

## 1 John 2:15 - 17

### Pastoral Announcements:

- No more Sunday announcements... (events on chairs (and a few other places...))
- Couple things: VSB registrations, Youth fundraiser (youth serve? at "Serve at Selah Lunch")
- VBS registrations, let's go!!! Rainforest Falls! (image!?) Deadline = 30th (limited space...)
- Baby Dedication at 3rd service:
  - Josh and Keryssa Conley: Tristan (male, 2 yrs old) and Atalie (female, 10 months old)

Please open to 1 John chapter 2 (need a Bible? ...)

- Last time: Family Matters: Children... babies... youth... fathers... (poetic encouragement!)
- This time: A Christian's relationship with the world (at least 6 times in three verses...)

### Message Title: What in the World?

- Some folks use the phrase "what in the world?" all the time...
- See something you're confused by... (open a teenagers bedroom door and shut it... ha!)
- Hear something that shocks you... (I've been saying that a lot over the last few years)
- Open your bank account after many Amazon expenses... (did we really spend that much?)

This morning, the Apostle John is going to ask something even deeper...

- "what is the world? ...and what is it doing to your soul?"
- Spoiler alert, the ways of the world are not neutral.
  - ...it has a pull, and it is a lover competing for your heart.

In today's verses, John shows us the conflict, the temptations, and what's truly at stake...

- Competing Loves (verse 15)
- Worldly Pursuits (verse 16)
- Eternal Realities (verse 17)

Let's dive in...

### Read verses 15-17

- **PRAY**

### Competing Loves (verse 15)

V. 15 - Do not love the world or the things in the world.

- First off, John is not condemning creation itself. He's not condemning a surf at the beach when the waves are firing at sunset (did that relate in Texas?). How about some brisket!?
- Creation is a gift from God and "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it!" In n out, people!
- God made the world and God loves the people of the world... that He sent His only son!
- World (Kosmos) = "arrangement or order; earth or inhabitants of the earth; universe or arrangement of the stars; ungodly multitude or the fleeting affairs/things of the earth"
  - Cosmopolitan (a citizen of the world's sites or institutions)
  - Cosmetics (to bring order out of "chaos" ...hahaha!)
  - Cosmic significance (something with large scale significance...)

- What John is addressing *here in verse 15* is the **fallen world system**... (*independent of God*)
  - *...the values, priorities, and pleasures* all arrayed **in rebellion against God**.
  - *Genesis 11:4 - "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves" (organized rebellion led by Nimrod!)*
- Or **the things of the world...**
  - Think of all the **money and stardom** that goes into the *multi-trillion dollar industries of Hollywood, fashion, sports, cosmetics, retail, tourism, forms of advertising, etc...*
  - Not that you can't wear *stylish sunglasses, play football or enjoy hobbies*, but **check your life's goals** in relation to **your devotion to God**. **Which has your heart, truly???**
  - **Do you possess your things, or do they possess you?**
- Notice also that this command to **not love the world**, is about **affection, not just information**.
  - *John doesn't say, "Do not explore or enjoy the world."*
  - *He says, do not love the world*. This is a **heart-level** command. (*begins, in "here"*)
  - **Whatever captures the heart, shapes one's life...**
  - **"Guard your heart for out of it..." (Prov 4)**
  - **Love (Agapao)** = *"to welcome, be fond of, or love dearly; the highest committed love"*
  - (*not just friendly or feelings...*)
- But John speaks of a **deeper love** with a **connotation of devotion or even worship** at times...

John is saying **you CANNOT devote yourself** to **two competing kingdoms**. **Divided allegiance!**

- *2 Timothy 4:10 - "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world..." (exampled)*
- *Matthew 13:22 - "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful..."*
- And, **this isn't a new problem** just for the New Testament age...
- Listen to what **Elijah said on Mount Carmel** roughly 3,000 yrs ago...
- *1 Kings 18:21 - "Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.' But the people answered him not a word..."*
- Hebrew literally pictures **hobbling back and forth between two branches** (*twigs, crutches*)
- That's what **a divided heart looks like**. **Wobbling between two kingdoms... lukewarm (yuk!)**
- And *here's the thing about a divided heart*: **It doesn't happen overnight**.
  - *People drift spiritually long before they collapse publicly...*
  - *You don't wake up one morning* and say, *"Today I'm abandoning Christ for the world"*
  - Instead... **prayer** slowly fades; **compromise** becomes acceptable; **church gatherings** become optional; **entertainment feeds the heart** more than devotionals; etc.

