

Series: 1 John
Title: The Love of Godliness
Text: 1 John 2: 15-17
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1 John 2: 15: Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world.

By the grace and love of God shed abroad in our new hearts, God's saints do not love *the people of this world*. We seek their spiritual good, as well as temporal. In that sense Christ teaches us to love our enemy. But the people of this world are never to be rivals for our heart over Christ or his people. That is what Christ meant when he said, "*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes and his own life also, he cannot be my disciples. (Lu 14: 26)*

By the grace and love of God, God's saints do not love this world *as though it is our permanent home*. We are only passing through; pilgrims and strangers with no continuing city. The apostle Paul said, "Our conversation"—that word means citizenship. "*Our conversation is in heaven; from when also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*" (Co. 3: 20-21)

By the grace and love of God, God's saints do not love *the things of this world*. As the apostle Paul told Timothy, "*God giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*" (1Ti 6:17) But we remember those things are gifts that God has given to ease the troubles of this life, to keep us knowing that God shall provide for us in this life. That is what our Wisdom said through the wise man, Solomon:

Ecclesiastes 5: 18: *it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.* 19: Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; *this is the gift of God.* 20: For he shall not much remember the days of his life because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

God gives us a job, God gives the fruits of our labor and God even gives us the power to enjoy them and rejoicing in our hearts. God does it so that we are not overly distressed with the troubles of life. But he makes his child remember God is our Provider. This is how God makes his people have godly enjoyment of these things. But we never love the things of this world above God who gave them. Christ said, "*So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (Lu 14:33)*

Subject: The Love of Godliness

Proposition: In this passage, the Holy Spirit declares that it is the love of the Father in the heart which makes his child cease living in worldliness (living for the world) and makes us live in godliness (which is living for Christ and his kingdom, which is the will of the Father.) Worldliness is living for the world; Godliness is living for Christ.

Divisions: Here are three reasons why God's saints no longer live for this world but for Christ:

1) The love of the Father is in us—**1 John 2: 15: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

2) The love of the Father turns us from the world teaching what is in it—**1 John 2: 16: For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.**

3) The love of the Father makes us do his will, that is believe on Christ and live for him—**1 John 2: 17: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

1 John 2: 15: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

The first reason a child of God lives in godliness, lives for God, is because the love of the Father is in him. The sinner who loves the world does so because the love of the Father is not in him. But that child of grace who lives for God does so because the love of the Father is in him.

Christ said, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”* (Mt 6: 24) Christ’s word, together with our text, gives us a fuller understanding. If I love the world then I do not have the love of the Father in me. But I am not neutral! Christ said the man who loves the world, *hates* God.

Every sinner that God regenerates, comes into the world loving the world and hating God, even as every other sinner in this world.

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

By Adam’s transgression, by Adam’s corrupt seed, we came into this world spiritually dead. Therefore, we loved the world, lived for the world and hated God like all other sinners. Who made us to differ?

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

The difference was not something we did—the difference was the grace of God, *“But God—for his great love wherewith he loved us—hath quickened us together with Christ.”* When God’s child is born from above, *“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* (Rom 5:5)

When God gave us life, the Spirit made us behold the Father’s great love for us in sending his only begotten Son to lay down his life for us, while as yet we hated him.

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, [in our hearts] 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Beholding how God loved us, beholding how Christ loved us by laying down his life for us—justifying us from our sins, making us joint-heirs of God with him, giving us the hope of eternal life—he made us fall in love with God in Christ.

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Conversely, if any man loves the Father, the difference is, the love of the Father abides in him.

Yet, every believer still has this flesh. Worldliness is our greatest danger. So we need constants reminding, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* Have you been born of God? Are you God’s child? Do you live in the hope of eternal glory? Then count this world to be what it is, dead. Live no longer for the things dead men live for. Live for Christ by giving yourself to further the gospel of the grace of God and by giving yourself to serve the people of God. That is our purpose.

ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD

1 John 2: 16: For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The love of the Father turns his child from this world and keeps us turned from this world by teaching us what is in the world.

“All that is in the world”—this is the sum of what is in the world. Worldliness is defined right here. It is not what false religion teaches. In fact, it makes up 99% of religion today.

