

Love Not the World: 1 John 2:12-17

Scriptures for Today:

1 John 2:12-17 *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 15 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. 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. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Introduction

The title of the lesson is "Love Not the World. "

[QUESTION] What does it mean to have fellowship with someone?

- When we hear the word *fellowship*, we might think about gathering after church, sharing a meal, or spending time together.
- Those things can be part of fellowship, but fellowship is deeper than just spending time with someone or being in the same room.
- Fellowship means that we share something in common. We have companionship and are walking together around a common truth and purpose.
- Christian fellowship is built upon the truth of Jesus Christ.
- We have fellowship with one another because we share the same Saviour, believe the same gospel, possess the same eternal life, and follow the same Word of God.

When we are all unified in our goals to preach the gospel. When we are unified in our behavior, in our conduct. When we love one another. We have a strong bond. We have true fellowship. That is one of the reasons why John is writing this letter.

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1 John 1:3-4 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

- John wanted these believers to have fellowship with him and with the other apostles.
- More importantly, he wanted them to enjoy fellowship with God the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- That's where true joy comes from.
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- It is important to understand the difference between a relationship and fellowship.
- The word "Relationship" is not found in the King James bible. But we know that our relationship with God is established the moment we believe in Jesus.
- **Galatians 3:26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
- If we have believed on Jesus Christ, God is our Father, we are his children, and other believers are our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- That relationship is permanent because the life we have received is everlasting.
- But having a relationship does not guarantee that we will maintain fellowship.

- Two people can belong to the same family while becoming distant from one another. They do not stop being related, but they may stop walking together, communicating, or stop going in the same direction.
- That's what sin does. It causes separation, it causes division, it causes broken fellowship.

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1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

- 1 Corinthians 5 speaks of a man within the church that was committing fornication.
- Because of that sin, the church was commanded to not keep company with such an one. Don't even eat with that person.
- That fellowship had to be broken. Why? So that man could see his error, be sorrowful over his sin, and have fellowship be restored.
- Just because fellowship was broken didn't make that man unsaved. He was still a child of God. He was still a brother in Christ. But the companionship and the strong bond had been severed for a time. The result is a loss of joy, a loss of happiness, and an invitation for turmoil, distress and correction from God.
- The same principle applies to our fellowship with God.
- Once we have believed on Christ, we do not stop being God's children when we sin. But sin interferes with our closeness, our walk, and our fellowship with him.

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1 John 1:5-7 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- Because God is light and there is no darkness in Him, we cannot walk in darkness while claiming that we are walking closely with God.
- [EXAMPLE] If I come to church and act very spiritual, if I verbally affirm the preaching and yell amen to this and amen to that. But then I go home and I'm a different person. I'm prideful, I treat my family badly, I go out and get drunk...The Bible says that I lie and the truth is not in me. There is no true fellowship there with the Father. That doesn't mean I'm unsaved. It means I do not have fellowship.
- That is why John says at the beginning of chapter 2:

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1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

- John's desire is that they would not sin, because sin damages fellowship and takes away from the joy that God wants us to have.
- But if we do sin, Jesus Christ remains our advocate with the Father.
- An advocate is someone who pleads the cause of or defends someone.
- That's what Jesus does for us.

- So John wants us to have fellowship, but fellowship is not something that always remains.
- The people we walk with can change. The things we share in common can change. Our desires, priorities, and direction can change.
- We can begin walking more closely with people who do not share the truth, values, or direction that God has given us.
- If you start spending time with two different groups that are moving in opposite directions, you cannot have true fellowship with both. You eventually have to make a decision on who you're going to go with.

[QUESTION]

- As we look at these verses, I want you to think about **who are you truly in fellowship with?**
- Who shares your heart, who is shaping your desires, who is influencing your decisions? Which direction are you walking?
- John wants believers to enjoy fellowship with the Father and with Jesus Christ. But in this passage, he warns us about another affection that will pull our hearts in the opposite direction. He warns us about affection for the world.
- Let's look at three points that will help us to stay in fellowship with God and believers.

1. REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST (VV. 12–14)

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1 John 2:12-14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. **13** I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. **14** I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

- In these verses John reminds the people who they are, what they already possess, and why he is writing to them.
- He begins with assurance: their sins are forgiven.
- Notice that he addresses them as little children. Throughout this letter, John uses that expression affectionately for believers under his spiritual care.
- He cares for them, he wants them to avoid sin, but he doesn't want them to forget their standing before God.
- They are God's children and their sins have been forgiven. He doesn't say that they have to wait till they die to see if their sins will be forgiven. Or that they must remain faithful to receive forgiveness.
- He says, Your sins are forgiven you. That is something they already possess.
- But why are they forgiven? **"for his name's sake"**
- They are not forgiven because of their service, obedience, church attendance, baptism, their turning away from sin – they are forgiven because of Jesus Christ.
- Next he addresses the fathers.

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1 John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning.

- These may be older believers physically, spiritually, or both. John doesn't explain the categories of people he is addressing in detail. What matters is what John says about them.

- **“Ye have known him that is from the beginning.”**
- These were believers who had walked with God, learned his Word, and grown in their knowledge of Christ.

[Application] That’s who you want to spend time around...

- The world is always offering something new, but mature believers have learned that nothing the world offers can compare with knowing the one who is **“from the beginning.”**

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1 John 2:13 ...I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one...

- Next John addresses the young men. He says they have overcome the wicked one.
- Who is the wicked one? The devil.
- The wicked one wants to deceive us, tempt us, and draw our hearts away from God.
- But John doesn’t describe them as helpless victims. He says ye have overcome.
- How do we as humans who are weak and frail overcome an angel that is far more powerful than any human that has ever lived?

