

# Essential Commitments of a Local Church

## Pt. 7

### 1 John 2:15–17

#### 1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

## Introduction

**J. C. Ryle** (1816–1900) was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he was a Craven scholar. Ordained in 1841, he became a leader of the evangelical party in the Church of England. In 1880, Ryle became the first bishop of Liverpool, a post he kept for 20 years. He also served as the dean of Salisbury. He wrote commentaries on Matthew, Mark, and Luke, essays on various subjects, including the gospel of John, and for the timeless treatise, *Holiness: Its Nature, Difficulties, Hindrances, and Roots*. The following is an excerpt from that book.

*He that wishes to attain right views about Christian holiness must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of sin. He must dig down very low if he would build high. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption. I make no apology for beginning this volume of papers about holiness by making some plain statements about sin.*

*The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Without it, such doctrines as justification, conversion, sanctification, are “words and names” which convey no meaning to the mind. The first thing, therefore, that God does when He makes anyone a new creature in Christ, is to send light into his heart and show him that he is a guilty sinner.*

*The material creation in Genesis began with ‘light’, and so also does the spiritual creation. God ‘shines’ into our hearts by the work of the Holy Ghost and then spiritual life begins (2 Corinthians 4:6). Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most of the errors, heresies and false doctrines of the present day. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul’s disease, you cannot wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies. I believe that one of the chief wants of the church in the nineteenth century has been, and is, clearer, fuller teaching about sin.*

**Matthew 18:6–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. <sup>7</sup> Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

<sup>8</sup> “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. <sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

**Matthew 18:15–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’* <sup>17</sup> And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup> “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

## **Review:**

### **Essential Commitments of a Local Church Pt. 5**

**I. We are Committed to a High View God Rather than a Deification of Man.**

**II. We are Committed to the Absolute Authority and Sufficiency of the Scriptures Rather than the Tradition of Man**

**III. We are Committed to Sound Doctrine Rather Than the Dumbing Down of Doctrine.**

**IV. We are Committed to the Preaching of the Word Rather than Pragmatic Methodology**

**V. We are Committed to Integrated Worship with the Family rather than the Segregation of the Family**

**VI. We are Committed to Personal Holiness Rather than Worldliness.**

VII. We are Committed to a plurality of Godly Leadership than the Business or Democratic Model.

VIII. We are Committed to Evangelism of the Sinner rather than Moral Reform of the Society.

IX. We are Committed to the Return of Jesus Christ rather than the Riches of Earth

**Lesson:**

**VI. We are Committed to Personal Holiness Rather than Worldliness.**

**1 John 2:15–17** (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the

world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

## I. The Command

## II. The Character

## III. The Contrast

### I. The Command

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

Μὴ ἀγαπάτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

**Love not the world** (μη ἀγαπατε τον κοσμον [*mē agapāte ton kosmon*]). Prohibition with μη [*mē*] and the **present active imperative** of ἀγαπαω [*agapaō*], either stop doing it or do not have the habit of doing it

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (1 Jn 2:15). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The word “**love**” here is *agapaō* (ἀγαπαω), the word used of God’s love for a lost race of sinners, and which

is self-sacrificial in its essence (John 3:16), the love which He is by nature (I John 4:8), and the love which is produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The question confronts us now as to how believers can love the sinful world with a love produced in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Here, *agapaō* (ἀγαπάω) is used merely in its classical meaning, that of a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved. The word as used here refers to a fondness, an affection, non-ethical in its content, for an object because of its value. It is a love of approbation, of esteem. Demas is said to have loved this present age. He found it precious and thus came to love it.

The verb is a **present imperative in a prohibition**, which construction in Greek speaks of the act of forbidding the continuance of an action already going on. Some of John's readers were still loving the world-system out from which they had been saved. John says: “Stop loving the world with a love called out of your hearts because of its preciousness.”

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 13, p. 126). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

It means to have a high esteem for something [BAGD].

Anderson, J. (2008). *An Exegetical Summary of 1, 2, and 3 John* (2nd ed., p. 63). Dallas, TX: SIL International.

