

**DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD**

1 John 2:15-27 (Key Verse: 15)

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*

In the past two weeks, we have been thinking about our **fellowship with God**. (1:3) We have learned that to have **fellowship with God**, we must confess our sins sincerely to Jesus. Then He will bring us out of darkness into the light of God. (1:6,9; 2:1-2) We have also learned that to have fellowship with God is to personally know God, and live joyfully within His presence. (1:3, 5) Lastly, we have learned that if we have fellowship with God, we will no longer live in sin. Instead, we will obey God's word (2:5), live as Jesus did (2:6) and love our brothers and sisters, just as Jesus loved us. (2:9-11) The question is, however, why is it so hard to maintain fellowship with God? Why does God's presence so easily fade from our hearts.....And why so many times are we left feeling cut off from God? Yes, it is because of our sin. All sin breaks our fellowship with God. (2:1) Yet, in today's passage, we will learn that there is one specific sin that we believers commit the most. A sin which is the most damaging to our fellowship with God. That sin is our love for the world. I sincerely pray that through today's message, the Lord may open our spiritual eyes to our hidden love for the world! May He also help us understand why love for the world is such a great sin and how it destroys our fellowship with God. May this lead us to sincere repentance before Jesus Christ.....so we can restore our fellowship with our heavenly Father. Amen!

Let's look at verse 15. Since it is our key verse, can we please read it together? Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. In the previous two chapters, Apostle John told us that all sin breaks our fellowship with God. (1:6; 2:1) Yet, here, for the first time.....he mentions the specific sin.....and the most prevalent sin that destroys our fellowship with God. This sin is **love for the world**. But what exactly does it mean to love the world? Does it mean we must not love God's creation? Not at all!! When John writes: "do not love the world" he is warning us to not love the secular and sinful ways of this fallen world. The secular and sinful way of this world can shortly be defined as **to live without God**. It is to reason and talk and behave as if God does not exist.....It is to live our lives as if God's will and word are unimportant. Whether it relates to our studies, our work, financial security, leisure, marriage, our future or family. In the secular world, there simply is no room for God.....or should we rather say, in the secular world there is no love for the Father. All that matters is people's selfish cravings and how to gratify them.

Now that we know what the word "world" refers to; what does it mean to *LOVE the world*? It means to conform to the patterns of the secular world. It is to think like worldly people think, it is to talk like worldly people talk, it is to embrace what worldly people embrace and do exactly what worldly people do..... In a word, it is to live like people who do not know God or who stand against God. **For example**, one of the secular ways of the world is that dating and premarital sex is the way of life. Yet, this stands in direct opposition to what God tells us in His word.....to Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. (1 Cor 6:18) *In this context, we can say that to love the world means to conform to this sinful way of the world by actually dating or engaging in sexual immorality before marriage.* **Another example** of the secular way of life is to actively love and pursue money. According to worldly people, not only is there nothing wrong with wanting to get rich and to love money but it is actually respected and encourage. Yet again, this stands in direct opposition to what God tells us in His word.....that those who want to get rich fall into temptation..... and a trap..... and into many foolish and harmful desires..... that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Tim 6:9-10) *In this context, we can say that to love the world means to conform to this sinful way of the world by only studying and working to get rich.....instead of simply following God's plan and purpose for our lives.* We can list many other examples of the secular world, relating to our cravings for the things of the world, the lust of our eyes and the active pursuit of worldly success,

fame and security. **The point is, however, to love the world is to conform to any of the secular ways of this fallen world.**

Now we know that for unbelievers, these secular ways of the world.....are the norms they live by; right! For they do not know God or enjoy fellowship with God. So they naturally love the world and everything in the world. But what about you and me? We are different from worldly people, right? Unlike them, we have the privilege of enjoying fellowship with our loving heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ. But is it possible that we also love the world as unbelievers do?

Yes, it is absolutely possible!! Otherwise, Apostle John would not have warned us not to do so. When we are honest with ourselves, we will find.....despite being a believer.....we easily love the world and the things of the world.....just like worldly people. Just like worldly people we easily conform to the patterns of the secular world. We value and pursue the very same things worldly people value and pursue. We reason and make decisions based on the same logic as worldly people. Though we know the Father and have personally met Jesus Christ, we behave and think as if He does not exist. **This all just boil down to pure unbelief, right!? That is why loving the world.....by conforming to its patterns..... is a sin that breaks our fellowship with God. For loving the world is deeply rooted in unbelief! Can you see how dangerous it is to love the world? Can you see how easily we fall in the trap of unbelief by conforming to patterns of this world? This is why Apostle John specifically mentions the sin of loving the world by name! It is the greatest threat to our fellowship with God.**

But how do we know whether we love the world or not? Fortunately, loving the world has specific side-effects in our lives. The first side effect of loving the world is that we naturally become hostile towards the ways of God. Jesus' half-brother, James, puts it like this: *You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.* (James 4:4 – NLT) Here we can see that when are friends of the world..... or in context of today's passage.....love the world or anything in the world..... then our hearts naturally becomes hostile to God. So much so that we get upset when the word of God challenges us to change our worldly ways.....or when the Holy Spirit challenges us to repent of our sin. Instead of humbly coming to Christ, we simply find an excuse to persist in our sinful ways. If this is something you can relate with, then it is sad to say that your fellowship with God was broken down by your love for the world. For the spiritual condition of your heart is hostile towards God.

