

THREE GREAT THINGS FROM JOHN
(Admonitions, Information, Exhortation)
Great Admonitions

1 John 2:15-29

From expressly addressing the “little children,”” the “young men,” and the “fathers” of God’s family, the Apostle John moves on in order to set forth three great things. Those three great things are found in the remaining verse of this chapter. We will find a:

- 1. Great Admonitions in verses 15-17**
- 2. Great Information in verses 18-26**
- 3. Great Exhortation in verses 27-29**

Regardless of the level of maturity in the child of God, what John sets forth here is applicable to all. In fact, it is necessary for all. My wish here is that all of those who hear will also heed the things we find written here.

As we begin considering these three things written by John, let’s begin by considering the **Great Admonition** we find in **verses fifteen** through **seventeen**. In those verses we hear the “son of thunder” setting forth a much needed reproof for all believers. What he says here is easily understood. He gently, but firmly, says to us all: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”

In order to understand what John is teaching us, the first thing we ought to try and understand is what John is referring to when he refers to “the world.” In the Greek language “kosmos” is their word for world. It can and does speak of different things depending on the context where it is found. In light of this we can understand John is not referring to this planet we are living on and all the beautiful things its Creator brought into existence when He created it in the beginning. How do we know that? Well, if we just take a quick moment and look back at **Genesis 1:31** we find: “And God saw every thing that he had made and behold, it was very good...” So, if God said what He had created was good, and He did, so can we. Therefore, by considering this, we come to understand what John is saying. That is, having a love for this world in which we live and all the beauty we find in it is not the kind of love John was speaking of.

In **John 3:16** we read “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” So, we find here that having a love for mankind that inhabits this amazing world on which we live is not what the Apostle is admonishing us about either.

The world John is warning us about is that world system that is headed up by the arch enemy of man’s soul, the Devil. This arch enemy is referred to in the Bible as “the prince of the power of the air” in **Ephesus 2:2** and the “god of this world” in **2 Corinthians 4:4**. It will well serve the follower of Christ to remember it is that world system that crucified our Lord in His day and still hates and persecutes His children in our day.

In looking for a good definition for the word “world” I looked to Wuest’s Word Studies for help. There I found what I believe to be the best explanation of “kosmos” that I could find. It reads like this: “Kosmos refers to an ordered system. Here it is the ordered system of which Satan is the head, his fallen angels and demons are his emissaries, and the unsaved of the human race are his subjects, together with those purposes, pursuits, pleasures, practices, and places where God is not wanted. Much in this world-system is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual. But it is anti-God and anti-Christ.”

This definition helped me. I hope it helps you as well. This is one of the reasons the Holy Spirit moved Paul to write what he did to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:15**: “Study to shew thyself approved to unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” In order to rightly divide the word of truth we must roll up our spiritual sleeves and dig until we find the truth.

As we continue reading in **verse 15** we find, after John admonishes us not to “love the world neither the things in the world” that he says: “If any man...” John continues by using the little conjunction “if.” He does so because he is setting forth a hypothetical situation. In essence he is saying any man who loves the world and the things of the world in reality does not have the love of the Father in him. What a bold but simple statement! In fact, it’s so simple even I can understand it!

That is a pretty bold and plain statement don’t you think? I do! The message here is both simple and profound. Regardless of who it may be and regardless of what

they may profess, John says anyone who loves the world as a habit of life does not have the love of God in him and is, therefore, a sinner!

As much as John wants the children of God to have assurance about their place in His family he also wanted to warn those who only had a false hope. He wanted to warn those who think they are saved when in reality are not. As J. Vernon McGee said, "I believe in the security of the believer and the insecurity of the make believer." I believe John would say the same.

