

LOVE NOT THE WORLD
(1 John 2:15-17)

I. The command stated (15a).

- A. John tells us to not love the world.
- B. What does he mean by the world?
 - 1. He is not talking about the people in the world, or else we couldn't evangelize.
 - 2. He is not talking about the earth itself because God created it for us to enjoy.
- C. John is talking about the world, or sphere, the meaning of the word translated world, in which Satan dominates.
 - 1. We have long heard the phrase, "the wide world of sports."
 - 2. This is the sphere in which sports dominates.
 - 3. The world to John is that area in which Satan dominates.
- D. Someone might say, "Well, John 3:16 says that God so loved the world."
 - 1. "World" there means mankind.
 - 2. It is not the world of this passage.
- E. John does not stop with the sinful realm of Satan but also included those things that make up that realm.
 - 1. There is nothing in that sinful realm that we are to enjoy.
 - 2. He makes a distinction between the general and the specific.
 - 3. We can't love any aspect of the world and say that we love God as well.
- F. The word love indicates that in which you find joy.
 - 1. The world of sin should bring no joy to us at all.
 - 2. It is a world to be avoided and shunned by Christians.
 - 3. Paul would say, "Abstain from every appearance of evil."

II. The cause presented (15b).

- A. Someone might ask John, "How come we can't love any part of the world?"
- B. The reason is we can't love the Father if we love the world.
- C. The cause of the command is that the two loves cannot coexist in anyone's life.
- D. God wants us to be holy and this is stated throughout the New Testament in a multitude of passages.
 - 1. Holiness is separation from sin.
 - 2. We can't love a sinful world or any item in that world and be holy.
- E. Philo, a first century Jewish philosopher, wrote that it is impossible for the love of the world to exist with the love of God as it is impossible for light and darkness to coexist.
- F. Jesus told us that we cannot serve two masters.
- G. James said that if we are friends with the world then we are enemies of God.
- H. We have got to obey the command in order to love God.

- I. The world wants us to sin, it tempts us to sin.
 - 1. There is nothing holy about the sphere in which Satan rules.
 - 2. Therefore we are to have nothing to do with it in order to have a right relationship with God.

III. **The categories of the world (16).**

- A. We noticed that there were categories of maturity.
- B. There are also categories of sin.
 - 1. These categories are not broken down into levels the way maturity can be.
 - 2. These are the three ways in which we are tempted.
 - 3. All sins fall into one of these three categories.
- C. The lust of the flesh is the first category.
 - 1. The meaning of flesh is the area in which our evil desires dwell.
 - 2. Galatians 5:19-21 lists the lusts of the flesh for us.
 - 3. This carries the idea of a disease of the soul.
 - 4. These include both sexual sins as well as social and religious sins as the list given by Paul shows.
 - 5. Paul tells us that those that engage in such things will not inherit heaven.
- D. The lust of the eyes.
 - 1. This carries the idea desires aroused by that which we see.
 - 2. The song children sing, "Be careful little eyes what you see" is an extremely true song.
 - a. Think of the devastation sight brought to David recorded in 2 Samuel 11:1-17.
 - b. Achan saw those items in Jericho (Joshua 7).
 - 3. Our eyes can get us in a great deal of trouble if we allow them to do so.
- E. Then there is the pride, or vainglory, of life.
 - 1. One lexicon defines pride this way:
 - a. empty, braggart talk
 - b. an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights
 - c. an impious and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthy things
 - 2. It carries the idea of trusting self over God.
- F. It is interesting to note that Satan used all three of these against Eve in the Garden, long ago.
 - 1. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh) and that it was a delight to the eye (lust of the eyes) and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise (pride of life)...
 - 2. All three avenues were present at the first temptation.
- G. They were also present when we have the recorded temptations of Jesus by Satan.
 - 1. Make the stone into bread - lust of the flesh.

2. I will give you all that you see - lust of the eyes.
 3. Cast yourself down and the angels with rescue you - show your abilities to the world and be proud of them.
- H. One writer stated: By sensuality, man sinks to the level of animals; by covetousness he competes on the level of men; by pride he tries to reach to the heights of God.

IV. The consequences of our choice (17).

- A. We have a choice to make: love the world or love God.
- B. There is no middle ground.
- C. One shows a love for others that sacrifices and the other shows a love for self.
 1. Sin is rooted in selfishness.
 2. Every avenue of sin deals with pleasing self and being selfish.
- D. If we choose the love of the world, we are choosing that which is transitory in nature and that does not last.
- E. Loving God, which John defines for us as doing God's will, allows us to keep on abiding for eternity.
- F. All that is held dear in this world is in the process of passing away, which is the meaning of the word passeth.
 1. We are deteriorating (1 Peter 1:24).
 2. Physical things we leave are deteriorating.
- G. We are choosing spiritual death or eternal life.