

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:18-20**

Chapter 30- What We Know 285 What We Know- Part 11

WAOY Tuesday 11/25/08/Friday 11/28/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we are going to continue to look at the summary of all that we know- based upon this great Epistle of **1John**- so let's read **1John 5:18-20** again together:

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Now we are in the middle of studying how that in these three verses- the Apostle John is giving us a summary of all that he has taught in this great Epistle. And he begins each of these three verses with the phrase, "We know".

In these three verses- John wants us to know three things:

1. That the person who has genuinely been born of God does not dwell continually in sin
2. That those who are saved are truly born of God
3. That the Son of God has come and has given us knowledge of the one true living God.

And on the last broadcast- we were looking at the second Truth that John says that we should know and I want to continue that today- so let's read **1John 5:19** again together:

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one.*

Now we are right in the middle of examining what John meant when he said in this verse that the whole world lies in wickedness- so we are examining what is probably the most common and yet the most unknown sin that exists in our lives today and that sin is the sin of worldliness.

Worldliness is when the love and affection and devotion of our hearts that should only belong to God is stolen from God and placed on something that is temporary and that is passing away. Worldliness is more common today than it has ever been; it is more easily engaged in by believers and due to the fact that there is such bad teaching out there- in many areas- the sin of worldliness is actually being promoted as being a virtue and even a blessing from God. But please listen to what God said about this evil sin by reading **1John 2:15-17:**

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves 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 boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Now there are several signs that warn us that we have crossed the line into worldliness. Those signs include always being too busy to study the Bible or to pray for any meaningful length of time; loving money; engaging in covetousness; and believing that more of this world's goods is a sign of God's favor- without a corresponding growth in holiness.

We can measure the degree to which worldliness has overtaken us by honestly examining what we love and what we spend time with because the Bible teaches from cover to cover that the human soul *cannot* love God and the world at the same time. It will *always* choose one over the other because God consciously made the soul to *exclusively* love and worship and serve only one object at a time. And any attempt by anyone at loving two things or worshipping two things or serving two things at the same time will always result in a schizophrenic life; a

diseased life; a fruitless life; a wasted life.

So we must choose; we must decide; we must *consciously* **abandon** one love for the other. Either you must abandon the world and love God or you must abandon God and love the world. But please understand that you cannot do both.

And please keep in mind, dear friends, that worldliness may not be that long list of evil sins that you are no longer troubled by- but worldliness may be much more subtle- it may look much prettier.

We give ourselves with abandon over our worldly pleasures as though we would die tomorrow; while we build houses and accumulate things as though we will live forever. How inconsistent we are.

The Puritans of the 17th Century were great about meditating about things like this. And while I struggle just to preach this one sermon on worldliness- Jeremiah Burroughs- a great Puritan preacher- wrote a deep and wonderful book about this very issue called *A Treatise on Earthly Mindedness*- and I encourage you to get this book. Written almost 400 years ago- this book spans 260 pages about how that a man's life is the *real* measurement of what he believes- not his possessions or accomplishments.

So just how do we combat these other "loves". Burroughs said that we as Christians have to become aware of our own thoughts. Burroughs wrote that we should pursue humility over our own sins; befriend godly people; help yourself to understand God's Will by becoming familiar with God's Word; Constantly remind yourself that you are going to have to stand before God and give an account; pray without ceasing; be quick to repent; and ask God for the blessing to be able to see your own heart as God sees you.

And Burroughs suggested that every morning, we read **Hebrews 12:2&3**. This passage says:

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

One of my heroes is the English theologian by the name of Ian Murray. Brother Murray was the editor of The Banner of Truth Trust

for many years and has written many important books among which is a plea for the modern Church to recapture The historic Biblical Truths concerning The Doctrines of Grace. And Brother Murray said this about worldliness:

“Worldliness is departing from God. It is a “man centered” way of thinking; It proposes objectives which demand no radical breach from man’s fallen nature. It judges the importance of things by the present and material results. It weighs success by numbers. It covets human esteem. It wants no unpopularity. It knows no Truth for which it is worth suffering. It declines to be a fool for Christ sake. Worldliness is the mindset of the unregenerate. It adopts idols. It is at war with God.”

My friends, we are not called to have the love of the word, but we are called to know and possess the Love of God. This same John writes a little later in **1John 4:7**:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The kind of Love that we are supposed to have comes only from God. You can’t work it up yourself. You can’t take the two sticks of your own righteousness and your own will power and rub them together and produce this Love for the Father. No, this kind of Love is a gift from God.

And we have to realize, dear friends, that we cannot give people a love for God- only God can do that. We cannot bring Christ down from Heaven and we cannot put Christ in a human heart. We can share the Gospel and we can labor- but ultimately this Love *for* God is a gift *from* God. But when Christ *does* come into a human heart; and when Christ *does* give to you a Love for God- it is a thing of great beauty.

And this means that if we are going to be successful in defeating worldliness in our own lives- then we are going to have to first acknowledge that worldliness is a sin and then secondly- we are going to have to confess that we are troubled by it; and then thirdly- we are going to have to pray for strength to overcome it.

And this is a work of God’s Spirit. If you already love God- pray for *more* love. And pray for others to come to love God also. So, a lot about this is Trust. In **Matthew 16**, Jesus said,

I will build my Church”

So the Head of the Church will succeed in building his Church with men and women and children just like you who are the object of Christ’s Love and who have been given the ability to not love the world – but to love the Father.

John says that any love for the world proves that there is an absence of love for the Father. And then John teaches that the whole world lies in wickedness. After that John said that everything that is of the world is temporary- that in fact- it is at this very moment- it is passing away. So John told his first century audience that no matter how attached they might have been to their goods and their possessions and their dreams and their desires and their boastings- John reminded them here that the earth is the Lord’s and not ours and that they would one day lose everything that is not eternal.

John said everything that they craved and sought after was at that very moment passing and would eventually all pass away. The correct Greek language in **1John 2:17** is,

The world is passing away- and it’ desires.

And this is a *huge* statement which should dictate our affections and loves today. Why put your love and devotion and allegiance into something that is at this present moment passing away and shall eventually all pass away?

Remember that this verse doesn’t say that one day it shall pass away- but that it is at this present moment in the process of passing away already.

The Bible tells us that the day is coming when the world itself with all the affections; all its loves ; all its lusts; all its desires- which are in direct competition with the love of the Father- is going to pass away. It is going to be destroyed; it is going to come of naught. But the same Bible which promises that also promises that he that does the will of God; he which loves God with all his heart; he which denied his flesh and loved God and was not divided in his love and devotion and affections will abide forever- with God- in heaven- forever!

So I suppose it would be a good time about right now to ask some very important questions. Do you know what worldliness is? Do you

recognize it in your own life? Do you understand how evil and how destructive this sin is? Do you love the world? Has the world robbed God of your love? Have you taken your love- that is only rightfully God's- and given it to something less valuable and less important than God? Are you too busy pursuing after things that are at this very moment passing away to spend time with those things that are eternal? Do you love money? Do you trust more in what money can do for you rather than what God can do for you? Do you fear losing some of this world's goods more than you fear sin? Have you crossed the line from having your needs met and are you at this very moment engaging in covetousness?

Keep in mind as you answer these questions that that John said that if anyone loves the world- the love of the Father is not in him.

So, whatever happened to worldliness? Did we overcome it or did it overcome us? Unfortunately, worldliness is alive and well, dear friends- and I pray that it is not in your heart today.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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