

The Danger of Misplaced Love

1 John 2:15–17

I. Introduction

- A. What are the biggest threats to your Christian walk? To your faith? To the spread of the gospel?
- B. We tend to think that it is that which attacks us – persecution, alternate agendas, different political persuasions, a lack of action, laziness
- C. But the real threat is actually misplaced love – loving the wrong things. Every great tragedy begins with misplaced love.
 - 1. People destroy marriages because they love pleasure more than faithfulness.
 - 2. People sacrifice integrity because they love success more than righteousness.
 - 3. People abandon Christ because they love the world more than God.
- D. The question is not whether you love something. Everybody loves something.
- E. The question is: What has captured your heart?
 - 1. Last week John told us who we should love.
 - 2. This week John tells us what we must never love.
- F. *1 John 2:15–17, [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. (ESV)*
- G. The battle for the Christian life is a battle for our affections.
- H. In these verses, John gives one command (“Do not love the world”) and two reasons for obeying it (“It’s not from the Father... & it is passing away”)

II. *[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. (ESV)*

- A. "Do not love the world or the things in the world."
- B. In order to properly understand this section, you need to understand how John is using the word WORLD
 - 1. John is not condemning creation. He’s not saying you should hate sunsets and dolphins
 - 2. He is not condemning beauty, enjoyment, work, family, good food, or material things themselves.
 - 3. God created the world and called it good.
 - 4. Every good and perfect gift is from above
 - 5. We should receive all things with thanksgiving and joy, bathed in prayer

C. So what DOES John mean?

1. "The world" refers to the system of rebellion against God
2. If you look at how it is used in John's writings (Gospel, 123John, Revelation), the world is humanity organized in rebellion against God under Satan's influence.
3. So when John says, "Don't love the world" he is saying, "Don't love that which is under Satan's influence..."
4. "The world" is the mindset, values, priorities, and desires that oppose God's rule.
5. It is the values, priorities, and desires of the Adversary, Satan.
6. The world, the kingdom of darkness in opposition to God says:
 - a) Live for yourself.
 - b) Follow your desires.
 - c) Seek status and success at all costs.
 - d) Self-promote; self-preserve
 - e) Make this life your ultimate goal.
7. That sounds a lot like what you would see on TV or read on the internet
→ it's the way the WORLD thinks b/c Satan is at the helm!

D. John has strong words: "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

1. John isn't talking about believers struggling against temptation; he's talking about hearts fundamentally devoted to the world.
2. John presents two competing loves
3. We cannot give ultimate devotion to both God and the world.
4. To put it another way: **The heart has one throne. Who sits there?**

E. For you...

1. What captures your imagination?
2. What dominates your thinking?
3. What do you fear losing most?
4. What do you pursue most passionately?

III. *[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. (ESV)*

A. John identifies three categories of temptations from the world: The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. What are they?

B. The Desires of the Flesh

1. Sinful cravings arising from our fallen nature.
2. Living to satisfy appetites rather than submit to God
3. Examples: Sexual immorality, Gluttony, Addictions, Self-indulgence, Pursuit of pleasure, living for the moment, the experience
4. The world says, "If you want it, do it,"
5. But remember: Paul says the flesh is in OPPOSITION to the Spirit to prevent you from doing what the Spirit wants you to do
6. The flesh is the sinful principle that remains within us and pulls us away from God.

