

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 9- Love Not the World

66. Part 1

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Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to begin to look at what John taught about not loving this present world. So, let's turn in our Bibles and let's read **1 John 2:15-17** together:

15 Do not love the world nor 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 lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Now this part of Scripture is one of the most interesting sections of all the New Testament. In these three verses- the Apostle John give us some of the most practical information and instruction that is invaluable to every single believer in Jesus Christ. However- in my own personal experience as a believer- the majority of the times that I have heard these three verses preached or taught- they have been rejected, warped, explained away, and even outright ignored- and only a few times in my entire Christian experience have I heard these three verses actually explained and defended.

Like all Scripture- my opinion doesn't even come into play in these three verses and neither does yours. It really doesn't matter how we fell about these verses, and it really doesn't matter what we think they mean- all that really matters is what John meant when he wrote them and what the Holy Spirit meant when He inspired them.

So, Lord, willing, over the next several broadcasts- I will endeavor to get to the root of what John says here and what the Holy Spirit inspired him to write.

First of all, let's agree that what John wrote here was not a suggestion. Verse 15 begins with an Apostolic command to all believers everywhere to:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world...

So, *whatever* we glean from this study- we must glean this: God Almighty is instructing us here through the Apostle John for us to not love the world and to not love the things that are in the world.

And right after he tells us not to love the World or the things that are in the world- John gives us a very clear reason as to *why* we are not to do this-

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

Now John said here, "*anyone*". Now "anyone" means you and me. "Anyone" is every person who is saved. You see, lost people can love the world all that they want to- and because they are lost- and loving the world will not in any way affect them or make them *more* lost. But loving the world, John says, is deadly to a believer- so therefore it matters whether *we* love the world or not. So, if we love the world, or if we love the things that are in the world- then John says here that the Love of God is not in us. So, I would suggest to you that this is very serious.

Next, we must agree that in verse 16, that there are three things that are in the world that John says are the root of why loving them causes the love of God to not be in us.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

So, it is these three things:

1. The lust of the flesh
2. The lust of the eyes
3. The boastful pride of life

These three things that John says are the real culprit here. And Lord

willing, over the next several broadcasts- we will go over just what these three things are and just how- by God's help- we can avoid loving them.

Now you may not realize this- but from just what I have already said so far in this one broadcast- we have already learned quite a bit about this issue here. So let me review with you what we have learned so far. We have already learned that true Christians do not love the world, nor do they love the things that are in the world because of four reasons:

1. God commands it
2. Because of our love for God
3. Because all that is in the world opposes God
4. Because of our eternal; perspective

So, after John has encouraged his readers about the forgiveness of their sins; and their intimacy with God; and what sonship is all about; and what true victory is all about in the first 14 verses of Chapter 2- the Apostle now turns his attention to an exhortation against loving the world and loving the things that are in the world.

So, in these three verses- John gives us four aspects of this command not to love the world nor love the things that are in the world.

1. **Do not love**

Now the way that this Greek phrase, "**Do not love**" is constructed here in verse 15 shows us that this is what is called an "imperative" command. Now an imperative command is opposed to a passive command. This phrase, "**Do not love**" is a command by the Creator and Owner of the universe to every single soul who has been saved.

And as I said before- this is not a suggestion. This verse does not say, "*Cut back on your love for the world and reduce your love for the things of this world*". This verse does not say, "*Put your love for the world and the things for the world on hold until after Church and then pick them back up again*". No, this imperative command states that believers cannot and should not and must not love the world nor can they love the things that are in the world. Ever. In any way. At all.

Now right off jump street- only born again people will even seek to obey this command because frankly only born again people love Jesus

enough to obey Him. Lost people don't love Jesus. Lukewarm and Backslid people don't love Jesus- that is proven by the fact that they do not obey Jesus. Jesus said if you do not obey Him- then you really don't love Him. All people like that- are just talkers.

As I have said many times- if Jesus is not worthy of your service; if Jesus hasn't earned your obedience; and if Jesus isn't entitled to your surrender- then why would He be worthy of your love? If you don't think enough of Jesus to do what He says- don't try to convince me that you love Him- because the Bible says that you don't.

Now lost people are more than happy to acknowledge Jesus; they are proud to tip their hat to Him; they feel real good about attending Church on Easter and at Christmas or when somebody dies; they are really excited about throwing a quarter in the plate; they acknowledge that God exists- but they certainly do not love Jesus enough to obey Him- especially when it will revolutionize their lives and cause them to alter the way they live.

Lost people and lukewarm people and backslid people are fine with God as long as God stays up there and leaves them alone. But when God has the audacity to make demands on their lives; when God expects obedience; when God exercises His ownership rights over all His Creation- that is when lost people and lukewarm and backslid people get real uncomfortable real quick.

