

## Do Not Love the World – 1 John 2:15-17

Note: These sermon notes have been compiled from a transcript of Phil Walker's message. We do not have access to Phil's personal notes at the time of upload.

We are taking a break this week from our series in Ephesians to consider a vital warning from the Apostle John. In 1 John 2:15-17, John calls believers to examine their affections. He warns against loving the world and its desires, reminding us that such love is incompatible with love for the Father. True Christians, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, are called to walk in light, not darkness. As John wrote to first-century churches (likely around Ephesus) to combat false teachers and assure true believers, this passage gives us clear marks of genuine faith: our loves reveal whose we are.

John uses “world” (Greek: *kosmos*) in a specific way here—not the created order (which declares God's glory, Isaiah 6:3), nor the people God calls us to love as neighbors. He means the spiritual system and realm in opposition to God—anything satanic, driven by rebellion against the Creator. This is the system ruled by the prince of this world (Satan), which hates Christ and His people (John 15:18-19; 1 John 3:13).

The good news is that Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33), and the Spirit who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). We are *in* the world but not *of* it. The command is clear: “Do not love the world or the things in the world.” If we do, the love of the Father is not in us. This is not about losing salvation (which is impossible for the truly born again, John 6:37-39; 10:28-29), but about revealing our true spiritual condition. Doing God's will is evidence of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone—not the cause of it (the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints).

### 1. What Is the World? – The Spiritual Realm in Opposition to God

John defines the “world” as the ungodly system and mindset hostile to God—anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

- The world does not know God or His people (1 John 3:1).
- The world hates true believers because it hated Christ first (John 15:18-19).
- Satan discipulates those who walk in the world; Jesus discipulates those born again.

As Phil Walker noted, when our affections are set on the world, they cannot be set on God. “No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). Born-again Christians walk differently—we walk in light, not darkness. Persecution and opposition can even be evidence we are shining as lights in a dark place.

**Application:** Examine your loves. What master do you serve? Do your daily choices, entertainment, ambitions, and conversations point to Christ or to the world? Romans 12:2 commands us: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Cling to God's Word—Satan has no foothold where Scripture saturates the heart.

## 2. The Desires of the Flesh Are of the World

All that is in the world—the desires (lusts) of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world (v. 16). This mirrors the temptation in Genesis 3: Eve saw the fruit (eyes), desired it (flesh), and took it in prideful rebellion.

- **Desires of the flesh:** Sensual appetites and sins listed in Galatians 5:19-21 (sexual immorality, impurity, idolatry, enmity, jealousy, drunkenness, etc.). These are evident everywhere in culture.
- **Desires of the eyes:** Covetousness, craving what we see—materialism, greed, and visual temptations.
- **Pride of life:** Boasting in self, possessions, status, or achievements—Satan’s lie that we can live independently of God.

These are not neutral; they oppose the Spirit (Galatians 5:17). Christ perfectly resisted these temptations for us. Through union with Him by faith, we die to the world and are made new.

**Application:** If you find yourself indulging in these, bring it to God and fellow believers. Sanctification is a process—desires shift over time as we grow in Christ. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). Maturing believers struggle less with sin as their affections are increasingly shaped by the gospel.

## 3. The World Is Passing Away

“The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (v. 17). This present evil age is temporary (Revelation 21:1-4). A new heaven and new earth are coming—no more tears, death, or pain. But for those who remain in unbelief and worldliness, judgment awaits (Revelation 21:8).

Doing God’s will is not how we *earn* eternal life—it is the fruit of those united to Christ by faith. True believers persevere genuinely (though not perfectly) because God preserves them.

**Application:** Where are the gaps between your profession and your loves? Tighten the belt of truth in those areas. Bring raw affections, temptations, and sins into the light before God. Confess, repent, and rest in Christ as your righteousness and power for holiness. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life—no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

**Close:** Brothers and sisters, examine your loves today. A heart changed by the gospel is a life changed by the gospel. The world and its lusts are fading, but the one who does God’s will abides forever. Let us pray for the Spirit to expel worldly love by the superior power of affection for Christ (as Thomas Chalmers so beautifully described in *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*). May we walk as those who are not of this world but chosen out of it for God’s glory.

### Condensed Sermon Notes:

**Title:** Do Not Love the World – 1 John 2:15-17

**Points:**

1. **What Is the World?** – The spiritual realm and system in opposition to God (Satanic, hostile to Christ and His people).
  - Not creation or people (whom we are called to love).
  - If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.
2. **The Desires of the Flesh Are of the World** – Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life (Genesis 3 pattern).
  - These oppose the Spirit and reveal the fallen heart.
  - Christ resisted them perfectly; we find victory in union with Him.
3. **The World Is Passing Away** – Temporary, but those who do God's will (evidence of salvation) abide forever.
  - Grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Persevere by the Spirit.

**Key Application:** Examine your affections and close the gaps by bringing everything into the light before God. Cling to Scripture. Rest in Christ.

*Recommended Resources (Reformed):*

- John Calvin's Commentary on 1 John 2:15-17.
- Matthew Henry's Commentary on 1 John 2.
- John MacArthur sermons on 1 John 2:15-17 (Grace to You).
- Thomas Chalmers, *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*.