7. The sinful nature of your flesh wants to stop you from doing God's work and following his heart
- C. The Desires of the Eyes
1. Wanting what we see without asking whether God approves.
 2. Being captivated by appearances rather than truth.
 - a) Ex: When Saul saw the people's love for David, he was jealous and hated him
 3. Examples: Coveting, Envy, Materialism, Chasing what looks impressive
 4. For you...
 - a) Be careful little eye what you see... what you hear...
 - b) Not everything that looks attractive or sounds nice is good.
 - c) Not everything impressive is godly.
 - d) In Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice, a suitor reads a riddle on a golden casket that famously states, "All that glisters is not gold".
 5. Just b/c it looks good and you want it doesn't mean it's good for you, doesn't mean it will help you, and doesn't mean it's from God
 - a) It might be a misplaced love from the enemy to spiral you
- D. The Pride of Life
1. Boasting in possessions, position, achievements, looks, skills...
 2. Finding identity in what we have rather than whose we are
 3. Examples: Career success, Wealth, Influence, Reputation, Social media image, six pack abs, successful kids, any source of pride that defines us
 4. For you...
 - a) Pride seeks glory for self.
 - b) The gospel teaches us to glory in Christ.
 5. If your value and worth is rooted in what you have accomplished, what you own, what you've done or can do → it's a trap from the enemy to destroy you
 - a) (Or the opposite, you're crushed by what you DON'T have)
 6. God sees identity and value so differently from the world
 7. You are not what you've accomplished or what you offer the world
 8. You have value b/c you are made in the image of God
 9. The world defines value differently The world assigns value based on productivity, beauty, strength, and usefulness.
- E. These three temptations are not isolated sins. They represent a whole world system that constantly whispers: Gratify yourself, impress others, exalt yourself.
- F. It's the same root temptations that led Adam and Even into sin
1. *Genesis 3:6, So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*
- G. And like in Genesis 3, they often work together (personal example)
- H. But John reminds us: "This is not from the Father." It's from the Serpent of Old.

IV. *[17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

- A. Remember the world's destiny... "And the world is passing away along with its desires."
- B. Everything the world offers is temporary
 - 1. Pleasure wanes.
 - 2. Beauty gets wrinkled.
 - 3. Wealth & Status fade.
 - 4. The buzz wears off.
 - 5. Human applause dies down.
 - 6. Temporary identities are left in ruins.
- C. The world promises satisfaction but it – Simply. Cannot. Deliver.
 - 1. People spend their lives chasing things they cannot keep while simultaneously ignoring that which has eternal value
 - 2. This is a trick from the enemy to entice you to miss your God-given purposes here on earth!
- D. Look at the contrast between the World & the Kingdom of God
 - 1. Passing Away // Abides forever
 - 2. Temporary pleasure // Eternal joy
 - 3. Empty promises // Lasting fulfillment
 - 4. Self-centered living // God-centered living
- E. "But whoever does the will of God abides forever."
 - 1. God's will leads to what lasts forever
 - 2. The world is temporary. God is eternal.
 - 3. The world's rewards vanish. God's rewards endure.

V. Conclusion

- A. What do you love?
 - 1. The world is constantly competing for our affections through the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - 2. Every day it whispers the same lies: Live for yourself. Follow your desires. Build your identity on what you have and what you can achieve.
- B. But John reminds us that all of it is passing away.
 - 1. The pleasures and sufferings of this world fade.
 - 2. The applause and boos of this world fades.
 - 3. The treasures of this world fade.
 - 4. The perfect body dies with age
 - 5. The kingdoms of this world fade.
 - 6. Everything the world offers comes with an expiration date.
 - 7. Don't love that which fades.
- C. So what's the solution? John says the one who does the will of God abides forever. He said to love the things of God, not the things of the world.
- D. How do we obey from the heart? How do I change my heart? How do I love?
 - 1. Well, you can't. You need someone to cut out your heart of stone and give you a new heart

2. You need someone to breathe life into those dead, dry bones
 3. You need someone to pick you up out of the Kingdom of Darkness (the World) and transfer you to the Kingdom of Light (of the Beloved Son)
- E. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
1. God showed love to those enslaved by the kingdom of darkness.
 2. He gave his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice
 3. So that HE could be punished and WE could be forgiven
 4. So that HE could die, but WE could have eternal life
 5. Jesus didn't come to condemn those of us in the world
 6. He came to save us
 7. If we do not believe, we are already condemned, awaiting judgment
 8. But if we do believe, we are forgiven, set free, transformed, transferred
- F. And like we said last week, if you have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, your affections begin to change → not perfectly, but they do change
1. You will still be tempted to love fallen, temporary things
- G. But don't give your heart to what cannot last. Give your heart to the One who abides forever.
- H. Love the Father. Treasure Christ. Walk by the Spirit.
- I. Live for what will matter not just a hundred years from now, but for all eternity.
- J. The world still calls for your affection every day.
1. The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life still wage war for your heart.
- K. But remember: Jesus is better. His kingdom is better.
- L. Again: **The heart has one throne. Who sits there?**
- M. Don't give your heart to what is fading. Give your heart to the One who abides forever.
- N. *"The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:17)*