**Beloved brethren**, this is a big deal... (*do not make light of this today - your flesh wants to!*)

**V. 15 - If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

- **Present tense** = **ongoing loves**... These two are **oil and water**. **Incompatible!**
- *In modern terms*, John is refuting the **squishy emerging seeker friendly** approach (*soft faith*)
  - *"No man can be said to be truly converted to Christ who has not bent his will to Christ. He may give intellectual assent to the claims of Christ and may have had emotional religious experiences; however, he is not truly converted until he has surrendered his will to Christ as Lord, Savior, and Master."* (Billy Graham)
- You **cannot claim to know God** and **simultaneously** **chase after the world's systems and ways**.

- James 4:4, CSB - "You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? **So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.**" (*I was guilty* in pursuit of the music scene (*not inherently bad*)... (*identity/worship*))
- **Israel was tempted as well, at every turn,** to *worship false gods all around*, but God called...
- Deuteronomy 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength**" (combat **idolatry!**)
- "Choose for yourselves, **as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!**" (Joshua 24:15)

Friends, the question is *not whether you've ever struggled with loving the world*. **We all have.**

- The question: **what are you doing about it? Do a love audit:** (*calendar, spending, materials*)
  - *Is there something (other than God) that consumes all of your thoughts, conversations?*
- Jesus made it clear "**you cannot serve two masters** for you will love one and hate the other..."
- Likewise: **Ekklesia = "Ek" (out of) + "Kaleo" (to call). The called out ones! Even hated!**

John writes **not to crush you to pieces** but to **urge you back home**. **The love of the Father!**

### **Worldly Pursuits (verse 16)**

V. 16 - **For all that is in the world...**

- It's *not enough* to say "**do not love 'all that is in' the world**" ...it must be **brought to specifics**. *John is not abstract* and breaks it down into **three categories**: ...and these three *aren't random categories of sins*. These are the **operating system of worldliness**.
- *Every temptation you have ever faced* fits within one of **these three world system buckets**:

First...

V. 16 - **The lust of the flesh** (*lust = not always sexual...*)

- **Epithumia tes sarkos** = "*the desires/cravings of bodily appetites/sinful nature*"
- **Desires (lusts)** are **not bad in and of themselves**... (*intimacy, belonging, joy, etc...*)
- **The needs of the flesh** in themselves are **not inherently evil** (*food, shelter, clothing, etc...*)
- But the **desires of the flesh** can become **quickly sinful**...
  - *Eating becomes gluttony; Resting, laziness; Intimacy, fornication... Drinking becomes drunkenness (and the world tells you to "if you feel it, it must be right... treat yourself")*
  - **Frank Sinatra's** best known song "**My Way**" - the "**Me monster!**"
- This is what John is speaking of. **Cravings of the fallen sinful nature... Evil passions.**
- And you know it... **The flesh is weak...** (*and pursues what is not good for us...*)
- **It's a war within that needs to be addressed....**
  - **Jesus** - The flesh "**profits nothing**" (John 6:63)
  - **Paul** - In the flesh there is "**no good thing**" (Rom. 7:18)
- **Romans 6:12, 13:14** - "**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts... but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh...**"

Second...

V. 16 - **The lust of the eyes**

- **Epithumia ton ophthalmon** = "*the desires/cravings triggered by what we see...*"
- The **eyes themselves are not evil**. Our **eyes are simply windows** to take in the world.
  - Have you ever said, "**Feast your eyes on this...**"?

