

The Book of I John

Return Church

Lesson #6

Wednesday Evening

Bible Study

February 11, 2026

Do not love the world

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. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. ***1 John 2:15-17 NKJV***

This is misunderstood by many people. What does it mean: love not the world. We looked at these verses about one year ago, but I really feel led to go over them again, going a little deeper than last time.

Love not the world

In the Gospel of John, we see the famous scripture:

For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ***John 3:16 NKJV***

- But here the apostle John is saying to us, love not the world.
- The word world can be used in different ways. Like the words a Big Apple can mean:
 - A big fruit
 - A big computer
 - New York City.

The world

The word world can be used in several different ways in the Bible. I can think of three ways.

1. **The world** can mean all the people that inhabit the world God created. All of the human beings on the earth. Of course we are supposed to love this world.
2. **The world** can mean; all of creation, the material, physical, visible world. Everything in the universe. We should also love this world.
3. **The world** can also be used as a system of thinking by where the material world becomes ultimately valued. Worldliness is to act as if the material world is all there is. This is an invisible world that is in opposition or rebellion to God. This is what John is referring to. The ideological system that is anti-Christ, that is Satanic. We are not to love this world.

Love not the world

- This world that we are not to love is the spiritual and ideological system of the devil, that is at war with God, that is an enemy of God. The culture that we live in that is in opposition to God. The fallen man-centered system or way of life.
- The world here, refers to a system of values and priorities that are opposed to God, often characterized by worldly desires, pride, and materialism, essentially representing a lifestyle focused on earthly things rather than spiritual things.
- Worldliness is to act as if the material, visible world is all there is. Where this material world becomes ultimately valued.

What worlds should we love?

- **We are to love all human beings.**
- The Bible teaches clearly that Christians are supposed to love everybody. We are to love the people of the world.
- God hates sin, but He loves the sinner.
- You are supposed to have a profound respect for every human being. Every human being is made in the image and likeness of God.
- James says don't use the same tongue to praise God and to curse humans made in his image. Don't cut down another human being.
- The needs and rights of every human being are important, even the ones that we differ with. Atheist and Christians, Jew and Gentile, gay and straight, democrat and republican, rich and poor, we are to respect, honor and love them all.

We are to love all human beings

- Why should we care about the homeless? Because they are made in the image and likeness of God. You honor, respect and love every human being.
- We should love the lost people.
- Jesus came to save the world, not to condemn the world.
- Everybody you meet is either a believer or a potential believer.
- We should be concerned for the lost people.
- If your neighbors house was on fire and you knew he was in the house, would you do nothing, or say nothing? No, you would scream, yell, maybe even break his door in to help save him.

Be in the world but not of the world

- We are not to separate from all people and isolate ourselves.
- We are to be in the world, but not of the world.
- But there is an exception. If you are a new or immature Christian, you must be extremely careful of who you associate with.
- Being friends with worldly people is for the mature and strong Christian. You need to be converting them, not allowing them to convert you.
- You must choose your friends carefully and wisely, because you will become like those whom you spend time with.
- God will sometimes ask a new believer to walk away from some old friends and stop associating with them. In this way, you separate from the world.

We are to love the material world

- The world can also mean all of creation, the material, physical, visible, tangible world or the universe. We are to love this world.
- Some people believe in Dualism, which is the belief that there are two equal powers or forces, good and evil, and they are at war with one other. This is not a Christian belief.
- These people only see two worlds, the spiritual and the natural world. They think they are to love the spiritual but hate the natural or material world.
- We are not to hate the material world, but rather we are to love it.
- People that believe this way they tend to say people should have nothing to do with politics or social action.
- The way to really serve God is to leave your job and go into full time ministry.
- They are negative about the arts, music, and culture.
- This is all based upon the idea that the physical or the material is bad. They think we need to get out of the world. Like the Catholic monks.

