

Love Not the World

by Philip Powell

We must not love the world, but rather love God, as the two are mutually exclusive.

Duration: 9:37

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 12:2, Galatians 1:4, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15, 1 John 5:19

Topics: "Worldly Love", "Godly Affection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the apparent contradiction between two Bible verses: 1 John 2:15, which advises not to love the world, and John 3:16, which states that God loved the world. The preacher explains that this is not a contradiction but a paradox, as the Bible is full of paradoxes that present real truths. The sermon emphasizes that while the Bible contradicts every aspect of life outside of Christ, it never contradicts itself. The preacher also highlights the importance of loving the Father instead of the world, as what we love will shape us.

Transcript

1 John chapter 2, verse 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

The same writer seems to contradict this statement in the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3, verse 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish. Christ Himself.

May God bless you. 1 John chapter 2, verse 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The same writer seems to contradict this statement in the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3, verse 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

However, love not the world and for God so loved the world is not a contradiction. It's a paradox. That is, an apparent contradiction which actually presents a real truth.

In this age of the dumbing of the human mind and the destroying of good speech, the distinction between a paradox and a contradiction is often misunderstood by preachers and others. The Bible is full of paradoxes, but it never contradicts itself. Yet it does contradict every aspect of life outside of Christ.

As a Bible college student back in the late 1950s, I recall the principal shocking the class one morning by saying, the Bible is full of contradictions. In fact, it is one big contradiction from beginning to end. He then went on to explain that the word contradiction is derived from contra, meaning against, plus diction, a word.

The Bible and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ are words against worldly life and the world system. Of course, John 3.16 is talking about the world of men and women and boys and girls. God loves that world.

And He loved it so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die to bring us to Himself. The world of 1 John 2.15 is the system where sin reigns and Satan rules as the Bible so graphically declares. 1 John 5.19 And we know that we are of God and the whole world lies in wickedness.

It is on account of the intrinsic wickedness of the world system that we are commanded not to love it. In fact, our text makes it clear that a defining factor of our being a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is that we do not love the world. The latter part of 1 John 2.15 If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

So John says we cannot contain two loves at the same time. Love for God and love for the world are mutually exclusive. To be perfectly blunt, you cannot be a Christian if you love the world.

Paul agrees with John. In Romans 5, he writes, The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us a Christian when He enters my life.

In that moment, the life of God is dispensed to me and also the love of God. This is the saving grace of the Holy Spirit that brings regeneration or the new birth. The change is definite.

God's love enters and worldly love departs. Of course, I must thereafter cooperate with the Holy Spirit as His sanctifying grace continues to work in my life. In the context, John tells us what worldly love really is.

1 John 2, verses 16-17 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 passes away and the lust thereof. But he who does the will of God abides forever.

If we truly love God, we will be controlled by Him and by our love for Him. If we love the world, we become controlled by lust and by pride. Lust, according to John, expresses itself in two areas.

There are three things that distinguish worldly love. First, fleshly lust. Secondly, visual lust.

And thirdly, the pride of life. The word flesh means the earthly or sensuous nature of man apart from divine influence. It is prone to sin and opposed to God.

Lust is a desire, craving or longing for that which is forbidden. The only other place in the Bible where the expression lust of the flesh appears is in Galatians 5 where Paul provides us with the key to victorious living and warns about the awful alternative. Galatians 5.16 This I say then, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary, the one to the other. So that you cannot do the things that you want to do.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Paul then lists the works of the flesh which start with a catalogue of prohibited sexual activity, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, that is licentiousness and profligate living. These are not the only sins of the flesh, but they do head the list.

Elsewhere, Paul tells us that sexual sin is different from all other sins because it is a sin against one's own body. 1 Corinthians 6.18 Flee fornication, he says. Every sin that a man does is outside the body.

But he that commits fornication sins against his own body. Our Lord taught that the look of lust is equal to the sin of adultery. Matthew 5.28 But I say unto you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The eye is the lamp of the soul. Visual impact is more powerful than audible impact. The image remains longer and is not easily removed by a deliberate act of the will, especially if it is graphic.

John's reference to the lust of the eyes being linked to the lust of the flesh is significant and is probably both literal and metaphoric. With the ideas of the natural eyes and the eyes of the mind, that is, the faculty of knowing, Jesus said, The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, your eye is single or sound, your whole body shall be full of light.

But if your eye is evil, bad or diseased, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. The lust of the eyes renders the knowledge that is acquired through them destructive.

This issues in the pride of life, that is, empty braggart talk or boasting. The online Bible that is based on Dr. Strong's concordance suggests that this is an insolent and empty assurance that trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights. What a powerful description of today's world and of the worldly church that masquerades as God's people.

What a contrast this is to the humble and contrite followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who are distinguished by their love of the Father. You see, the two are a whole world apart. The love of the world makes the world what it is.

And the love of the Father makes the true followers of Christ what they are. Why? Because what we love will shape us until we become like it. That's why the church today is so worldly.

If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. God bless you.

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