15. *Love not.* He had said before that the only rule for living religiously, is to love God; but as, when we

are occupied with the vain love of the world, we turn away all our thoughts and affections another way, this vanity must first be torn away from us, in order that the love of God may reign within us. Until our minds are cleansed, the former doctrine may be iterated a hundred times, but with no effect: it would be like pouring water on a ball; you can gather, no, not a drop, because there is no empty place to retain water.

Calvin, J., & Owen, J. (2010). *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (pp. 185–186). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

## **Romans 12:1–2** (NKJV)

**12** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And 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.

*12:2) “Conformed” is sunschēmatizō (συνσχηματίζω). Schēmatizō (Σχηματίζω) refers to the act of an individual assuming an outward expression that does not come from within him, nor is it representative of his inner heart life. The prefixed preposition sun (συν)*

*adds to the meaning of the verb the idea of assuming an expression that is patterned after some definite thing. The verb is present imperative with mē (μη), the negative, which construction forbids the continuance of an action already going on. Paul exhorts the saints, “Stop assuming an outward expression which is patterned after this world, an expression which does not come from, nor is it representative of what you are in your inner being as a regenerated child of God.” One could translate, “Stop masquerading in the habiliments of this world, its mannerisms, speech expressions, styles, habits.”*

The word “world” is aiōn (αἰών), which Trench defines as follows: “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, — all this is included in the aiōn (αἰών) (age), which is, as Bengel has expressed it, the subtle informing spirit of the kosmos (κοσμος) or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.” The Germans have a word for it, the zeitgeist or spirit of the age. This masquerade costume which saints sometimes put on, hides the Lord Jesus living in the heart of the Christian, and is an opaque covering

through which the Holy Spirit cannot radiate the beauty of the Lord Jesus. The world says to that kind of a saint, “The modernism of your appearance nullifies the fundamentalism of your doctrine.”

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 2, p. 207). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

## the world

What he is **not** talking about.

### 1. The World of Creation

He is not speaking of the physical world, or the created order. John would not have commanded his readers to hate something that God in Genesis 1:31 pronounced was originally “very good.” Even though creation is marred by the fall (cf. Genesis 3), nature’s physical beauties still reflect God’s glory and demand praise. The psalmist expressed this principle eloquently:

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out

through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Ps. 19:1–6; cf. 104:1–32; Acts 14:15–17; 17:23–28; Rom. 1:20)

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (p. 82). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## 2. The World of Sinners

John would not have commanded believers to hate the **world** of humanity. That is because God loves people in the world and sent His Son to be the propitiation for their sin (see 2:2; 4:9–10, 14; cf. John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:3–6; Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–5).

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (p. 82). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

### 1 John 2:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

### 1 John 4:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world.

### John 3:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send

His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

**2 Corinthians 5:19 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

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

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

What does the World mean

**The world** and its **things**, which John warned his readers **not to love**, is the invisible, spiritual system of evil. It is the *kosmos* (“world order,” “realm of existence,” “way of life”) governed by Satan; as Paul reminded the

**Ephesians 2:2** , “You formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

Later in this letter

John wrote: **I John 5:19**

“the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (5:19; cf. 4:1–5; John 12:31).

The “world” here refers to the same evil system that Jesus referred to when He said,

**John 15:18**

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18; cf. 17:14).

So, it was not humanity in general or the created order that hated Christ, but rather the wicked, corrupt (2 Peter 2:19), demonic ideologies and enterprises that stimulate fallen humanity (cf. Matt. 13:19, 38; 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 11:14; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 16:14).

In keeping with this understanding, the apostle Paul correctly viewed the world as engaged in a massive spiritual war against the kingdom of God:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:3–5; cf. Eph. 6:11–13)

“Speculations” means ideologies or belief systems, ranging from primitive, animistic systems to sophisticated, complex world religions, philosophies,

political theories, or any unbiblical worldviews. They represent all unbelieving ideas and dogmas that, often from an elitist standpoint, rise up against the true knowledge of God. In response, believers are commanded to confront and destroy the world's spiritual lies and false speculations with the truth. Paul thus identifies the world as the full spectrum of beliefs and inclinations that oppose the things of God, and John implicitly echoes that definition. When a person becomes a Christian, he or she is no longer a slave to the world system.