Everything God created is good

You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch! Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires. ***Colossians 2:20-23 NLT***

They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth. Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer. ***1 Timothy 4:3-5 NLT***

We are to love the material world

- We are to love this material, visible, tangible, world. We are to love the creation.
- It's good to love nature, just don't worship it.
- It's good to love animals and pets, just don't make a god out of them or put them ahead of human beings.

who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator. ***Romans 1:25 NKJV***

- It's is good to love and care for the environment. Just don't put the environment over human needs.
- Is there anything wrong with music, art, culture? No, not as long as it doesn't promote worldliness.
- I personally play it safe and try to only listen to Christian music. But there is other music that is ok, as long as it doesn't violate or oppose God's values.
- We are supposed to love the material, visible created universe.
- This is where the Amish and orthodox Jews get the idea to totally separate themselves from the world.

Love not the world

- What is the world that John tells us not to love? Let's call it worldliness.
- Worldliness is to act as if the material, visible, physical world is all there is. Where this material world becomes ultimately valued.
- We must constantly examine our hearts for the presence of this love of the world. We all must fight off worldliness.
- Some say: "Don't drink, smoke, cuss or chew, or date the girls that do".
- It's a little more complex than that.
- This world, this material world is not the ultimate, but penultimate. (Next to the ultimate.)
- Money, food, sex, and work are all from the visible world and are all good things, but they are penultimate. They are not evil and wicked, but if you live for these things, if you make them the ultimate, you are worldly.
- When John says love not the world, He isn't saying go away from the world, move to the wilderness and become a monk. He is saying, don't be worldly.

The love of the world

For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ***1 John 2:16 NKJV***

What does it mean to love the world?

1. **Lust of the flesh:** Gluttony, drunkenness, leisure, sexual immorality.
2. **Lust of the eyes:** Lustful sinful desires, covetousness, greed.
3. **Pride of life:** Boasting, pride in all its many forms.

Lust, the word means - an over-desire. **Lust is not wanting bad things; but rather wanting things badly.**

Lust of the flesh

- **Over desires of the body.**
 - Food and drink
 - Rest and leisure
 - Sex
- What is wrong with food and drink, nothing?
 - **It is ok to eat to live, but you must not live to eat.**
- What is wrong with rest and play or leisure, nothing? It is ok to play, but when you live to play it is an over-desire.
- What is wrong with sex, nothing, but it's wrong to live for sex.

Worldliness

- Worldliness is when these things become things you live for.
- Food and drink; when you use food as a strategy for coping with life, it becomes wrong. Again: It's ok to eat and drink to live, but you must not live to eat and drink.
- There are many eating disorders. You can eat too much (gluttony), or you can eat too little (anorexia), while using that to try to cope with life.
- Or drink, Paul said to Timothy, to drink a little wine for the stomach sake. (I Timothy 5:23) But when you use alcohol as a way to cope with life, you have made it an over-desire, it has become worldly.
- It is sinful and worldly to become drunk or gluttonous. There are scriptures proving that both are wrong.
- My Dad always said that alcohol makes you see double and act single.

Rest and leisure

- People are now more driven to have fun and have a hobby now much more than they were 50 years ago.
- People are spending billions of dollars in the leisure industry. More and more people are addicted to rest and leisure because their jobs are unfulfilling.
- Golf, camping, skiing, hiking, boating, tennis, bowling, mountain climbing, sports of all kinds, even video games, there is nothing wrong with any of them, until you make it an over-desire and you live to play. Then you are worldly.
- You can play to live, but don't live to play.

Sex

- God gave us sex, so there is obviously nothing wrong with sex.
- If a Christian looks at sex from the perspective of eternity it can be a great thing. You can view sex as an analogy of something that will happen when we get to heaven, when we are brought into complete oneness with God.
- But sex can never really fulfill you. Only a complete union with God will ever completely satisfy you.
- Sex only works in a context of marriage. Think of intimacy with God. Would God say, I will pour out my love into your heart, but you don't have to be completely committed to me, you can worship anybody or anything you want, whenever you want. No, He would never say that.
- Therefore, God says you must not pour your love into someone that is not completely exclusively and permanently committed to you. This is why God says sex should only be with one partner, a monogamous relationship within the bounds of marriage.