Please allow me to ask a simple question right here. How could anyone professing a relationship with Christ love a world system that is in rebellion against God? I think the answer is obvious: they cannot. Every time I remember what Jesus said in His high priestly prayer that is recorded in **John 17** I want to shout! Listen to what Jesus about His own he was praying for. In **verse 11** Jesus admits His own are "in the world" but continues in **verse 14** and says "they are not of the world." That statement demands a good "glory halleluiah!"

Oh let us never forget that if we are a child of God we are but pilgrims and strangers in this world! We must understand that a stranger is away from home and a pilgrim is on his way home. As Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (**Hebrews 11:10**), so are we. **1 Peter 2:11** "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

As I write these comments on this subject I am reminded of part of a song that says:

This world is not my home,
I'm just a passin' through:
My treasures are laid up,
somewhere beyond the blue;
The angels beckon me, from Heaven's open door,
and I can't feel at home in this world any more."

As we continue with **verse 16**, we find John telling us about "all that is in the world." That is a bold statement. In order to understand what the Apostle is referring to we need to go back to the beginning. To a garden called Eden. To a meeting where Satan met Eve tempting her with "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Please notice he tempted her with the same

things we find mentioned here by John. The writer wants us all to know these three things are the only things in the world. He still uses them today. Wow! Isn't that an amazing? In order to understand what he is saying we must consider it in light of how sin began. Every sin a man commits is invariably linked to one of these three things. As we have seen, those three things unchangeable things are:

1. **“the lust of the flesh”**
2. **“the lust of the eyes”**
3. **“the pride of life”**

The aged Apostle wanted to make sure that everyone knew those three things are “not of the Father, but...of the world.” Although we find those things in the world, we need to understand although they are in the world they are not things God the Father created when He created the world! Rather they are the results of or the by-products of a world invaded by Satan and negatively affect by the fall of Adam and Eve.

The fall of Adam and Eve assured their depraved, fallen nature would be passed down to all mankind. This refers to all those sons and daughters of Adam and Eve which includes us all. We possess a fallen nature and prove it by the deeds we do as a result of the fall of our parents in the garden so long ago.

So much could be, and maybe should be said, about all three of the things John has listed here. But I pray these few broken remarks will be sufficient for now. Remember, we know these three things were not created by God. In fact, the Bible clearly states in **Proverbs 6:16-19** that “pride” is one of the seven things God hates. So, we can rest assured He would not put that in man He created. It also helps to remember pride was the very thing that caused Lucifer to fall from his exalted position where he once “walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” (see **Ezekiel 28:11-17** and **Isaiah 14:12-17** if you would like to do additional studies on the fall of Lucifer.)

As I read this my mind is taken back to **Ecclesiastes 1:9** where the Preacher said: “...there is no new thing under the sun.” How true! When we are taken by a temptation we need to remember what Paul says us in **1 Corinthians 10:13** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Temptation will come to all us but none of us have to fall for the things the Devil tries to lure us with. Although his lures are thousands of years old they are still effective today.

In an attempt to illustrate what the Devil does to allure us to sin, allow me to try and illustrate this by using this simply illustration. The Devil, like a fisherman, uses whatever works. Often when shopping in preparation for a fishing trip, a fisherman will buy some new lure that he has seen hanging on a rack or has watched other fishermen use on some fishing show. As soon as he arrives at his favorite fishing hole, with great anticipation he opens the new lure. He carefully ties it on to the end of his line using his best knot. Then he sends it sailing through the air while imagining at the same time how big the fish will be he's sure he's going to catch.

After about twenty minutes without any success, he reels in the new lure one last time. He then cuts the knot. He throws the new lure back into his tackle box. He searches until he finds his favorite lure. It's the one that has a broken treble hook. It's the one with the paint almost completely gone on one side, with one eye missing. He quickly ties it onto the end of his line. He flings it out as far as he can waiting to feel that pleasing resistance a fisherman lives to feel on his line as he reels his catch into the boat knowing once again his old, but favorite lure, would get the job done once again.

