

# The Love God Hates

1 John 2:15-17

## INTRODUCTION

As we have studied 1 John so far we have seen that fellowship with God requires that there is no room for hatred in our heart toward our brother: **"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now."** (1Jn 2:9). Love is a great theme of this letter of 1 John—God's love for us and our love for God shown by our love for one another.

But there is one sense in which we are not to have love at all! There is a kind of love that God hates. **"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."** (1Jn 2:15)

Here John gives us a very simple command. It is the only command in this text. Therefore it is probably the main point. **"Do not love the world or the things in the world."**

Let's begin by answering the question "Why should Christians not love the world?"

## I. BECAUSE OF WHAT THE WORLD IS (15a,16)

### A. THE "WORLD" IN THIS PASSAGE...

The word "world" is used in at least three different ways in Scripture:

- The word "world" often refers to the physical world, the earth which God made. **"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands."** (Acts 17:24). And Psalm 24:1, **"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein."** John cannot be talking about just this physical world for it belongs to the Lord and God made it to be good.
- The word "world" often refers to the world of mankind: John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world."** John cannot be talking about the world in this sense. For even God loves this world of mankind and Jesus commands us to love people, our brothers in Christ and even our enemies!
- The word "world" often refers to the evil world system: In this context the world is an enemy which is opposed to God. This is the meaning of **"world"** in this passage. Satan is described as **"the prince of this world"** (John 12:31). John says later in this letter, **"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."** (1 John 5:19).

When John tells us not to **"love the world or the things of the world"** he is telling us not to be devoted to the world system that stands in opposition to God. The **"world"** of which he writes is a philosophy or way of thinking and living that ignores God. This is what Jesus meant in Jn.15:18-19, **"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not**

**of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."**

John says we are also not to love **"the things in the world."** How do we know if we **"love the world?"** We know we **"love the world"** if we love **"the things in the world."** **"World"** refers to a philosophy. **"Things"** refer to specifics.

This passage is often misused. Ray Stedman wrote, *"Surely this is a much abused passage. Each of us has heard it used to denounce everything from buttons to beer, from opera to operations, from the waltz to the watusi. Anything that is currently the subject of Christian disfavor has been crammed into this passage labeled 'worldliness,' an denounced."* Now my job today is not to add to anyone's list of do's and don'ts. Too many people think that worldliness is something limited to external behavior. Others think worldliness is hanging out with the wrong kinds of people. Worldliness is a wrong attitude of the heart that indicates a lack of a totally consuming love for the Lord, God.

What are **"the things in the world"** ?

### **B. THREE THINGS IN PARTICULAR MAKE UP THIS "WORLD"...**

1. **"The lust of the flesh"** refers to illegitimate physical cravings, the longing to fulfill bodily appetites in a sinful manner. In the garden, Satan lured Eve into sin with a luscious piece of fruit that was **"good for food"** (Gen.3:6).

We understand the **"lust of the flesh"** every time we go to a restaurant with a buffet or food bar. We may have a legitimate need for food but we often give over to lust. Who really needs a chicken-fried steak, fried fish, steak, meatloaf, enchiladas, green beans, fried okra, steamed broccoli, six different kinds of bread, and 24 desserts—all in the same meal?

Paul describes the lust of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. He says, **"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."**

We don't have time to go into detail about what each of those mean, but look them over again this morning. Do you find yourself in any of these?

2. **"The lust of the eyes"** targets our fantasy and thought lives. In the garden, Eve saw the fruit was **"pleasant to the eyes."** What enters into the mind through the "eyegate" often is played out in life. This is why pornography is so dangerous and deceptive. King David looked upon Bathsheba long before he committed adultery with her.

The lust of the eyes is basically covetousness, wanting what we don't have. It is greed and envy. Someone has well-said, "We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like!"

