



17 October 2025

## Do not love the world

We know Jesus' words,

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”

Yes, God *so loved* the world! Because of His love and by His grace God sent His son to be our Savior and in Him we have eternal life.

But we also may remember God's command through the apostle John,

“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 life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God continues to live forever.”

(1 John 2:15-17)

So, what does *world* in 1 John 2 mean? Very briefly, in John's writing *world* has a number of meanings. In 3:16 in his gospel it refers to God loving fallen, sinful humanity. In chapter 2 of his first letter it refers to the sinful values, motives, beliefs and practices, the moral order opposed to God. Later in this letter John declares “the world lies in the power of the evil one” (5:19). Love, devotion to the passing things of this world is one of Satan's traps, landmines to deceive and destroy people.

The first thing to note is the sharp contrast, the either/or relationship: it is the love of God versus the love of the world. “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” This draws us to what Jesus told us,

“No one 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.”

(Matthew 6:24)

If I am loving the world, I am not living by, living out the love of God.



As attractive as the *world* and all its things may be, they cannot bring fulfilment (remember Solomon's quests), are destructive and temporary, and they cannot coexist as a driving force and master with God.

John gives us three examples of the things of this world which can easily entangle and then dominate us.

- The lust of the flesh. This is an ever-present danger because we still have our fallen nature and Satan's forces use these desires to deceive and destroy us. While it includes sexual desires, it extends to all physical desires. The apostle Paul points us to understanding this and to gaining, keeping freedom and victory.

“walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want” (Galatians 5:16-17).

And again, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Romans 13:14).

- The lust of the eyes. We can easily desire what we see, whatever it may be. Again, it is not limited to sexual temptation, as with David and Bathsheba. The desire of the eyes flows into coveting, wanting what we do not have, and here, what is wrong to have.
- The pride of life. While the Bible deals extensively with the sin of pride, this phrase only occurs here. In our fallen state we see ourselves at the center, and so exalt ourselves, see ourselves as sufficient in ourselves, think we know what is right and best, rather than being humble and dependent on God, His truth, wisdom and strength.

The closing phrase draws us back to loving and obeying God, “the one who does the will of God continues to live forever.” The choice is obvious. Living it out requires submitting to and living by the power of God.

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