

Do Not Love

1 John 2:15-27

“Do Not Love the World”

1. Read 1 John 2:15-17. John writes, “Do not love the world¹ or anything in the world” (2:15a, *NIV*). Elsewhere John records the following words of Jesus: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son” (John 3:16a). Are these verses inconsistent with each other? Do they contradict each other? Explain.²
2. The things that “come from the world” include 1) the lust (desires) of the flesh; 2) the lust (desires) of the eyes, and 3) the pride of life (2:16).³ What specific types of attitudes and behaviors fall into these categories?



3. What is wrong with “loving the world?” What is wrong with “worldly desires?”

📖 “...friendship with the world is hostility toward God” (James 4:4, *HCSB*)

📖 Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24, *NIV*)

4. What can we do to avoid “loving the world”?

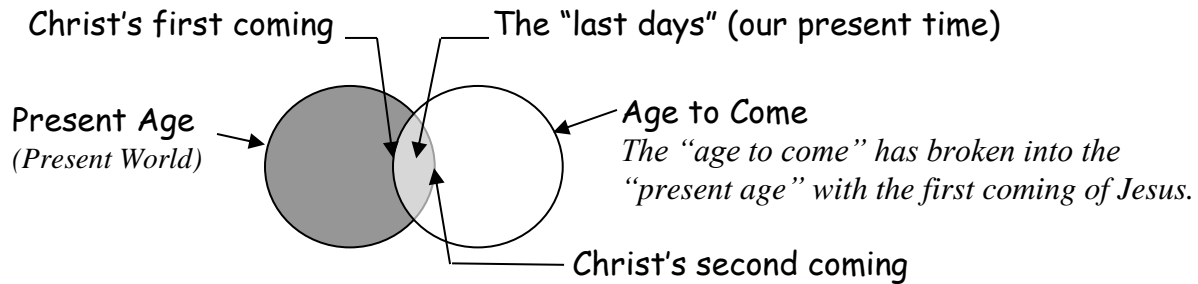
Personal Reflection

- Do you recognize any symptoms of “loving the world” in your life? When someone looks at your life, do they see “friendship with the world” or “devotion to God?”

¹ In this context, the Greek word *kosmos* (world) means ‘the fallen world, and everything that belongs to it, as that which is hostile (opposed) to God.’ This is the most common meaning of the word *kosmos* in John’s writings.

² God’s ‘love’ in John 3:16 is a holy love of redemption. The ‘love’ in 1 John 2:15 is a selfish love of embracing worldly things. Some also say that ‘world’ has a different nuance in John 3:16 (i.e., ‘the world as humankind’).

³ ‘the lust of the flesh’ (επιθυμία της σαρκος); ‘the lust of the eyes’ (επιθυμία των οφθαλμων); ‘the pride of life’ (αλαζονεία του βίου). ‘Desire’ (επιθυμία) can be good or bad, but the desires of fallen, sinful humanity tend to be bad. And ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23).



Beware!

5. Read 1 John 2:18-23.⁴ John talks about “antichrists” (*those “against Christ”*).⁵ What are characteristics of these “antichrists?” What essential Christian teaching do they deny?

And Take Care!

6. Read 1 John 2:24-27. In telling believers what will keep them safe from being led astray, John uses the word “remain (abide)” (*menō*) several times. What will keep believers safe?⁶

📖 “[God] anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (*2 Corinthians 1:21b-22, NIV*).

📖 *Jesus said*, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth” (*John 14:16-17a, NIV*). “...he will guide you into all the truth” (*16:13b*)

Reflection/Application

- How do you answer the question? - Who is Jesus Christ? What you believe really matters!
- It is important to know the difference between genuine biblical Christianity and unbiblical (false) Christianity. Beware of “new” and strange teachings (relative to the basic teaching you hear at BCF).⁷ *Beware, and take care!* Stay in fellowship with the church, hold tightly to God’s Word (read it, know it), and pray for the Holy Spirit’s illumination and guidance.

⁴ The ‘last days’ (which include the ‘last hour’) denote the period between Christ’s first coming and his return to fully establish his kingdom (*Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2*). The Scriptures foretell the coming of a great enemy of God before Christ’s return. Among other descriptions, this person is called ‘the antichrist’ (*2:18*) and the ‘man of lawlessness’ (*2 Thessalonians 2:1-12*). The ‘many antichrists’ (*2:18*) are forerunners to the one antichrist yet to come. These forerunners reveal the ‘spirit of the antichrist’ (*4:3*). They deny that Jesus is the divine Christ.

⁵ The prefix ‘anti’ can mean both ‘against’ and ‘instead of.’ Thus the term ‘antichrist’ might also have the sense of ‘counterfeit Christ.’ Jesus said, ‘For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect – if that were possible. So be on your guard’ (*Mark 13:22-23a, NIV84*).

⁶ Both ‘what you have heard from the beginning’ (the objective apostolic teaching) and ‘the anointing you received’ (the subjective experience of the Spirit). These must be kept in balance. Stott notes, ‘Some honor the Word and neglect the Spirit who alone can interpret it; others honor the Spirit but neglect the Word out of which he teaches’ (John R.W. Stott, *The Letters of John* [Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988], 119).

⁷ This assumes that the basic teaching at BCF is biblical, which I believe is true. The same can be said of various other churches and groups. See Jay’s “Are They ‘Christians?’” to help distinguish true Christian groups.