3. **"The pride of life"** is the out-of-control desire to awaken envy and admiration in other people. In the garden, Satan tempted Eve with the fruit that was **"desirable to make one wise."** He told her that if she ate it she her **"eyes"** would **"be opened"** and she would **"be like God, knowing good and evil."**

The "pride of life" manifests itself in the desire to be known, for people to see us and recognize us. It affects the clothes we wear, the cars we drive and the homes in which we live. There is nothing wrong with these things but often our desire to have them is rooted in arrogance. Why? Because we want glory. We don't want to give God glory, we want to keep it for ourselves.

Can you see how dangerous it is to love the world and the things in the world?

Another reason John gives not to love the world is:

## **II. BECAUSE OF WHAT LOVING THE "WORLD" DOES (15b)**

### **A. IT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO LOVE THE FATHER...**

**"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."**

I understand **"the love of the Father"** means "love for the Father" Instead of "the Father's love for us", for He loves us even as sinners (Romans 5:8).

So John is saying that if we love the world, we cannot love God. We cannot love God and the world that is opposed to God at the same time.

Other scriptures also teach this. James taught that **"friendship with the world is enmity with God"** – (James 4:4) Jesus said, **"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"** (Matthew 6:24).

We simply are not able to love the world and God at the same time!

Why?

### **B. TO SEE WHY, LET'S DEFINE "THE LOVE OF THE FATHER"...**

What does it really mean for me to love the Father?

According to John, it means that I keep His commandments. **"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments"** (1John 5:3) To this Jesus agrees, **"If you love Me, keep My commandments."** (John 14:15 NKJV) **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."** (John 14:21 NKJV)

### **C. IF WE LOVE THE WORLD, WE CAN'T KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS!**

If you are driven by **"the lust of the flesh"**. to commit fornication, adultery, etc. then you can't keep God's command to love one another as He has loved.

If you are overcome by **"lust of the eyes"**...so that you always want more, and to hold on to what you have, then you won't keep God's command to help the needy - cf. 1Jn 3:16-17.

If you are filled with "**the pride of life**" so that you consider yourself more important than others you will not be able to keep the command to imitate Christ - cf. Php 2:3-5.

So it is impossible to faithfully serve God and Jesus, thereby showing our love for them, if we allow ourselves to "love the world"! But John gives us another reason why we should not "**love the world**"...

### **III. BECAUSE OF WHERE THE "WORLD" IS GOING (17)**

#### **A. "THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY"**

This is true in regards to our individual lives - "**For 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away'**," (1Pe 1:24).

It is also true concerning everything that we leave behind - "**But 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.**" (2Pe 3:10)

#### **B. IN CONTRAST, "HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER"**

This is because he will be blessed to enter the heavenly kingdom "**Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven**" (Matthew 7:21).

Even his "works" will follow with him Revelation 14:13, "**Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."**

Jim Elliot was an evangelical missionary who was killed several years ago at the hands of the Auca Indians in S. America. He wrote, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Conclusion:

"Anything in this world that is not God can rob your heart of the love of God. Anything that is not God can draw your heart away from God. If you don't have it, it can fill you with passion to get it. If you get it, it can fill you with pride that you've got it." (Piper)

The Psalmist says, "**Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.**" (Psa 73:25 NKJV). Therefore let us desire nothing but God. Possess nothing but God, pursue nothing but God.

But someone might ask, Should I not desire dinner? Should I not desire a job? Should I not desire a spouse? Should I not desire the child in my womb? Should I not desire a healthy body or a good night's rest or the morning sun or a great book or an evening with friends?

And the answer is no -- unless it is a desire for GOD! Do you desire dinner because you desire God? Do you want a job because in it you will discover God

and love God? Do you long for a spouse because you are hungry for God and hope to see him and love him in your partner? Do you desire the child and the healthy body and the good night's rest and the morning sun and the great book and the evening with friends for God's sake? Do you have an eye for God in everything you desire? (See Colossians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 10:31)

If you love God with all your heart, then every room you enter will be a temple of love to God, all your work will be a sacrifice of love to God, each of your relationships will be a reflection of the love of God, every meal will be a banquet of love with God, every song will be overture of love to God.

Is that how you live your life? If not, make the decision today to get it right. Love is not just an emotion, love is a decision. It is an act of your will. I invite you today, begin loving God.