Sex

The world says:

- You can have sex with whoever you want, whenever you want and in anyway you want.
- We don't have to get married, we can just live together.
- Adultery, fornication, and homosexuality, are all ok.
- I am just wanting to be loved. Doesn't God want me to be happy? I am lonely.
- I don't want to give up my sin. So, I'll find a church that accepts me just the way that I am, and tolerates my sin, so I can continue in my sin.
- Anybody that preaches against freedom of sexuality must be a hater of people.

God says:

- Marry a wife and be faithful to her. Have a monogamous relationship.
- Be the husband of one wife, or the wife of one husband.
- Keep your heart pure.
- Jesus said if you lust after a woman, you have already committed adultery in your heart.
- Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. **Hebrews 13:4 NKJV**
- Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV**

Lust of the eyes

- If you see work, sex, money, or leisure from an eternal perspective, they can be good things, but they are not the ultimate things.
- If you are driven to the point where you think you have to have food, sex, or money or you think you can't be happy, it is an over-desire.
- What are some of the over-desires of the eyes. Appearance for example; beauty, it is worldly to look at money, status, name, clothing, figure, and say that is what controls me.
- The lust of the eye means that you are too concerned about how you look, or you are too concerned about how somebody else looks, to the point where you are lusting after someone you should not lust after.
- It also has to do with materialism. Do you spend a lot of your money being generous, giving to God? It depends upon whether you look at eternity or the world as the ultimate.

Money

The world says:

- You deserve more.
- Keep up with the Jones'.
- You should be successful.
- He who has the most toys wins.
- Money will make you happy and secure.
- Use your money on yourself, buy more comfort.
- Your net worth determines your self-worth.
- Most people think thou shalt not covet is a suggestion and not a commandment.

God says:

- Be content with what you have. In fact, the Bible says be content with food and clothing.
- The love of money is the root of all evil.
- Hardly shall a rich man inherit the kingdom of God.
- Materialism and greed are sinful.
- You should pray about how much should you spend on comfort?
- You should give tithes and offerings to God.
- You should use your money to help the poor.
- What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul.
- No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. **Matthew 6:24 ESV**

Money

- If you spend all of your money on yourself, you are worldly. You are saying that this material world is all there is, or that the material, visible world is the ultimate, there is nothing greater than this world.
- If you are a mature Christian, you will give a lot of your money away every year.
- You will gladly and cheerfully give tithes and offerings to the church, and you will willingly help the poor people that God brings into your life to help.
- This is because you value the eternal over the material world.

The pride of life

- There is an ascending order:
 - **Lust of the flesh.**
 - **Lust of the eyes.**
 - **The pride of life.**
- Each one gets worse. Most churches think lust of the flesh is the worse. You are an alcoholic, or you have been sexually immoral, oh how awful.
- But look at gossip, jealousy, trying to grab the spotlight, always having your feelings hurt, back-biting, trying to control, trying to be known, having to be right, that is pride, and these are much worse sins than lust of the flesh.
- Because these sins have to do with you being the very center of your life instead of putting God as your center.

Pride

- Jesus looked at the Pharisees, they were very moral, they lived a clean life on the outside, but they were so proud, Jesus said the prostitutes get into heaven before the Pharisees do.
- You think you have scandalous things in your life, and you feel so ashamed, you are probably thinking of the first two categories, you need to understand that proud people are worse than you.
- What is pride, there is the pride of applause, I want recognition, I want thanks, I want to be noticed, boasting,
- Then there is pride of power, I want to be in charge, I want my way, nobody tells me what to do, I am the boss of my life.
- Pride of control, nobody treads upon me, I don't give up my rights for other people, I don't humble myself.

The pride of life

- Pride is the root of all our sinful behavior.
- Pride is self-centered, selfish, self-absorbed and self-righteous.
- Pride is independence from God.
- Pride is you playing god. Pride says, I'll be my own god.
- Pride is self-centeredness.
- Pride is you wanting others to serve you instead of you serving them.
- Pride is the source of anger.
- Pride is the source of materialism and covetousness.
- The entire system of "the world" plays into the hands of the pride of life.