Christians have been “rescued ... from the domain of darkness, and transferred ... to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:13; cf. 2 Cor. 6:17–18; Eph. 5:6–12).

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (pp. 82–83). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

(2:15–17) The word “world” here is kosmos (κοσμος) which in its use here is defined by Vincent as follows: “The sum-total of human life in the ordered world, considered apart from, alienated from, and hostile to God, and of the earthly things which seduce from God (John 7:7; 15:18; 17:9, 14; I Cor. 1:20, 21; II Cor. 7:10; James 4:4).” Kosmos (Κοσμος) 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.

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 13, p. 125). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Trench quotes Bengel as saying that this world of unsaved humanity is inspired by “the spirit of the age,” ...which Trench defines as follows: “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.” This is the world-system to which John refers.

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 13, pp. 125–126). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

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

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

**It is clear that John has in mind primarily the system of the World, which include these ideologies, beliefs**

To summarize a few  
Darwian Evolution  
Freudian Psychology  
Neo- Marxist ideology  
Humanism  
Feminism  
Narcism  
Racism  
Consumerism  
Sexism  
Perversion  
Pragmatism  
Atheism  
Agnosticism  
Socialism  
Hedonism  
Materialism  
Naturalism  
Nihilism  
Subjectivism  
Totalitarianism  
Universalism

This is just some of the ideologies and beliefs of the world.

This does not include all of the erroneous beliefs inside the church.

However, John also indicates that there is a problem with the things in the world

## I. The Command

## II. The Character

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world.

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

**In verse 16**, he gives a list of 3 categories that as we shall see, can eventually find their expression in things. Although, all of these can remain in the mind only, they hardly ever do.

**16** For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—

**16** οτι παν το εν τω κοσμω η επιθυμια της σαρκος και η επιθυμια των οφθαλμων και η αλαζονεια του βιου

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (1 Jn 2:16). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

## **16** For all that *is* in the world

In the phrase, “all that is in the world,” the word “all” does not refer to all things severally, but to all that is in the world collectively (Vincent).

The meaning of **all that is in the world** and **is from the world** appears in the three qualifying descriptions of sin’s categories. Sin is the dominant reality in the world, and launching from this verse it is helpful to look more extensively at sin, by definition called “lawlessness” (1 John 3:4)—any violation of God’s perfect and holy law. Whereas the law of God encompasses all that is righteous (Pss. 19:7; 119:142; Isa. 42:21; cf. Josh. 1:7–8; Ps. 119:18; Neh. 8:9, 18; Isa. 51:4; Matt. 22:36–40; Acts 28:23; Rom. 3:21; James 1:25), sin encompasses all that is unrighteous (Prov. 24:9; Matt. 15:19; 1 John 5:17; cf. Gen. 6:5).

Although it manifests itself in external actions, the roots of sin go much deeper, embedded in the very fabric of the depraved human heart. Sin permeates the fallen mind, internally defiling the sinner in every aspect of his being (cf. Matt. 15:18–20). Thus, the Old Testament likens sin to a deadly plague (1 Kings 8:38,

nkjv) or filthy garments (Zech. 3:3–4; cf. Isa. 64:6). Sin is so foul that God hates it (Prov. 15:9) and sinners hate themselves (Ezek. 6:9) because of their inherent wickedness.

Sin is by nature both rebellious and ungrateful—so much so that if possible it would dethrone God in favor of sinners (cf. Ps. 12:4; Jer. 2:31; 44:17). Its attitude is that of Absalom, who when forgiven by his father, King David, nevertheless immediately plotted to overthrow him (2 Sam. 14:33–15:12). Romans 1:21 says of the ungodly, “Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God *or give thanks*” (emphasis added; cf. 2 Tim. 3:2).

Sin is also humanly incurable. Sinners have no capacity in and of themselves to remedy their sin (Rom. 8:7–8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1). The prophet Isaiah described Israel’s incurably sinful condition:

Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. (Isa. 1:4–6)

Sin is like a terminal illness, or hereditary condition, about which sinners can do nothing in their own strength. God demanded of Israel, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil” (Jer. 13:23; cf. Job 14:4; Matt. 7:16–18).