And then you can hear them cry out, *"That's legalism!"* at even the slightest mention of our duty and obligation and responsibility and joy as believers to follow Jesus and obey Him. You can watch them head for the high ground when you talk about things like denying self and crucifying flesh; and mortifying the deeds of our bodies and to love not the world.

These people will stand in line all night long in order to be healed or to get a "word from God" or to be blessed or to get some new thing from God. But when it comes to any interest at all in deep, serious, Bible Studies or actually denying their flesh that loves the world- the FBI won't be able to find them.

And you know- we can white wash this all that we want to and make as many excuses for them as we want to, beloved- but the bottom line is that the reason that these people have no love for the things of God; the reason that they do not care one whit for Biblical holiness or for those

things that bring honor to Jesus Christ is because they do not love God; they are not saved; they are still lost; they are yet in their sins.

You see, dear friends- the Bible says that only genuinely saved people have both the will and the power to do God's good Pleasure. The rest only want to do what is right in their own eyes.

So, in order to even more clearly draw the line between those who serve God and those who only talk about it- the Apostle John gives us this powerful and earthshaking command-

Do not love the world nor the things in the world...

Now once these Words came out of God's Mouth; once these Words were written down by this Apostle; once these inspired Words were included in the Canon of Scripture- these Words became a *requirement* for all believers. In other words- the struggle to obey this Command right here is one of John's 10 tests of true Salvation because these tests are able to discern between who is truly born again and who is simply deceived.

Now as we have already studied, John has already taught us that no one can say that they are saved unless they are honestly struggling against the lusts of their flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Holy Scripture in their daily lives- all to the Glory of God. And while that struggle is certainly not sinless- it must be honest.

And John then went on to teach that no one can say that they are a true Christian unless they also love all the brethren. And now John adds this third measurement or this third test and says that unless we do not love the world and unless we do not love the things that are in the world- we are not truly born from above.

Now some would say, "*But, Brother Blair- I thought we were saved by Grace through Faith and not by works*". And that is absolutely true- Salvation is a Sovereign Work of God alone and is accomplished without any assistance or cooperation from Man in any way. So, no religious works or the keeping of religious sacraments or partaking in religious ceremonies can save us. But we must understand that this requirement here about not loving the world is not about how a man gets saved- it is about how a man knows if he is truly been saved. This command is for those who are already saved.

No loving the world would never make anybody good enough to be saved in a million years- but all truly saved people will nevertheless struggle to cease their love for the world out of the fact that they have already been saved.

So, this is not a method by which we earn our way to Heaven, dear friends- no, no, no- this is just another wonderful benefit of genuine Salvation- that the dominating power that satan had over us when we were lost has been broken and we are now free to love God and enjoy Him forever. And one of the things that hinders us from doing that is the fallen world and the things that are in this fallen world.

Now like all Commands from God- this verse is for all and is binding upon all. It isn't that *some* saved people do not love the world while others who are equally saved do love the world- no- that's not how this works at all. This Command is for all believers, and it is binding upon all believers and all believers will be held accountable by how we obeyed or disobeyed this Command.

Now notice something very interesting here. John doesn't say that we are to remove ourselves from the world- only that we are not to love the world. And this brings up a very important concept to remember. God has told us that we are to dwell in this evil and fallen world and to live here and work here and to occupy here until He returns and we are to influence this wicked world and to be salt and light to this dark and dreary world- precisely because we do not act or think or behave like those who have no hope and at the same time that we are doing all of that- we are also told not to be a part of the sinful world. Now that may seem like a contradiction- but it is not.

Many times, the line between living here and occupying here and being a part gets blurred. Many times, we stray too far into being a part of the world and at other times we do not do enough to influence our world for Jesus.

So, this is a struggle and something that we need to pray about and talk about and meditate on and to help one another achieve this and hold one another accountable to. But let me say to you that the struggle is worth it because God is glorified and so this struggle to be obedient to all that God has said will force you to your knees and it will compel you to seek God and it will place your nose in the Book and it will cause you to seek counsel and it will make you willing to pray.

You know- there was a time in Christian history when this concept of not loving the world was misunderstood and many in the Church stepped away from the world altogether. All around the world- Christians became monks and they completely left society and the evils of the world so that they could fast and pray and seek God and worship Him without the interference of the sinful world. But while we can periodically do that- history has taught us that it was a mistake to think we could live that way long term- and so God did not honor that concept. It is fine to temporarily steal away too fast and pray and seek after God for a season- but then we are told to come right back and step back into the trenches and fight alongside our brothers and sisters.

We must remember, dear friends- that God did not call us to be safe and secure. God called us to holy and faithful and so we must get strong, and we must stay strong and then we must engage this present evil world as ambassadors for Jesus Christ without loving it.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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