Quotes

- The essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through pride that the devil became the devil: pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.
- Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good—above all, that we are better than someone else—I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil.
- A proud man cannot know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you. **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

The world is passing away

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- This is such an important scripture.
- Jesus said, not my will but thine be done.
- The world and all of its lust are temporal and will pass away.
- Worldliness is looking for love in all the wrong places.
- Worldliness is saying the eternal invisible God doesn't love me, so I will find something visible to love me and to satisfy me.
- Our goal should be to never fulfill our own will or go our own way, but rather only do the will of God; 24/7.

One foot in the world, one foot in God

- Lots of people are unhappy, because they have one foot in the world and one foot in God.
- They are unwilling to purge their life of worldliness.
- My old mentor use to say, “most Christians have just enough of Jesus to make themselves miserable.”
- Many Christians have **just enough of Christ where they can't enjoy the world and just enough of the world where they can't enjoy Christ.**
- You need to turn your back to the world and run away from it. Rid yourself of any and all worldliness.

The doctrinal test

Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us. But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. ***1 John 2:18-23 NLT***

The doctrinal test

- There were a group of people that were in the church, but they were not Christians, they were counterfeit. They were probably moralist. They looked like Christians, but were false.
- We learned earlier that John said you are not a Christian even though you may know doctrine, you may know your Bible, but if you are not a loving person you are not a Christian.
- Now John says that Christianity has a doctrinal core. There are things that you must believe in order to be a Christian. Knowing the truth matters.
- John says, if you say you are a Christian, but don't believe the truth, you are a liar.

Doctrine matters

- When it comes to somebody disagreeing with you, you are supposed to say maybe you are right, I could be wrong, never be dogmatic about you. Be meek and humble when it comes to you.
- But when it comes to somebody disagreeing with the Bible, when it comes to the core message of the gospel, there can be no compromise. Be assertive and uncompromising when it comes to the gospel. John called them liars.
- Anyone that denies that Jesus is the Christ is Anti-Christ.
- The problem they faced was Gnosticism. They believed that God could not have become a flesh and blood human being.
- The doctrine of the incarnation is that we are so sinful that nothing less than this drastic measure was necessary to save us. The gospel is that no matter how hard we try we were never able to get up to God, so He had to come down to us.

Truth

- The reigning dogma of many churches is that Jesus was a great man, a great teacher, but not the Son of God. They think being a good person is enough. You don't have to be born-again.
- Moralists say it doesn't matter what you believe, what matters is that you live a good life.
- A Christian looks in the mirror and says I am doing better, I am changing, I am growing, but it is a miracle of God because my life was such a mess.
- What is truth, a person. Jesus says I am the way, the truth and the life.
- The doctrine that Jesus was God come in the flesh, that He came to the earth to rescue us, this is the gospel, this is the truth. John is saying that if you say you are a Christian and don't believe this, you are a liar.
- I asked somebody the other day, what are you going to say to God when you get to the judgment seat. They said, God knows my heart. Bad answer. That is saying that you basically believe that you are a good person and good people get into heaven.

God abides in you, and you abide in Him

Therefore, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. ***1 John 2:24-27 NKJV***

Abide in Him

- We had an entire lesson on this subject of abiding in Him recently.
- When we get saved Jesus comes to live in our hearts, but we also come to live in God's heart.
- We must learn how to abide in Him, or live through the lenses of our new identity.
- In Christ we are righteous, justified, in right relationship with God. Therefore, in Christ we are accepted by God, we are His Sons and Daughters, we are heirs of God.
- If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you and you will have an anointing to help you recognize or understand the truth.
- You know it is working when these truths grab hold of you, when the truth gets quickened to you, and you feel the power of the truth.

His coming

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. ***1 John 2:28-29 NKJV***

- This is our segue into our study of the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ; **The Return.**
- Theologians call this eschatology, or the study of the end of times.
- Jesus is coming back soon, and He will establish His kingdom on the earth for 1,000 years, and God wants us to understand this.
- There are hundreds and hundreds of verses in the Bible concerning this subject that most Christians simply ignore. Why? Most of them believe in a pre-tribulation rapture and therefore they say, what's the use, I am not going to be here, why bother.
- That's not a good answer, because God has put hundreds of scriptures in the Bible about the end times, to comfort you, encourage you and to give you hope.
- Lord willing, we will start this study next week, Wednesday February 18th.