

1 John 2:15-17 Answers The Love God Hates

Introduction: Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life. Be aware; never under estimate the enemy. The evil one, Satan, will do everything he and his demons can to trip up, defeat, tempt, distract or derail the true believer. Satan is described as an angel of light (2Co 11:14) and he will sometimes use the lure of the world to hook us and pull us down. John has already pointed out that one birthright of Christians is that we can overcome the evil one, **2:13b, 14b** (read aloud). Today we shall examine one of the traps he has laid for us as we study the love that God hates.

****** John warned us not to love the world. What reasons did John give for not loving the world (2:15-17)?** 1) Love of the world and love for the Father are mutually exclusive, like to magnets repel each other (2:15). This is a love that God hates. 2) The world is passing away but those who do God's will abide forever (2:17).

2:15

1. John said not to love the world. What does it look like when someone does love the world (2:15)? (Symptoms?). Such a person has worldly attitudes and values. He is worldly; he holds dear the things of this world; he values worldly things as important. (As in **2:10**, the Greek under love in 2:15 is *agapé*). The following symptoms indicate a worldly attitude: being discontent, divisiveness, quarrelsome, lusts, being envious, wanting to be the center of attention, self centeredness, being enamored with secular entertainment (tv, movies, plays), immorality and sensuality.

Example: My wife looked at a People magazine in the doctor's office. After a few minutes she remarked that when she was young she used to read with interested about the people in such magazines and the things they did. Now however it held no interest for her at all. It was just pictures of worldly people with worldly values doing worldly things.

Song: "Turn your eyes up Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace." Worldliness is a heart problem; you love the wrong things.

2. When we were born again we were given a new nature; the old man passed away and the new man came. The things of the world are no longer as alluring to us as they used to be. Our value system changes from the inside out:

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:17 . . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Verse 15a is a command. Is not loving the world automatic for the believer or is it something we have to be aware of and actively avoid? How so? Since John wrote in the imperative, the decision not to love the world is also a choice we make: we are to consciously decide not to love the world. Becoming totally disconnected from the world's charms is not instantaneous. It is a process that begins at the new birth and that needs to be encouraged through exhortation and teaching. John wrote to people who enjoyed fellowship with God (2:12-14) yet it was also necessary to warn them about the love for the world.

ESV 1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

3. Here we are told not to love the world, yet in John 3:16 we are told that God loves the word (same Greek words both times). What is the difference? World is from *kosmos* (cosmonaut, cosmetics, cosmopolitan) and has many meanings, depending on context. Sometimes it refers to the created, physical world around us, which is not evil in and of itself (matter is not sinful). Sometimes it refers to the people of the world (especially Gentiles). Here it refers to the system of human reasoning that sets itself up in opposition to God and His purposes. Scripture declares Satan to be the god of this world — a world that can be religious, refined and intellectual but anti-God and anti-Christ. It is the ungodly multitude, the whole mass of man alienated from God and opposed to the cause of Christ (Strong's data). Jesus called Satan "the ruler of this world" (Jn 14:30).

ESV 1 John 5:19 . . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

What is the difference between the world and the things in the world (2:15a)? There is not much difference; John may have written this simply for emphasis. He went on to explain what he meant by the things in the world in the next verse.

4. Why is it true that anyone who loves the world does not love the father (2:15b)? See 2:16. The reason given is found in the next verse (2:16): "for" the things of the world come from the world, not from the Father. This is like the old saying, what's down in the well comes up in the bucket. If a person loves the bad things of the world, that worldly love is flowing from his heart; that is true allegiance. Love for God the Father displaces love for the world. The two cannot co-exist for long. Each one is all consuming.

ESV Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

ESV 2 Timothy 4:10 . . . Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me . . .

ESV James 4:4 . . . Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

2:16

The Devil's Traps: Verse 16 reveals three traps the devil uses to ensnare Christians: the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life. These are the same three used to trap Eve. The devil showed her the forbidden fruit was good for food (the desire of the flesh) and she saw that it was pleasant to the eyes (the desire of the eyes) and that it would make her wise, like God (the pride of life) (Wiersbe, p. 70). Eve took it hook, line and sinker.