Finally, sin is universal. David wrote, “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Ps. 14:3; cf. Isa. 53:1–3; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:10–12; 5:12). Thus all people, left to their own devices, choose to sin:

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19–20; cf. Ps. 7:14; Prov. 4:16; Isa. 5:18; Jer. 9:5)

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (pp. 85–86). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## 16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh,

“Lust” is *epithumia* (ἐπιθυμία), “a craving, a passionate desire,” good or evil, according to the context. Here it refers to evil cravings. The word “lust” is obsolete today, as it is used here, since the

present day usage confines its meaning to an immoral desire. “Flesh” is *sarx* (σαρξ) which here refers to the totally depraved nature as governing the individual’s reason, will, and emotions. Thus, the lust of the flesh is the passionate desire or the craving that comes from the evil nature. The word “flesh” here has no reference to the physical body except as that body is controlled or energized by the evil nature. The physical body and its members in themselves have no evil desires except as controlled by the totally depraved nature. To say that the physical body of itself has evil desires is Gnosticism, the heresy that matter is inherently evil.

**The lust of the flesh** refers to the debased, ignoble cravings of evil hearts. **The flesh** denotes humanness and its sinful essence. The word translated **lust** (*epithumia*) is a common New Testament term denoting both positive and negative desires (Luke 22:15; Rom. 1:24; Phil. 1:23; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 3:3; James 1:14–15; 2 Peter 1:4; cf. Matt. 5:28; Gal. 5:17; Heb. 6:11; James 4:2). Here it refers negatively to the sensual impulses from the world that draw people toward transgressions. The expression **lust of the flesh** brings to mind primarily sexual sins, but, while they are included in its definition, the phrase is certainly not limited to that meaning.

The base desire of the human heart perverts and distorts all normal desires (Jer. 17:9), sending them into a relentless, slavish pursuit of evil that exceeds the proper limits of what is good, reasonable, and righteous—any attitude, speech, or action that opposes God’s law (cf. Rom. 7:5; 8:7). Those lusts include all the immoral excesses about which Paul warned the Galatians:

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19–21; cf. Rom. 1:24–32; 1 Cor. 6:9–10)

Those sinful attitudes and actions are primary characteristics of the world system and are irresistibly appealing to the corruption of the unconverted soul.

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (pp. 87–88). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**16** For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, **the lust of the eyes,**

Now, John speaks of one of the manifestations of the evil nature, the lust of the eyes, namely the passionate cravings of the eyes for satisfaction, these cravings finding their source in the evil nature.

The world also entices sinners to thoughts and actions contrary to God's will through **the lust of the eyes**. Eyes are gifts from God (cf. Prov. 20:12; Eccl. 11:7) that enable people to see His beautiful creation and excellent works (cf. Pss. 8:3–4; 19:1; 33:5; 104:24; Isa. 40:26; Rom. 1:20). However, as they let in light, so they are open windows for temptation to enter; thus sin perverts the use of the eyes (cf. Prov. 27:20; Eccl. 1:8; 4:8) and plunges people into dissatisfaction, covetousness, and idolatry (cf. Pss. 106:19–20; 115:4; Eccl. 5:10). Lot's wife misused her eyes, and God killed her as a result (Gen. 19:17, 26). Achan plundered the forbidden goods he saw, which also led to his death (Josh. 7:18–26; 22:20). From his rooftop David saw Bathsheba bathing, subsequently committed adultery with her, and paid severely for his sin the remainder of his life (2 Sam. 11:1–5; 12:1–20; Ps. 51:1–17). Because of such potential consequences, it is imperative for believers to guard their eyes (cf. Job 31:1; Ps. 101:3; 119:37). Jesus' graphic hyperbole underscores the necessity of avoiding the lust of the eyes.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” (Matt. 5:27–29)

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (p. 88). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**16** For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, **and the pride of life—**

Another manifestation of the evil nature is the pride of life. The word is *alazonia* (ἀλαζονία), “vainglory.” Vincent says: “It means, originally, *empty, braggart talk or display; swagger*; and hence an insolent and vain assurance in one’s own resources, or in the stability of earthly things, which issues in a contempt of divine laws. The *vainglory of life* is the vainglory which belongs to the present life.”