- John here is dealing with the **sin of wanting** - **material, pleasure or possession**.
  - Remember, *Psalm 23* says, "The Lord is my shepherd, **I shall not want!**"
  - **Envy and covetousness...** - *Exodus 20:17* = "**you shall not covet!**"
- **An example of this...** that **brought defeat to God's people...** (articles from Jericho)
  - *Joshua 7:21* - "When **I saw** among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, **I coveted them and took them.**"
    - *Listen to his own confession:* "**I saw... I coveted... I took...**" Three verbs, in that order.
    - **David with Bathsheba** = the same thing...
- This is why **Social Media can be so spiritually destructive**. It's a **time sucking rolodex** of other people's often fake **highlight reels** which creates **lusting within you (algorithms know!)**
  - You **scroll for ten minutes** and you're convinced you need **a backyard pizza oven, a cold plunge tub...** (and, **if you don't have, not enough** (house, body, family, lifestyle...))
  - You **didn't have a problem before** you opened that app... but **the eyes saw and wanted!**
- *Matthew 6:22-23, CSB* - "**The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.**"

Third...

V. 16 - And the **pride of life - positions...**

- **Alazoneia tou biou** = "empty boastful arrogance about one's life circumstances."
- *Used in Roman times* as **a vice of the wealthy** displaying **power over inferiors**. **The 1 upper!**
- This is the **sin of comparison / showing off:** **flexing wealth, achievement, status, position**.
  - *The first two could be in isolation*, but this one **requires others** to **outshine or outrank**.
- In **Daniel 4. King Nebuchadnezzar** is **walking on the roof of his palace** looking out over the city. And he says (*you can almost hear the chest puff out*), *Daniel 4:30* - "**Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?**"
  - And the very next verse **God humbles him** so completely that he ends up **out in a field eating grass like an ox**. (*hair like eagle feathers and nails like bird claws! whoa!*)
  - **Pride comes before the fall...**
  - **God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble...**
- King Nebby learned the hard way... but he learned...
  - *Daniel 4:37* - "**Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.**"
- Friends, **be careful not to boast or brag** in life. *Even in ministry* - Social = the **"humble brag"**

These three pursuits **in themselves are not evil** (*God created food, beauty, and meaningful work*).

- The problem is **when they rule us instead of Christ's lordship**.
- When they **win the affections of our hearts**

So, you could **sum these three up** as the desires to **feel great, look great, and be great!**

- **The disciples of Jesus** struggled with the same kinds of sins... (*who will be the greatest?*)

But this...

V. 16 - ...is **not of the Father** but is of the world.

- **The story of Lot:** First looked... then pitched his tent... then sitting at the gate... (**torment!**)
- **Three enemies of our faith:** **the flesh, the devil, and the world...**

- **God would never tempt you** in these things, but **the world** will, and **Satan disguises as light!**
  - Satan is the *“prince of the power of the air and ruler of this present age”* (Eph 2, 2 Cor 4)

Interestingly: **the flesh, the eyes, the pride** - shows up at **two consequential moments** in history.

- Not clear if we're **meant to make a direct 1-1 correlation**, but man, it's certainly convincing...

**In Genesis 3:6**, Eve looks at the fruit and the text tells us **she saw three things**:

- **(all three one one slide)**
- **“The tree was good for food”** — that's the **lust of the flesh**.
- **“It was pleasant to the eyes”** — that's the **lust of the eyes**.
- **“And desirable to make one wise”** — that's **the pride of life**.
- **Three temptations**, in a garden **full of every provision imaginable**. And they fell into sin...

Also, **in Matthew 4 & Luke 4**. Jesus has fasted forty days in the wilderness. He was hungry and exhausted. And Satan comes with three temptations.

- **(all three one one slide)**
- **“Command that these stones become bread”** — that's the **lust of the flesh**.
- **“Showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory”** — that's the **lust of the eyes**.
- **“Throw yourself down... For He will command His angels...”** — that's **the pride of life**.
- **Same three temptations**, this time **in a barren wilderness**. And He conquered.

