

# The First Epistle of John

## (Week 18 – 1John 2:15-17)

### I. Review

A. The apostle, John, offers some encouragement to the different age-groups:

1. To the whole assembly (little children – “*teknion*”), your sins are forgiven (vs. 12)
2. To the veterans (fathers), you know Him who is from the beginning (vs. 13)
3. To the growing, maturing disciple (young men), you have overcome the evil one, as you abide in God’s Word (vs. 13, 14)
4. To the recent convert (children – “*paidon*”), you have come to know the Father (vs. 13)

### II. Do Not Love The World

A. 1John 2:15-17, *“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. (16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”*

1. 1John 2:15, *“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.”*

a. John changes formats here:

- i. First, he establishes the identifying marks of the true believer.
- ii. Now, he commands the true believers not to love the world
- iii. The command is in the present tense

- He is telling them: “Do not be loving (present tense) the world”
- Those of the world do not love Christ, nor is the love of the Father in them, because their lives are governed by the flesh and not the Spirit.

iv. In this statement, John establishes the principle that the true believer knows that Christ calls him to pursue the things of God and not this world (cf. Colossians 3:1-6).

- 1John 4:17 (ESV) says, *“By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world”*
  - We already learned in 1John 2:4-5 that those who know and abide in Christ ought to walk as He did (in this world).
- 1John is a book of contrasts.
  - Here, you see a contrast:
    - a. People who are in the world and love it
    - b. People who are in the world but not of it.
  - Just as a boat is designed to be on the water, we are designed to be in the world
  - However, having the world in you is as disastrous as having the water in the boat!

- v. **Question: Is John saying here that we are not to love the people of the world?**
    - No! As it is written in John 3:16, God so loved the world!
      - Jesus spent time with tax collectors and ‘sinners,’ sharing with them the good news of the kingdom of God
        - a. Matthew 9:10-13
          - i. Matthew throws a dinner party involving other tax collectors and ‘sinners’ – Jesus was in their midst conversing with them.
          - b. It is good for us to be among the lost and impact them with the love of God.
    - We are to love the souls of men but not the things of this world (that is, that invisible system controlled by Satan).
    - He explains what things we are not to love in verse 16...
2. **1John 2:16, “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world.”**
  - a. The Spirit of God tells us three things we are never to love:
    - i. The desires of the flesh
    - ii. The desires of the eyes
    - iii. Pride in possessions
  - b. Lets first deal with *the desires of the flesh*
    - i. Greek word: “*epithumia*” – a longing; desire; lust
      - “*epi*” – over, upon
      - “*thumos*” – passion (as in breathing hard); fierceness
    - ii. Denotes a strong desire; an intense longing!
    - iii. **Question: How do you know when there is “*epithumia*” in your life?**
      - When you can’t get your mind off of that “something.”
      - It compels you.
      - It is your focus.
      - It is not a lot of things; it is that “something” that has your undivided attention.
  - iv. The Greek word “*epithumia*” is not a bad word:
    - Luke 22:15 (ESV), “*And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired (epithumia) to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"*
    - Phil. 1:23 (ESV), “*I am hard pressed between the two. My desire (epithumia) is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better"*
    - 1Thess. 2:17 (ESV), “*But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire (epithumia) to see you face to face"*
  - v. God created us to be concentrated and focused on the things that God has put before us. (cf. Ephesians 2:10)
  - vi. But when that focus becomes the things of the flesh and pleasing the flesh, that is the “*epithumia*” we are never to love.
  - vii. Such desires are not of God, but of the world and the one who rules it!

viii. **Question: What does it mean to follow after the flesh? How does it express itself?**

- **Jude 1:16 gives us an example of how to identify one that follows after the flesh:**
  - **Jude 1:16 (ESV),** *“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”*
    - a. **To grumble – “to utter sounds or words indistinctly or with a low voice and with the lips partly closed”**
    - b. **Malcontent – “one who bears a grudge from a sense of grievance or thwarted ambition”**
  - **If you ever want to find somebody who is “following after the flesh,” listen to them for a while.**
  - **Note: Jude is addressing those who change the grace of God (that leads to godliness – Titus 2:11-12) into immoral behavior.**

### III. Conclusion

A. Here are questions to ask yourself to see whether you love the Father or the world:

1. **Which do you seek with more fervor: The wealth and honors of the world or the riches of grace and the approval of God?**
  2. **Which have the greater attraction: The pleasures of the world, which are temporary, or those pleasures at God’s right hand, which are for eternity?**
  3. **Where does your confidence lie: In the money you possess or in the living and faithful God, who has promised to supply all your needs?**
  4. **Which causes the deeper sorrow: A temporal loss or a break in your fellowship with God?**
    1. **Which gives you more joy: Spending money for personal comforts and luxuries or spending money to further the gospel and kingdom of Christ?**
    1. **What most dominates your mind: Thoughts and schemes after worldly advancements or efforts to grow in character and knowledge of Jesus Christ?**
- a. **Most of us made the choice to love the Father!**
  - i. **But we must maintain that love!**
  - i. **Do not yield to the temptations of the world, but do the will of God.**