Every fisherman knows what this feels like. I believe the Devil does something similar to this. He tries new things (which in essence are not new) on each every generation. When something he tries is unsuccessful or does not produce the kind of result he desires, he simply lays it aside, reaches back into his tackle box (so to speak), and pulls out one of his favorite lures: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

As simple as it may sound, the things John lists here represent the only means whereby sin comes into our lives. The enemy may try to package them differently at different times, but that does not change what they are and how well they work.

When the Word of God speaks about "lust," our tendency is to think about something negative. That is unfortunate. It can and often does mean that very thing but it is undeniable that God has created man with certain legitimate desires or lusts and the means whereby they may be satisfied. The thing that makes them illegitimate is the unlawful means by which we, at times, choose to satisfy them.

In **Matthew 4:1-11** we find the record of our Lord and His temptation in the wilderness and how He got victory over “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” In fact, I think it nothing less than praise worthy that we find Him using the same spiritual weapon He has made available to His followers. That is the Word of God. That’s all we need in order to get victory over “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” All we have to do is what our Lord and Savior did, hide God’s Word in our heart and bring it out when we find ourselves being tempted. It was the Word of God that gave Jesus the victory. It will give us the victory too.

I also find it interesting that Satan used the same three temptations he used on Eve in the Garden of Eden so long ago on our Lord and continues to use them today. Remember again what the Preacher said? In essence he said nothing really ever changes. The fallen nature of man does not change from generation to generation. The flesh is the flesh regardless of who is wearing it!

What makes lust sinful is the way a person may chose to take in order to satisfy that lust. When the Devil met Jesus in the wilderness, he found our Lord had been fasting for forty days. Thinking he would tempt him at his most vulnerable point, he suggested if this virgin born son of Mary was truly the Son of God He could command the stones to be turned into bread and thereby satisfy a legitimate desire. The only problem with that solution was, it would have been sin for Jesus to do so. If Jesus had turned those stones into bread it would have meant He was taking matters into His own hands instead of trusting in His Father to provide His needs, in His time, in His way, and according to His will.

In essence, the Devil was tempting Jesus to break His allegiance with His Father in order to satisfy a legitimate need. The unspoken idea behind this suggestion is Satan was suggesting to Jesus that if God the Father was as kind as He wanted everyone to think He is then He would not withhold something from His own Son that would be good for Him. Especially something He needed! In other words, the Devil wanted our Lord to think that if God truly loved Him as His only begotten Son He would either provide for His needs or allow Him to satisfy those needs any way He pleased. But Jesus knew His mission was not to please Himself but rather the Father who had sent Him into the world. So, when the enemy tempted Him, He simply took the sword of the Spirit out of its sheath and said to the enemy, in essence, “thus saith the Lord.”

The Devil used the same philosophy with the other two temptations that he used in the first temptation. He was as unsuccessful with them as he was with the first temptation by the way. Although the three temptations came in a somewhat different form, in reality they were the same at their core. They were a challenge to satisfy a legitimate need or desire by an illegitimate way. Jesus refused to fall for the enemy's ploy and so can we!

You see, any time we place our desire above the desire and will of God and find a way and means to satisfy a legitimate desire in a way not in the will of God, we are sinning against God and ourselves.

John continues in **verse 17** and with this verse we will bring this study to a close. This verse demands close consideration by all of us. The verse reads "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." I think the unspoken message here is this. Not only does the world and the lust that are a part of it pass away but so does the one who uses illegitimate means in order to fulfill a legitimate need.

A lust is a temporary thing. It will eventually pass whether ignored or satisfied (and I know I am over simplifying this subject, but forgive me for doing so), but the soul of man and the consequences of lust will live on, forever.

I believe you, as do I, want like to be a part and I believe we are a part of those who John said: "abideth for ever."

The **admonition** we find here presented by John I pray will be seriously considered and received by all of us.

Lord willing, I in our next study we will find John informing us on issues we need to be wise about and educated on.

Tom Price, 2020