**The first Adam fell** in **a garden full of provision**.

**The second Adam stood firm** in **a desert with none**.

- **Where Adam failed, Christ prevailed** — and His victory became **our model and strength!**

**I also, in light of that, want to give some pastoral direction...**

- John is **not calling you to ultra legalism** and **full monk-mode in isolation**. **In but not of (John 17)**
- Don't **go home and whiteknuckle (in your own power)** all the things you have to stay away from.
- **You will lose and be frustrated**. **The flesh is weak** and **the flesh cannot crucify the flesh**.
- What **kills worldliness** in your life is **a greater affection**. By **pursuing something better!**

**The last and most important note to make is that there are everlasting ramifications...**

**Eternal Realities (verse 17)**

This verse reminds us of **the fleeting nature** of **the things of the world...**

- You know what **temporary** is like: **a junk drawer full of stuff ... Kitchen gadgets unused for years in the cabinets... friendships that didn't last... jobs that ended... phone updates!**
  - **Fads**: pogs, beanie babies, chia pets, pet rocks... **but we think we need them!**
- **That's the deceptive nature of the world...** (**estate sale**: folding tables with sticky notes...)

**V. 17 - And the world is passing away, and the lust of it...**

- **(Greek theatre curtains closing) Is passing away = present tense**. **Not "will pass someday."**
  - **Right now. As I'm preaching**, the world is in the process of **fading and decaying...**
- **The world is like a sandcastle at high tide**. **It still looks beautiful in some places... Towers are still standing here and there...** But **the time clock is running...** (**a wave is approaching**)

Some of you are **tired of building the castle**. **Exhausted**. *Rate race. Keeping up with the Joneses.*

- You've been *pouring all your heart* into *things designed to fade*... **Striving the corruptibles!**
- The Lord is **inviting you to something better**. **Something fruitful and eternally lasting...**

V. 17 - *but He who **does the will of God abides forever**.*

- **Doing the will of God** is not used here in regards to **justification**. But ultimately, **glorification!**
  - **Justification** is *by faith alone in Christ alone*.
  - **Glorification** is the **final result of that blessed eternal life!**
- **There are two roads. Two ways. Two wills**. The *will of the World* or **the Will of God**.
  - *Those who choose **the Will of God** will **abide with Him forever!** **Hallelujah!***
- *Romans 12:2 - "**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may **prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**"***
- One of *John's favorite words*. He uses it **over 60 times** in his Gospel and letters...
- **Abides/Lives (Meno)** = *"to last, endure, stay settled, rooted, immovable, not to perish"*
  - **Not just surviving but abiding!**

*This idea is on repeat in the Bible...*

*Isaiah 40:8 - "The grass withers, the flower fades, **but the word of our God will stand forever.**"*

- **A decision has to be made**. *Matthew 16:26 - "For what profit is it to a man **if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?** Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*
- **Not to choose is to choose...**
- *"Worldlings make gold their god; saints make God their gold" (Matthew Henry)*

**Closing:**

*One day God will call down **the great theatre curtain**, and we'll realize **it's all vanity of vanities...***

In light of that, the Scriptures have shown us **three important truths**:

- There are **Competing Loves**, and they **cannot both hold your heart**. **One must rule!**
- There are **Worldly Pursuits**, and they **appeal to your flesh, your eyes, and your pride**.
- There are **Eternal Realities**, and **only one of them is going to last**. **Which do you choose?**

John **isn't trying to ruin your enjoyment**, he's **trying to save you from regret (now & eternally)**

**The one who faced the same three temptations** in the wilderness and **didn't flinch!**

- **His victory is offered to you this morning**. *If you choose to pick up your cross and follow...*

**Never trusted?** - The world **sold you a bill of goods** but didn't deliver? There's a better way...

**Maybe have drifted?** - The Father's arms are wide open. **Repent. Come home...**

**Walking Faithfully?** - Remain **steadfast and immovable**, abounding, knowing your labor...

**PRAY**

Stick around for **Dominican Republic Luncheon... (k-1st room)**