

1-2-3 John, Part 6 — Know God — Do not love the world

If we really know and love God, we do not love the world or the things in the world. This text is making it clear that believers have been transformed by the power of Christ and have been brought out of the world.

1 John 2:15-17 NKJV ¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

If a person loves the world, they do not love God. This could be rephrased to say, “stop loving the world.” Why is this so important? Loving God is primary to being a Christian. John says: *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

John is presenting a message that may be misunderstood by some.

John 3:16-17 NKJV 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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

If God so loved the world, why is John saying, *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him?”* We need to understand what he is saying.

What does Scripture mean by “the world?”

The “world” means several things:

First, “the world” means the earth or planet.

Second, it is man-made systems or governments.

- It is the secular or material matters, ideals, and interactions as opposed to spiritual ones.
- The whole circle of earthly goods, riches, advantages, pleasures.

Third, it can mean the standards and practices associated with secular society.

- It involves personal activities and lifestyles, earthly things.
- The desires, lusts, sin, pride, and rebellion that is against God is the world.
- Ephesians 5:11 NKJV Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

Fourth, the world is the whole mass of people who are alienated from God, all unbelievers.

● **John 3:16-17 NKJV** For God so loved the world that He gave ...that the world through Him might be saved.

Romans 12:2 NKJV And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The message is very clear. Do not conform to the pattern and lifestyles of the world. Keep your heart and mind focused upon God. Love God before everything else.

2 Timothy 2:4 NKJV No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs

of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Moses was an example of this.

Hebrews 11:24-25 NKJV By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

Moses had the opportunity to become totally consumed with the philosophies and cultures of Egypt. He chose God.

1 John 2:15 tells us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

John refers to two groups of people who profess to know God.

- 1 John 2:15-16 shows a person who loves the world.
- 1 John 2:17 refers to a person who does the will of God.

The first person makes a false profession. They say they know God, but they do not love Him.

The second person is the obedient believer. They do exactly what God says. Their life is controlled by their love for God.

Four things are pointed out about the person who loves the world. John is writing to people in the church. They say they are a believer, but they love the world. John says: "The love of the Father is not in them." It is impossible to love the world and love the Father.

What causes people to return to the world and to love the world?

- Some people enjoy nature and the beauty of the earth so much that they no longer worship regularly.
- Some people are so involved with other things that they don't have time for God.
- Some are so hungry for the pleasures and possessions of the world that they don't have time for God.

The second one is the lust of the flesh. The *flesh* has to do with feeling, touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, and seeing. (Five senses) Their desires and urges are not wrong, but they are controlled by their old passions and lusts. We all should have healthy desires and urges. If the desires of the flesh are not controlled, the flesh will begin to lust more and more.

There are two times when the desires and urges of the flesh are wrong:

- First, when the flesh desires something that God forbids, it is wrong.
Any desire or urge that God condemns is wrong.
- Second, when the flesh desires and consumes more and more, then it becomes over indulgence.

Healthy desire is not over indulgence.

The lust of the flesh wants more and is never satisfied.

Anytime we desire something God forbids or we over indulge we fall into sin.

What are the sins of the flesh? They are not just acts of *immorality*. Some of these things might surprise you to think that they are works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Four things are pointed out about the person who loves the world.

Third, John says the lust of the eyes is of the world. There is nothing wrong with desiring what we see. Seeing and desiring is normal. That is the way that God made us.

It becomes wrong when two things happen:

- When we see and desire what God forbids.
- When we see and desire to consume it upon our lusts.

Eve saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes. She sinned when she did what God told them they should not do. Satan showed the Lord Jesus Christ all the kingdoms of this world. There are many things that are attractive to the eyes that draw us away from God.

Fourth, there is the pride of life. The pride of life focuses on self, self-sufficiency, possessions, position, rank, race, self-glory, etc. The pride of life refers to a person who is arrogant, conceited, and boastful. They feel they *don't need anyone*. They have little need for God.

What are the sins of the pride of life? This is the same sin that led Lucifer into rebellion against God. He began thinking he was perfect, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty and blameless. He began exalting himself above God. His beauty and position corrupted him.

Revelation 3:17 ESV For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

It is the pride of power, intelligence, knowledge, and position. Jesus spoke of a Pharisee who had this issue.

Luke 18:11 NKJV The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

Romans 10:3 NKJV For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

The person who focuses life on the things of this world and the love for the things of the world must face one fact.

1 John 2:17 AMP And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.

In 1841 Fredrick Marryat said, "You cannot take it with you when you die." The world passes away and disappears with its cravings and desires. The person who does the

will of God abides forever. Don't become consumed with the things of this life, but prepare for eternity. This is critical for our eternal future.

Jesus had much to say about where we put our priorities and what we value.

Matthew 6:19-21 AMP Do not gather and heap up and store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust and worm consume and destroy, and where thieves break through and steal. But gather and heap up and store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust nor worm consume and destroy, and where thieves do not break through and steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Why should we lay up treasures in heaven?

2 Peter 3:10-13 NKJV ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

When we know God, we have hope in heaven. You cannot go to heaven if you do not know God.