“The lust of the flesh”—the carnal man lives for the carnal from sensual desires of the flesh. He lives for the belly, for pleasure. False religion appeals to the lust of the flesh by pointing men to earthly things such as touch not, taste not and handle not and by enticing with pleasure and entertainment.

Philippians 3: 18: (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

2 Timothy 3: 1: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2: For men shall be lovers of their own selves,...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away....

“The lust of the eyes”—is to be covetous for things that gratify the sight. But also it is lusting for men to see one’s own self in a certain way. Christ teaches us to do nothing *“to be seen of men.”* But of Pharisaical, will-worshippers, Christ said, *“all their works they do for to be seen of men.”* (Mt 23: 5) *“And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”* (Lu 16: 15)

“The pride of life”—is the pride of living; it is ambition for honor, popularity, prominent positions, luxury and pomp. False religion operates from this same principle as the world. Men desire to sit in *“the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi”* (Matthew 23:6-7). Christ said, *“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that [cometh] from God only?”* (John 5:44)

Religion says worldliness is eating certain things, dressing a certain way. But Christ said, *“the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro 14:17)*. Worldliness is a heart attitude: *the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life*.

All this *“is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* All that is in the world—these lusts and this pride—is the result of the fall; it is the result of sin and death in Adam. These are all the works of the devil. Christ said,

1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

In the wilderness, Christ was tempted of the devil with all these things. The devil used the same subtlety he used on Eve. But Christ overcame him with *“As it is written.”* Christ destroyed the works of the devil by his perfect obedience to God his Father, in perfect love for his Father and his people, throughout his life, unto the death of the cross. He destroyed the accusing works of the devil *for* his people on the cross by bearing our sins and shedding his sin-atonement blood for us. Christ destroyed the works of the devil *in* his people by creating us entirely new in the inward man in righteousness and true holiness by the Holy Spirit in the new birth. So those Christ has perfected are not of this world. He said,

John 17: 14: I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The only way God’s elect are saved from all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—is by the grace of God our Father choosing us in divine election, by the blood of Christ redeeming us, by the Holy Spirit making us a new creation. Therefore, God’s saints no longer live our lives ruled by these corrupt principles. We are of the Father and live a life governed by the power and grace of Christ Jesus our Master.

Young believers when it comes time for college stay close enough to come home on the weekends to be under the gospel of Christ. Or if you move away, make your choice of colleges, based on where the gospel is preached and go to every service. The gospel is preeminently more important than the prestige of any college on your resume. When it comes time for a job or career pick a job that will not consume you but allow you to promote the gospel and serve God’s people. Let us all always remember what Christ said, *“the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” (Mr 4:19)*

HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF GOD

1 John 2: 17: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

By the love of the Father given in our new heart, God’s saints do the will of God by believing on Christ and living for him.

One morning I brought a bottle of soap bubbles into the pulpit. I blew those bubbles into the air and said, “There is Rocky Hill, Pennington, Spotswood, Bordentown—all the places where we all live.” We watched as one by one they disappeared. That is what God says of this world and the lusts thereof, *“the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.”* If you go after this life, you may fulfill your lusts, but this world and

you will soon pass away. But please hear this, God says, *“but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”* He that believes on Christ and lives for him abideth for ever.

I can tell you this. You can read it plainly right here from God himself. But what did John say brings us to that end of keeping the word of God, of doing his will? *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”* (1 Jn 2:5)

When the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, Christ speaks effectually, commanding, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”* Christ speaks into our heart, effectually commanding,

Matthew 16: 24: If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 27: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Romans 2: 7: To them who by patient continuance in well doing [doing the will of the Father by living for him, seeking things above] seek for glory and honour and immortality, [Christ shall freely give what Christ earned for you] eternal life: 8: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [Christ shall give that man what that man earned by his own wicked works] indignation and wrath,

John 8:51: Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Therefore, by the power of his grace and by the constraint of his love, beholding Christ, his child believes on him and begins living for him rather than this world.

Christ spoke to Moses in this power. Moses could have lived for this world and had all the riches Pharaoh could give. Instead, *“by faith Moses, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”* (Heb 11: 24-26)

May God be pleased to shed his love in our hearts and constrain us to believe on his Son and live for him.

Amen!