

Dangers to Avoid
June 21, 2015
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1 John 2:15-27

It's Fathers Day, so let's ask the wives to affirm their husbands. **What was something that first attracted you to your husband?** (This actually ties into the lesson!)

Big Idea: Believers are tempted by the things of this world and the deceit of false teachers, but we can overcome by abiding in the truth of the gospel by the power of God's Spirit.

We'll study this passage in two sections: A Warning Not To Love "The World" and Warning Concerning Antichrists (false teachers.) We'll see what the text says; what it means; and what it means to US.

1 John 2:15–17 (ESV)

15 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. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- Verse 15: Don't love "the world." Mature believers know generally what that term means. A new believer might be confused. **What famous verse might it seem to contradict?**
 - Scripture talks about the world in three contexts. The first two are 1) God's creation and 2) the people He placed in it. **What does this third context of "the world" mean?**
 - A good definition: *"This "world" named here as our enemy is an invisible spiritual system opposed to God and Christ."* (Wiersbe)
 - When you are tempted to sin, do you ever picture Satan's forces at work around you? Scripture tells us that Satanic forces, both supernatural and human are at work opposing God:
 - 1 John 5:19 says, *"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"*. Jesus called Satan *"the prince of this world"* (John 12:31). The devil has an organization of evil spirits working with him and influencing the affairs of "this world" (Eph. 6:11–12). Unsaved people unknowingly do Satan's bidding: *"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"* (Eph. 2:1–2).
 - So John warns believers, don't LOVE the evil world system that opposes the things of God.
 - He goes on to say if we DO love the things of the world, the love of the Father isn't in us.
 - The NIV and the Holman Christian Standard clarify that sentence. They render it: *"If anyone loves the world, love **for** the Father is not in them."* (Emphasis mine) **What does that mean?**
 - J.B. Phillips' paraphrase clarifies verse 15 even more: *"Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time."*
 - Think about the expression: something or someone "turned his head." **When do we use that?**
 - John is saying, "Don't let your head be turned by the things that are opposed to God."
 - If God's truth is in one direction and the world's deception from Satan is the opposite, how can you look at them both at the same time? You can't love the world and God at the same time.
 - Some take verse fifteen to an extreme that John didn't write. They put words in his mouth.
 - John said don't fall in love with the world. **What did John NOT say? What did Jesus model?**
- John 17:15 (ESV) Jesus prayed to His Father...
- 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.*

- If we want to be like Jesus we won't isolate from the world, neither will we fall in love with it, instead we will have COMPASSION for the lost who are in the world. (John 3:16)

Andrew Knowles said it this way: "...there is a difference between loving the world for its values and ways and loving the world because you want to change it."

- Verse 16 tells us Satan lures believers into falling in love with the "things of the world" by taking natural God-given instincts and perverting them for evil purposes in three ways:
 - Desires of the flesh - (Hunger; thirst; weariness; sexual desire)
 - The desires of the eyes - (Pleasures that gratify the sight and mind - Wiersbe)
 - The pride of life - (Desire to be seen as affluent or successful)
- These desires are not bad in and of themselves. **How does Satan use them against us?**
- Falling in love with the things of the world is a gradual process. Falling out of love with God and in love with "the world" happens in little steps. Like the Casting Crowns song says, it's a "Slow Fade." As an illustration, I thought of the way unfaithfulness creeps into a marriage. Think about the stages:
 - Complacency (opposite: interest in a forbidden relationship) that leads to...
 - Boredom (opposite: excitement) that leads to...
 - Distance (opposite: closeness) that leads to...
 - Unexplained absences (opposite: intentional time with the new love) that lead to...
 - Defensiveness (opposite: feelings of acceptance) that leads to...
 - Irritation (opposite: delight) that leads to...
 - Abandonment (opposite: entanglement)
- **Question: How could we compare each of those with falling out of love with the things of God? Christian books teach us to "affair proof" our marriages. What are some ways to do the same in our relationship with God? Other thoughts?**
- How can we be sure we are not falling in love with the things of the world? A couple "tests."
- Ask: *Does my conduct display my love for God and others?*
- Put that against the Ten Commandments and it's pretty straightforward. (i.e. - Does murdering; stealing; or committing adultery show my love for God and others? Open and shut case!)
- Even beyond the "big 10" we have many commands in scripture that are very clear.
- The challenge is the "grey areas" not specifically spelled out in scripture. **How do we deal with those grey areas? How can we avoid drifting into loving "the things of the world?"**

One test is to compare the grey area to living out the Great Commandment:

- Does this behavior hinder me in loving God with all my heart, soul, mind?
- Does this behavior hinder my loving others?
- Does this behavior hinder my witness to others for Christ?

Another test if the "things of the world" have turned my head from my relationship with God?

- Priority - Have the things of the world become a higher priority than things of God?
- Pleasing - Is what I engage in daily pleasing to God according to scripture?
- Passion - Where is my passion? Am I passionate about the things of God or things of the world?

- **Other thoughts?**

- Let's quickly look at John's warning about false teachers in that day...and today.

1 John 2:18–27 (ESV)

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

- The “last hour” is synonymous with “last days,” while we await Christ’s second coming.
- One day there will be one MAJOR Antichrist as we learn in Revelations. In the meantime there have always been other “antichrists” or those working in opposition to God’s truth.
- You might expect false teachers to knock on your door or camp out in the wilderness.
- Sadly, they are often closer than you think. Sometimes they infiltrate the church.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

- Verses 22 and 23 tell us what the false teachers were “selling” within the church:

22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

- In verses 26 and 27 John summarizes his solution for resisting false teaching:

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

- The way to resist false, counterfeit teaching is to hold it up to the REAL THING: the truth of God’s word. We do that by ABIDING in Christ as His Spirit abides in us.
- As we read God’s word, the Holy Spirit will ILLUMINATE our minds to understand the truth.
- When John said “you have no need that anyone should teach you,” that was not to put preachers and teachers into retirement. We know that isn’t his meaning because other scripture calls for preaching (Romans 10:14-15)
- It means believers shouldn’t RELY ONLY on teachers and preachers to understand God’s word. We must study it for ourselves. Never think: *“We have ‘people’ for that!”*

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- John warns Christian believers, as J.B. Phillips put it,: *“Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time.”*
- Jesus has called us to be IN the world and to reach them for Him. We’re not to be enamored with the world, we are to change the world with the gospel message.
- How can we be certain our “head isn’t turned” by the world? How can we avoid a “slow fade?”
- Think of those three words: PRIORITY; PLEASING; and PASSION.
 - What’s my PRIORITY, the things of God or the things of the world?
 - Is what I’m doing PLEASING to God according to scripture?
 - Do I have a PASSION for the things of God?
- As we honestly answer those questions, God’s Holy Spirit living inside us will give us the power to stay in love with Christ and not fall in love with the things of the world.
- The best news is verse 25: *“...this is the promise that he made to us —-eternal life!”*