basically said "I don't have time for that triviality". Continuing in verse 15 he said **15 But He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one is affluent does his life consist of his possessions."** And in the parable that follows, when the rich man in verse 17 **17 And he began thinking to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'** **18 And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my**

**barns and build larger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. 19 And I will say to [I]myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years to come; relax, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!”** This man had spent all his time accumulating stuff, good’s wealth, but not cultivating a relationship with God, and getting close to Him. And what is God’s reaction? God calls him a fool. In Luke 12:20 **20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is demanded of you; and as for all that you have prepared, who will own it now?’** In other words, one day each of us will die, and all that we have accumulated in worldly possessions will do us no good! Someone else will have them then. And Jesus comments in Luke 12:21 **21 Such is the one who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich in relation to God.”**

#### **If anyone loves the world**

Is this true of us? Do we love the worldly system? Do we “play the game?” Do we “go along to get along?” Do we love the world’s “stuff”? We each must ask ourselves these questions. It is important, because John lets us know that if we have love for the world, then we lack in love for God.

#### **the love of the Father is not in him.**

A love of the worldly system and it’s stuff is inconsistent with experiencing intimacy with God. This happens in a few different ways.

1. You can be sure that to the extent that you love the worldly system and it’s stuff, the love God is not expressing itself in us toward other people. We cannot be focused on the world and it’s stuff, and also be focused on those lost sinners that God loves, and our brothers and sisters in Christ who need our love and attention.
2. We will find that as we love the world and it’s stuff, it interferes with the amount of love that we have toward God—it gets in the way. Jesus says in Luke 16:13. **13 No servant 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. You cannot serve God and wealth.”** Serving money or wealth or greed will lessen our love for God, and distract us from His plan for our lives.
3. And lastly, we will find that if we focus on God, and His love for us, He will fill us up to the point that we don’t want the things of the world. “The things of earth will grow strangely dim”. Hebrews 12:2 **We must focus our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.** We must look to Jesus keeping our hearts and minds on Him. He is the cause of our faith. Our faith is in Him, through Him and by His spirit alive in us. As we fix our eyes on the love of God, be become more rooted and grounded in Him, we become fully convinced of our faith in Him as the foundation of our life, and we know that nothing can separate us from Him, then we understand that we can depend on the faithfulness of God to be able to make us stand, even when we cannot in our own strength. We can be sure that He will help us to finish the race that He has set before us. He will supply all our needs, bear all our burdens, and comfort us from all our pains. We just need to keep focused on Him. And we will find that this removes, piece by piece, our focus on the world. Jesus wants to reveal himself to you, where you are in your own personal world; live in you and through you, as you focus your eyes and life upon Him, and wants to express His love for others through you. Let Him!