The Desires of the Flesh

5. What are the desires of the flesh (2:16)? Desire is from *epithumia*; *thumia* (thermos, thermal) means heat and *epi* serves as an intensifier. It means hot heat, a burning desire, a super-charged passion. Johnny Cash sang, "Love is a burning thing. And it makes it fiery ring. Bound by wild desires, I fell into a ring of fire. I fell in to a burning ring of fire. I went down, down, down and the flames went higher. And it burns, burns, burns.

The KJV translated this as lust. The NIV has cravings. It's that "I gotta have it!" feeling. Advertising and commercials are designed to take advantage of the lusts of the flesh that are already in your heart (such as with new car "fever").

Flesh is from *sarx*, which has different meanings depending on context. Literally it refers to our fleshly bodies. Metaphorically it refers to human nature apart from divine influence and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God. Thus instead of desires of the flesh (ESV) the NIV has "cravings of sinful man".

ESV Romans 13:14 . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

ESV Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Worldly Pompeii: Pompeii was a Roman city suddenly destroyed by a volcano (Vesuvius), buried under ash and preserved for nearly two thousand years. A large percentage of its artwork has survived and much of it is pornographic (the erotica is on frescoes, in statues, symbols and inscriptions). Even today at the museum on Naples the artwork is kept in a separate room and minors are not allowed in except with permission of parent or guardian. In short, ancient Rome was characterized by the works of the flesh: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality and orgies.

Perspective on Perversion: The devil is the original pervert. He takes a God-given gift designed to meet a legitimate need and he perverts it. Satan tries to get you to misuse something good God made by trying to get you to fulfill that need in the wrong way, at the wrong time or with the wrong person. Hunger is a God given desire, but gluttony is a sin. Thirst is a legitimate need, but drunkenness is sin. Sleep is a gift from God, but laziness is a sin. Sex is God's precious gift when used rightly, but when used wrongly it becomes immoral.

The Desires of the Eyes

6. What are the desires of the eyes (2:16)? As above, desire is from *epithumia*. The lust of the eyes would be a kind of greed caused by something we have seen. As Julius Caesar supposedly said, *Veni, vidi, vici* ("I came, I saw, I conquered").

ESV **Genesis 3:6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes . . . she took of its fruit and ate . . .

ESV **Joshua 7:20-21** [God told the Israelites not to take any spoils from the city of Jericho, but a soldier named Achan gave in to the lust of his eyes, resulting in a defeat outside the city of Ai] . . . Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them."

ESV **Matthew 5:28** . . . everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

ESV **Job 31:1** I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?

ESV **Matthew 18:9** . . . if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

ESV **Psalms 119:37** Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

The Pride of Possessions

7. What is the pride of possessions (2:16)? Possessions (2:16) is from *bios* (biology) which fundamentally means life, but it came to refer to those things by which life is sustained: resources, wealth, and goods (thus, the ESV put possessions). This is the sin of materialism (Vanity Fair, so to speak). The KJV calls this "the boastful pride of life".

ESV **Luke 12:15** . . . one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

ESV **1 Timothy 6:10** . . . the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.

ESV **1 Timothy 6:8** . . . if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

2:17

******Where is the world and all its desires headed (2:17)?** See 2:8. It is passing away. It is a dead end street. Like the Titanic, it is headed for down.

ESV **Proverbs 14:12** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

ESV **2 Corinthians 4:18** . . . we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

ESV **Hebrews 13:14** . . . here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

8. According to 2:17, what is the secret to abiding forever? He who does the will of God abides forever.

ESV **Matthew 7:24** Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

Application: Do you build you life for eternity or do you build your life for time?

Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Wiersbe, p. 79).

Salvation by Works? John is not here teaching salvation by works. One of his purposes in writing was to help the church understand the difference between false professors and true possessors. A true possessor is saved by grace through a faith that expresses itself in obedience to God’s will.

So What?

ESV **Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . .

ESV **1 John 3:13** Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

Application: We are to be in the world, but not of the world.

ESV **Colossians 3:5-8** Put to death . . . what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness . . . you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

The opposite of worldliness is expressed in compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiving each other, love, peace and thankfulness.

9. What examples can you share of how you once loved the world but now do not?

10. What in a person’s life reveals whether he loves the world or the father (2:15-17)?

Credit Due: Applications for this lesson came from Guy King’s *The Fellowship* and Warren Wiersbe’s *Be Real*.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session (30 minutes of teaching and 15 minutes of group discussion) and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF.

Stephen E. Atkerson
www.NTRF.org
07/26/15