Thayer defines: “an insolent and empty assurance which trusts in its own power and

resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights.” The word “life” here is *bios* (βίος), referring to that which sustains life, namely, food, clothing, and shelter. “Of the Father” is “out from the Father as a source.” “Of the world” is “out from the world as a source.”

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 13, pp. 127–128). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The third human element that provides an avenue into the soul for temptation is **the boastful pride of life**. Such **pride** is the arrogance (cf. 1 Sam. 2:3; 17:4–10, 41–45; Pss. 10:3; 75:4; Prov. 25:14; Jer. 9:23; Rom. 1:30; James 3:5; 4:16) that arguably motivates all other sin, including the lust of the flesh and eyes, as it seeks to elevate self above everyone else (cf. Ps. 10:2, 4; Prov. 26:12; Dan. 5:20; Luke 18:11–12; Rom. 12:3, 16). Pride is the corruption of the noblest parts of man’s essence (cf. Ps. 10:2–6, 11; Prov. 16:18–19), his rationality and spirit that were created for him by God (Gen. 1:26–27). Instead of accepting that reality with appropriate humility and gratitude to God, sinners exalt themselves and seek fulfillment in things that glorify the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:22–25).

MacArthur, J. (2007). *1, 2, 3 John* (pp. 88–89). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

There are a few of these that I see dominating in the church.

Narcism

Hedonism

Materialism

Narcism - driven by egotism, self love, self-centeredness

Hedonism- Fueled by Narcism and the incessant desire for pleasure and entertainment.

Materialism - Fueled by Prideful Narcissistic Hedonism that says I have to have more to have more fun and to be better than the next guy.

## 2 Timothy 3:1–4 (NKJV)

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> **For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud,** blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,**

**lovers of themselves,**

**φίλαυτος** **self loving** adj. — characterized by affections concerned chiefly with oneself and one's own advantages to the exclusion of others.

**lovers of money, φιλάργυρος**

**loving money** adj. — immoderately desirous of acquiring wealth.

**Luke 16:14** (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.

**boasters ἀλαζών**

**braggart** n. — a person who has a self-exalting, self-absorbed conceit of their own superiority; especially one that believes that all achievements are of their own doing.

**proud, arrogant** adj. — having or showing feelings of unwarranted importance out of overbearing pride.

**lovers of pleasure φιλήδονος**

**loving pleasure** adj. — characterized by an immoderate fondness in pursuing pleasure.

Romans 16:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Philippians 3:18–19 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: <sup>19</sup> whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

**I. The Command**

**II. The Character**

**III. The Contrast**

There are contrast all thru out I John. The intent is to show the difference between a Christian and non Christian, believe and unbeliever, a possessor and a professor.

True and False, Real and Fake.

Children of God and Children of the Devil

**I JOHN 5:13**

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

## **1. True believers walk in the light**

### **Unbelievers do not**

1 John 1:6–7 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

## **2. True Believers confess their sin**

### **Unbelievers do not.**

1 John 1:8–10 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

### **3. True Believers obey His Commandments Unbelievers do not**

1 John 2:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

### **4. True Believers love their Brother Unbelievers do not**

1 John 2:9–11 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup> He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1 John 4:7–8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:20–5:2 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

**5** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

## **5. True Believers Love the Church Unbelievers do not**

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

## **6. True Believers Confess Jesus as Savior and Lord and God Unbelievers**

1 John 2:21–23 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

<sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

1 John 4:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

## **7. True Believers Love and live for the Return of Christ**

### **Unbelievers do not**

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

## **8. True Believers do not continue in sin Unbelievers do practice sin**

1 John 3:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God

<sup>10</sup> In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

## **9. True Believers have Overcome the World Unbelievers have not**

1 John 4:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them.

## **10. True Believers Love and Hear God's Word Unbelievers do not.**

1 John 4:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. <sup>6</sup> We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does

not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

## **11. True Believers do not love the world. Unbelievers do**

### **1 John 2:15–17** (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

### **Contrast #1 Christian vs. Non-Christian**

<sup>15</sup> 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.

