



Christ or Culture? (1 John 2:12-17)

Christians across the world are experiencing a tug-o-war for their affections. Today we're challenged to answer this question: *Will we follow Christ or Culture?*

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

Encouraging Words to Different Maturity Levels

1 John 2:12-13 (CSB) I am writing to you, little children, since **your sins have been forgiven on account of his name**. I am writing to you, fathers, because **you have come to know the one who is from the beginning**. I am writing to you, young men, because **you have conquered the evil one**.

Children Forgiven

When we REALLY BELIEVE that our **sins have been fully forgiven**, our lives will be transformed! Remember the story of the loving Father and prodigal son? Look at the Father's response to the son's return home!

Luke 15:21-24 ...'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.' **'But the father** told his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and **let's celebrate with a feast**, because **this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!**' So they began to celebrate.

✓ Oh how that son must have felt! Guilty...yet FORGIVEN!!!! Unworthy...yet CELEBRATED!!!!

Fathers Know Jesus

The longer your relationship lasts with a friend or a spouse, the better you know them. So too, those who have walked with Jesus for a long time, know His heart and start to act/react as He would. (The apostle Paul writes that followers of Jesus are being comforted into the image of Jesus - see Rom 8:29).

Young Men Defeat the Devil

These **young men** are no longer children in the faith, but not yet fathers in the faith, but they are maturing, passionate followers of Jesus who submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7), and are prepared to stand against the devil's schemes (Eph 6:11) by living in faith, speaking the truth, and trusting what Jesus says.

🔍 Revelation mentions those who stand in the face of the Devil's deception of the world.

Revelation 12:11 **They conquered him** [Satan] **by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony**; for they did not love their lives to the point of death.

1 John 2:14 I have written to you, children, because **you have come to know the Father**. I have written to you, fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, **God's word remains in you**, and you have conquered the evil one.

Much of this is similar, but some of it is different.

- Children (young believers) aren't just forgiven; they also **know the Father**.
- Once again, John notes that **fathers have come to know the one who is from the beginning**.
- John encourages the young men conquering the devil with these words: **you are strong** and that **God's word remains in you**. When **God's word** - the message of Jesus and the truths of God - is permeating our lives and influencing our daily decisions, we can stand against the enemy too!

🔍 **Do you value God's words found in the Scriptures?** When is the last time you opened the Scriptures and read them? **Does God's word remain in you?** And what's your EVIDENCE for your answer?

Follow Christ over Culture

1 John 2:15 Do **not love the world** or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

How can God love the world yet tell us not to (Remember John 3:16)? **World** comes from the Greek **kosmos** (pr. kōse-mōse). This word, like many others, means different things in different contexts. Some words have different meanings and the context helps clarify the meanings.

KOSMOS/world...

1. can refer to **created universe with order, arrangement, & adornment**. This is where we get the word **cosmetics** from - to order, arrange, or adorn.
2. can refer to **people alienated from God**—how it is used in John 3:16 - God so loved 'the world'.¹
3. can refer to **cultural practices of godless society**.² - culturally acceptable worldview without God in the mix.

Simply Put: 'World' can mean

🔍 **Planet, People on the planet, Philosophy of the People on the Planet**

➡ John is speaking of **loving the cultural practices of godless society or the culture's = PHILOSOPHY.**

There is a contrast here: **Love of the world** versus **Love of the Father**. To love *the world* is **incompatible** with loving God. We must make a DECISION. **Will we love & follow our Culture or love & follow our Creator?**

Caught in the Cultural Drift?

1 John 2:16-17 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world with its lust is passing away, but **the one who does the will of God remains forever.**

Lust of the Flesh

The **lust of the flesh** is a REAL battle going on inside the believer - *our sinful desires versus our spiritual desires*. Paul gives a substantial list of actions and attitudes that are "fleshly".

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before —that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Lust of the Eyes

GOD gave us our eyes. These same incredible gifts that allow us to see millions of colors, and all the beauty and scenery that God has created - including the people we love! **Yet these same eyes can lead us to disobedience and discontentment.**

Pride in One's Possessions

- Some translate this as the **pride of life** [NAS, ESV, NIV], but the term for "life" is better understood as "possessions, property, livelihood",³ as the CSB & NET translate.
- Our homes, possessions, positions, & prestige are GIFTS from God. How it must sadden God when the stuff we own causes us to BOAST instead of BLESS, to be prideful instead of thankful.
 - Pride causes us to value our possessions above God and people. We really think we are somehow more important because of what we own...but one day that's going away...or you are.
 - **Know how to tell if you're prideful?** You glory in your stuff, your beauty, or your reputation.

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 106.

² Ibid, 507.

³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 558.

What's the PAYOFF?

1 John 2:17 And the world with its lust is passing away, but **the one who does the will of God remains forever.**

When we breathe our last, what's the end result?

Our culture is drifting away from God and one day those drifting away from God are going to be judged. Our desires of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life are one day, going to be no more. BUT... **the one who does the will of God remains forever.**

So, what's it gonna be? ***Christ or Culture?***

FEET 2 FAITH

- ➡ ***Live like you're forgiven!*** Are you? Ask God to help you live like it!
- ➡ ***Grow and Know Your Heavenly Father!*** Could it be that you don't feel close to God...because you never make time for Him? Get in the Scriptures and seek God's heart! Take a walk and TALK to Him!
- ➡ ***Stand up and Speak Up!*** Our world NEEDS passionate & pure believers to speak truth & point out the lies of the enemy.

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Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (973-0047), Jere & Darlene Burnette (673-1888), Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282), Jim & Derita Pinkard (229-834-4307), or Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717).