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1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

- We do not overcome Satan through our own strength.
- We overcome because the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world.

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1 John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

- John returns back to the little children and says you have known the Father.
- Through faith in Jesus Christ, they have been brought into the family of God.
- Isn’t that awesome that you get to call the Creator of all things your Father? And you can know Him.
- He is not distant. He doesn’t disappear. He doesn’t fail us.

- Then in verse 14, John is going to go through these groups again.

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1 John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

- This time he says he has written.
- He has written unto the fathers because they have known him that is from the beginning.
- He has written to the young men because they have overcome the wicked one, but this time he adds: “Because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.”

- John is reiterating the point that he presently writes and has written to them in the past. He's building his case to present a powerful truth.
- Let's read all of these verses together and see how it builds up...

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1 John 2:12-15 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 15 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.

- Because your sins are forgiven, because you know the Father, because the Word of God abides in you, and because you have overcome the wicked one – do not love the world. Do not turn your heart toward something else. Do not break fellowship with God so you can have fellowship with this world.

2. RECOGNIZE WHAT THE WORLD REALLY IS (VV. 15–16)

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1 John 2:15-16 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. **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.

- John gives these believers a direct command: “Love not the world”
- What does that mean exactly? Does that mean we should hate everyone in the world?
- No. John 3:16 says “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...”
- God loves the people of this world enough to make a way for them to be saved from hell.
- We should also love them enough to give them the gospel.
- So what does it mean when it says “Love not the world”, it also says “neither the things that are in the world”
- Verse 16 explains that more...

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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.

- To love the world is to set our affection upon what the world lusts after and allow it to shape what we desire, pursue, and live for.
- What does the world lust after and live for? What are people always pursuing? Money, fame, power, pleasure.
- Those things are presented as though they are the keys to satisfaction and happiness.
- The world tells us that it's good to satisfy our flesh however we want.
- Understand that the world has rejected and rebelled against its Creator.

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Isaiah 24:4-6 The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, the world languisheth *and* fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. **5** The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. **6** Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

- What has the world done?
- It has transgressed God's laws.
- It has changed God's ordinance.
- It has broken God's covenant.
- It has defiled the earth through sin and brought itself under a curse.
- Yet this is the same world that wants to tell us how to live, what morality should be, what should make us happy.
- A world that has rejected God's authority should not become the authority over the life of a child of God. Look at verse 15 again...

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1 John 2:15 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.

- John is showing us that these are two opposing loves.
 - He is not saying that God stops loving us if we turn our affection toward the world.
 - He is saying that love for the world and love for the Father cannot be in our hearts at the same time.
- [EXAMPLE] If you as a believer say you hate the things of this world, and you hate sin, you hate the lusts that draw you away from God. Yet, you continue to allow the world to draw you away. You continue to go after the things in the world. That shows that you actually love the world and despise God.
- You have to make a decision in your life. Do I love God, or do I love satisfying my flesh with the things of the world? You can't love both. You might think you do, but you do not.

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Luke 16:13 No servant 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.

- If you have fellowship with people that despise God's commandments, If you hang out with people that take pleasure in wrongdoing. That love to indulge in the lusts of the world. If you continue to have that bond and connection with the world, you cannot have fellowship with God.

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

- John tells us exactly how the world tries to capture our affection.

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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 lust of the flesh is the desire to satisfy ourselves without regard for what God says.
- The world tells us that if something feels good or makes us happy, we should be able to do it.
- Not every physical desire is sinful. The problem is when our desires control us or lead us outside the boundaries God has established.

- The lust of the eyes is sinful desire produced by what we see.
- We see what someone else possesses, how someone else lives, or how someone else looks, and we begin to covet it.
- The pride of life is the desire to be lifted up. To be recognized and praised by the world.
- “Look what I have, Look what I have done, Look at how important I am”
- John brings these three things together and says they are **“not of the Father, but are of the world.”**
- These desires do not draw us closer to the Father. They pull our affection in the opposite direction.
- John is saying you’re forgiven of your sins, you know the father, you have overcome the wicked one...
- Don’t go back to the things that you have been brought out of.

3. LIVE FOR WHAT WILL LAST (V. 17)

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

- John gives us one final reason not to love the world: it will not last.
- Notice that he describes it in the present tense. It’s currently passing away.
- Everything is fading, the possessions wear out, the pleasures end, physical beauty fades, power eventually belongs to someone else.
- Think about all the things that you desired to have in the past and you finally got those things. Where are they now? After a few years, they end up forgotten, broken, or thrown away.
- That is why setting your affection upon the world is the worst investment you can ever make.

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Colossians 3:1-2 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **2** Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

- Our attention, time, strength, and resources should be directed toward things that have eternal value.
- But notice the contrast here at the end of verse 17...

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

- John is not teaching that we earn everlasting life by doing good works.
- He began this passage by saying that their sins were already forgiven **“for his name’s sake.”**
- But because we possess eternal life, we should live according to the will of God instead of wasting our lives pursuing what is passing away.

Conclusion

- Earlier I asked the question of who are you truly in fellowship with?
- Who are you yoked up with, who are your companions, what direction are they walking?
- If you are in fellowship with this world, your fellowship with God will be broken. You will not have joy, and peace, and comfort in this life.
- Do not try to love both God and the world at the same time. It will not work.
- Remember who you are in Christ. Recognize what the world is and refuse to allow it to possess your heart. Live for what will last and walk in fellowship with the Father. Let’s pray