Because believers are forgiven (Pss. 86:5; 130:3–4; Isa. 1:18; Matt. 26:28; Luke 1:77; Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 2:13–14; 3:13; 1 John 2:12), have a true knowledge of God (2 Cor. 2:14; 4:6; Eph. 4:13; Col.

1:9–10), have the Word of God abiding in them (Ps. 119:11; Col. 3:16), have overcome Satan (James 4:7; 1 John 4:4), and have an increasingly intimate relationship with the Father (1 John 2:12–14), they cannot love the world. **Anyone** who **loves the world** demonstrates that **the love of the Father is not in him**. Like Demas, such spiritual defectors manifest that any previous claim to know and love God was nothing but a lie (2:19).

Nonetheless, the basic identity of believers as God’s children does not make them immune to the world’s allure. Because they are still fallen sinners—though saved by grace—true followers of Christ are tempted through their remaining flesh by the world’s behaviors and enterprises (Matt. 26:41; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 6:16; James 1:12–14; 1 Peter 5:8–9). Whether the temptation comes from worldly priorities, worldly amusements, worldly riches, or worldly lusts, believers desire to resist the world’s effort to seduce them. As Jesus warned His listeners, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Luke 16:13; cf. Matt. 6:19–21, 24).

MacArthur, J. (2007). [1, 2, 3 John](#) (pp. 84–85). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## **James 4:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

John 15:18–19 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 17:14–16 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 8:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Galatians 6:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

We used to be like this

Ephesians 2:2–3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Galatians 1:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

**Contrast #2 Sinful vs Holy**

**16 For all that *is* in the world**—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—**is not of the Father but is of the world.**

John 14:30 (NKJV)

**30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.**

1 John 3:5–9 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

<sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. <sup>8</sup> He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

### **Contrast #3 Temporary vs. Eternal**

<sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The third reason believers are not to love **the world** is because it **is passing away**. The principle of spiritual death that permeates the world is the exact opposite of the principle of spiritual life, which operates in God's kingdom. Thus, the living dead in the world are destined for eternal death in hell, but Christians are destined for eternal life in heaven (Matt. 13:37–50; 25:31–46; cf. Matt. 5:12a; Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:22–23; 1 Peter 1:3–5).

“Passeth away” is *paragetai* (παραγεται), “to pass alongside, to pass by.” The verb is in the passive voice. The world is being caused to pass by. That is, God is causing the world to come to its end. It is being caused to pass by in a vain (futile) show, this parade of the world. But, John says, “The one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever.”

Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 13, p. 128). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The verb translated **is passing away** is a present tense form of *paragō* (“to disappear”). The present tense indicates that the world is already in the

process of self-destruction (1 Cor. 7:31*b*; 1 Peter 4:7*a*; cf. James 1:10; 4:14; 1 Peter 1:24). The entire system contains the seeds of its own dissolution (cf. Rom. 8:20–21). (God will destroy the physical universe at the end of the millennium and just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ [2 Peter 3:10], but that is not what John had in view here.) John looked ahead to the destruction of the satanic world system and all those who cling to its **lusts**—its ideologies that oppose God and Christ (2 Cor. 10:3–5; 2 Peter 2:1–17; Jude 12–15; Rev. 18:21–24; cf. 19:11–21; 20:7–10). They are all hurtling rapidly toward eternal damnation, as Paul wrote concerning the ungodly who persecuted the Thessalonian believers:

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be

marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thess. 1:6–10)

Paul did not say that those unrepentant members of the world would cease to exist (that would be the unbiblical doctrine of annihilationism), but that they would undergo an everlasting punishment in hell (cf. Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43–49; Rev. 20:15). The world’s process of self-destruction will only accelerate and grow worse in the coming years (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13) until the Lord returns.

On the other hand, the **one who does the will of God**, who savingly trusts and obeys Christ, has nothing to fear concerning the world’s destruction (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). It is God’s will that people believe the gospel, repent of their sin, and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Mark 1:15; John 6:29; 1 Tim. 2:4–6). John earlier had heard these words of Jesus: “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life” (John 6:40). Each person who has obeyed that teaching is a Christian and **lives forever** (Luke 6:46–48; John 8:51; 10:27; 14:21; 15:10; James 1:22–25; 1 John 2:5; 3:24; cf. Pss. 25:10; 111:10).