The second side-effect of loving the world is that our hearts become increasingly occupied by cravings for the things of this world. Look at verse 16. (Read) *For everything in the world —the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life— comes not from the Father but from the world.* Lust is an irresistibly strong desire for sexual gratification. I am sure you have all experienced the gripping power of lust, right? It simply takes control of our heart and mind in a way we can hardly resist. This helps us understand how strong all the desires of the flesh are. Regardless whether it's just craving for sexual gratification or more broadly to gratify the all the sensual pleasures know to us. Also, we have a constant craving to enjoy or possess every beautiful thing we see. Things like clothes, nice cars, the latest gadgets.....even the beautiful sisters and handsome brothers on campus or at work. Again, these desires comes not from the Father but from the world. And just like lust so powerfully grips our hearts, so these worldly desires take over in our hearts and minds.....to the point that we cannot think about anything else but to gratify these cravings of the flesh. So much so, that instead of enjoying fellowship with God, either through prayer or His word, we can only think of how to gratify the cravings of our flesh. So we can see that these cravings are not from God, but from the world. If this is something you can relate with, then it is sad to say that your fellowship with God was broken down by your love for the world.

A third and last side-effect of loving the world, is the pride of life that occupies our heart. The New Living Translation says it better, referring to taking pride in our achievements and possessions. This too is not from the Father but are from the world. For when we take pride in our achievements and possessions we place our confidence in the stability of earthly things. Then just like worldly people we live for superiority over others, mostly by impressing others through outward appearances. We crave success and the constant accumulation of possessions to secure our life, just like worldly people. We also crave the status and power that wealth brings because this too will secure our earthly life. But this way of living....this way of thinking and craving after the things of the world is not from the Father, but from the world. (16b) The pride of life is a sin that destroys our fellowship with God!

The question is, what do we do if we can relate with any of these side-effects in our lives? Firstly, and as we have learned in the previous two weeks, we need to come to Jesus Christ, and sincerely confess our love for the world to Him. Jesus is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1:9) He will help us to restore our love for the Father and our fellowship with Him. Secondly, after sincere repentance, we need to stop loving the world by no longer conforming to the patterns of the secular way of life. But how? We need to be transformed by having the right view of this world. Look at verse 17. (Read) This world along with everything in the world that people crave are fading away. It is all temporary! Moreover God is storing it up for fire. They are being kept for the Day of Judgment, when Jesus will come again to destroy worldly people and the secular way of life. (2 Pet 3:7) If this is true, then why would we..... who have a living hope to spend eternity with God in His kingdom..... love this sinful world and the things of this sinful world!? It simply does not make any sense! Not only is it sinful to love the world or anything in the world, but unlike loving God, it is also has no eternal value. Indeed, when we have the right view of the world, we will stop loving it to instead pour our love out on the Father.

Through preparing this message, I have realized that I am guilty of loving the world. As far back as I can remember, I have always believed that the standard of measuring success in this world is material wealth and prosperity. Like any other man, I am eager to live a successful and prosperous life. That is why one of my greatest desires was to graduate from university so I can get a well-paying job that would enable me to live a financially secure and comfortable life. I believed, like any worldly person, that this would secure my life.

make me successful! And bring me the respect and status among my peers I so desperately craved for. But I have learned from the passage that this craving for worldly success.....the pride of life within me.....is not from the Father but from the world. And it sits in me, because I have conformed to the godless way of this secular world. Indeed, I have loved this world in unbelief.

I am not a wealthy man. I also don't have a secure job nor do I own fancy and luxury things. Consequently, whenever I meet with my friends or peers, my heart was deeply troubled. In fact, I always feel ashamed for not reaching the same level of financial prosperity as them. Indeed, this matter has been a thorn in my flesh ever since I matriculated, about 22 years ago. It has also caused friction between me and shepherdess Sarah. Because to sooth my ego, I always felt I need to be the main breadwinner in the house, not her. Most tragically, it has broken my fellowship with God over and over again. I sincerely repent of this. I sincerely repent of my love for the world. And pray that Jesus may forgive my sin of loving this world in unbelief and purify my heart from this unrighteousness. Indeed I want to be free from this love of the world that has hindered my fellowship with God. To instead be filled with love for the Father, so I can pursue His plan for my life according to His good will and purpose.

In conclusion: Just as our love for the Father sustains our fellowship with God.....so does our love for the world break our fellowship with God. Many believers think they can love both God and the world at the same time. But this is impossible. In today's passage Apostle John made it crystal clear that it: If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. It is one or the other; either we

love the world or we love the Father. Other believers deny that they love the world. Yet sadly, their hearts are hostile towards God's word and filled with the cravings for worldly things..... and the pride of life. Though they claim to have fellowship with God, they walk in darkness, and do not live by the truth. (1:6) What about us today? Let's not be like either of these kind of believers. Rather, let us be the kind that deeply thinks about our love for the world so we can sincerely repent before the Lord. To pour out our love of the Father and so enjoy wonderful fellowship with God

Of course, this is not always easy. If it was, we would do this at all times, right? Then how can we make sure to keep loving the Father instead of the world? Look at verse 24. (Read) As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. To remain in love with the Father, we need always, always come back to the gospel of Jesus Christ what we have heard from the beginning. God had every right to condemn and abandon each one of us, for loving the world instead of loving Him as our Father. Yet, instead He sent His one and only Son into this fallen world. To die a brutal death on the cross at the hands of evil men. To become the atoning sacrifice and wash away our shameful sin with His precious blood. This proves God's love for sinners like us. And we are reminded of His love, every time we come to the cross. It is then that our love for the Father is also renewed, so we feel no need to love this perishing world.

My sincere prayer for each of you is to stop loving the world; for it is really bad for you. May the Lord Jesus help each one of us to sincerely repent and so restore fellowship with our heavenly Father! Amen. `