

What in the World?

Youth Camp 2008

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1 John 2:15-17 ESV 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. The Principle

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. ~1 John 2:15 ESV

The world is sin's system, not God's creation—designed by Satan to seduce mankind by drawing us away from the Father's love.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.
~ John 17:15-16 NIV

This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. ~ John 3:19 ESV

What is Worldliness?

Worldliness is human nature without God. ~Joel Beeke, *Overcoming the World*

Worldliness...is an orientation, a way of thinking and believing. Worldliness is accepting the world's definitions; the world's measuring sticks, the world's goals.
~John MacArthur

See "Think About It" appendix

Worldliness is accepting & going along with the values & practices of our culture without discerning if they are pleasing to God. ~Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins*

Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
~James 4:4 ESV

The world draws the heart from God; and the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God decays. ~Matthew Henry

The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but endless nibbling at the table of the world. ~John Piper

I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church. ~Charles Spurgeon

2. The Peril

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. ~1 John 2:16

a. Desires (Cravings) of the Flesh

Cravings come when I try to fulfill normal desires in sinful ways. When I seek blessing for myself rather than as a gift from God, I make myself a slave to that desire.

The evil in our desires often lies not in what we want, but in the fact that we want it too much! ~David Powlison paraphrasing John Calvin

The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other...
~ Galatians 5:17 NIV

Blessings from God when sought for themselves, rather than as gifts to be received with thankfulness, reduce us to slaves. ~John White

b. Desires (Lust) of the Eyes

Lust is the limitless appetite of my eyes to crave things that God hasn't given me, resulting in a heart of covets & complains.

"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." ~Achan in Joshua 7:21 ESV

The gifts of a generous God become necessities. We collect them passionately and we worship what we collect. We lust for things. ~John White

c. Pride (Boasting) in What we Have & Do

Boasting is trying to impress others with what I have & what I do. I want to be noticed for my reputation, clothing or possessions instead of my character or godliness. I consider my image more important than the glory of God or the good of others.

You boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil! ~James 4:16 ESV

3. The Promise

The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. ~1 John 2:17 ESV

All the evils in the world come not because our desires for happiness are too strong, but because they are so weak that we settle for fleeting pleasures that do not satisfy our deepest souls, but in the end destroy them. ~John Piper

The antidote to worldliness is the cross of Jesus Christ. ~CJ Mahaney, Worldliness

When someone sets his affections upon the cross and the love of Christ, he crucifies the world as a dead and undesirable thing. The baits of sin lose their attraction and disappear. Fill your affections with the cross of Christ and you will find no room for sin. ~John Owen, Sin and Temptation

Beware of ever supposing that you may go too far in religion, and of secretly trying to keep in with the world. I want no one to become a hermit, a monk or a nun; I wish everyone to do his real duty in that state of life to which he is called. But I do urge on every professing Christian who wishes to be happy the immense importance of making no compromise between God and the world. Do not try to drive a hard bargain, as if you wanted to give Christ as little of your heart as possible lest you overreach yourself and end by losing all. Love Christ with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. Seek first the kingdom of God, and believe that then all other things shall be added to you. ~J.C. Ryle, Thoughts for Young Men

Eradication of worldliness is not an end in itself. Resisting worldliness is absolutely vital, but not ultimately most significant. We must fight worldliness because it dulls our affections for Christ and distracts our attention from Christ. Worldliness is so serious because Christ is so glorious! ~CJ Mahaney, Worldliness

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."
~ Matthew 13:44 NIV

When Making a Decision...

1. Does it make me love God more? (*Luke 10:27*)
2. Does it honor God & my parents? (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 10:31*)
3. Does it present a temptation to sin? (*Romans 13:14, 2 Timothy 2:22*)
4. Do I have a clear conscience? (*Romans 14:23*)
5. What's my motive? (*Proverbs 16:2*)
6. Is it enslaving or harmful? (*1 Corinthians 6:12b*)
7. Is it a wise or foolish use of time? (*Ephesians 5:15-16*)
8. Does it cause anyone to stumble? (*1 Corinthians 10:32*)
9. Does it promote the good of others? (*1 Corinthians 10:24*)
10. Does it set a godly example for others to follow? (*1 Corinthians 11:1*)
11. Is it legal? (*Romans 13:1*)
12. Is it profitable or beneficial? (*1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23*)

Application Questions

For Teens to Discuss with Parents:

1. What things are stealing your heart and time from the Lord?
 - What profitable things are missing from your life?
 - What is the most important change you need to make?
2. In what ways are you tempted to (or have been sinning in) worldliness?
 - What effect is this activity having on your relationship with God?
 - What ways have you resisted your parent's wisdom in this area?
 - How might you replace this activity(s) with something pleasing to God?
3. How can we (your parents) help you to pursue God & fight worldliness?

For Parents Consideration:

1. What example are you setting?
2. What protection are you providing?
 - Develop standards and communicate the what's and why's to them
 - Ask the hard questions – what are they viewing, listening to, what are they talking about,
 - Prepare them for events and have them share when they return
 - Be discerning and teach your children to discern
 - Teach them to be courageous
 - Be willing to work through your children's displeasure