

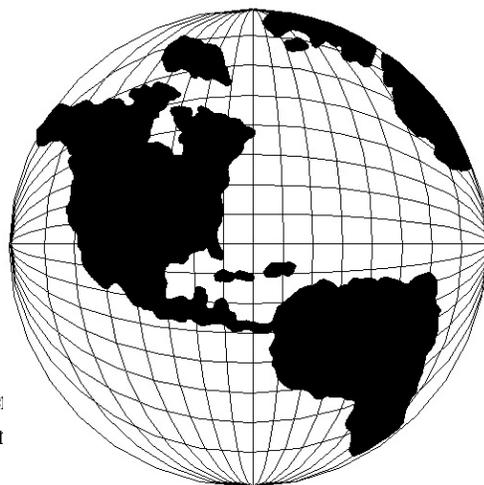
LESSON 4

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Scripture Texts: John 17:14-16; 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 6:19-21; Romans 12:2

To be mature Christians, each avenue of our spiritual lives must be developed according to His Word. We must grow in grace and daily reach nearer the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is a personal responsibility. Each Christian lives his life before God alone.

Many saints work with and are neighbors to sinners. There are different ways of associating with them. The association must have a positive effect upon sinner, not a negative effect on the saint. The separation between saint and sinner should be in conduct, in nature, and in allegiance to God. Today we study another area of daily living important to spiritual growth.



MEMORY VERSE: *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

— James 4:4b

Christ Is Our Example

John 17:14-16. **The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world.** Jesus is the Son of God with the nature of God. When He came to earth, He became human also. He lived *in* the world but partook not *of* the world. He ate with sinners and lifted them up. He did not allow them to pull Him down. **Even as I am not of the world.** He is our example. He was of a different nature. The world (the spirit in sinners) hated Christ. Christ's followers are like Him. Therefore, the world hates them also. God does not wish to separate us from the people of the world but **from the evil** of it. By association with the people, saints may win them to Christ—but only if they remain separate from the evil. We are in the world, but we dare not be of the world.

Love Not the World

First John 2:15-17. **If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** We cannot love God and the world at the same time. The love which the Father gives loves godly things. This love is given when one obtains salvation. What is the love of the world? The "world" in John 3:16 means the *people* living in the world. In 1 John 2:15 "world" means the *nature* of unregenerate, sinful humanity. To love the world in this sense is to love possessions, pleasures, the praise of men, the satisfaction of fleshly desires, and the attempts to feed the soul on the temporary enjoyments of this life. Worldly ones live before men, the unworldly before God. **Love not . . .** Why is it forbidden? Because it **passeth away**. It is unwise to invest in a sure loser. **He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.** God offers us this wonderful alternative. A sure winner now and in the life to come.

The world looks with disfavor upon saints. They cannot comprehend the spiritually minded, unworldly people. "They think it strange" (1 Peter 4:4). To the world, saints are misfits.

True Treasures

Matthew 6:19-21. **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.** Jesus here is not condemning acquiring of houses, possessions, and goods. He contrasted the poverty of these with the lasting treasure of spiritual riches. He is

helping us to put things in their right perspective, to weigh our decisions in the light of eternity. How can we properly balance our lives in these matters? We must heed the warnings as to the nature of evil. Turn from worldly customs. Establish a wholesome environment in which our souls may thrive. What things mean most to you? What, to you, is true wealth?

Jesus points out two things about possessions: (1) They are temporary, and they decay through such destructive means as **moth and rust**. (2) They may be stolen or lost. The treasure of obedient service to the cause of Christ is lasting; it cannot decay or be stolen or lost. Verse 21 points out that whoever considers material possessions the real treasure will set his heart on them. This will crowd out loyalty to God and service to men.

The Transformed Mind

Romans 12:2. **And be not conformed to this world.** Be not fashioned according to this world. Upright living is purchased at the price of sacrifice. It never was and never will be easy to live a good life in a wicked world. The saint is in constant contention with the world. The spirit of our society says to do what is being done, follow the broad way of pleasure and indulgent living. But the Gospel of Christ instructs with this counsel: **Be not conformed . . . but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.** A man who has found Christ gets a new set of ideals. Not only does his behavior change, but his philosophy of life changes also. This command means for us what it meant for saints many hundreds of years ago. The Christian must be different from the non-Christian. His life must stand tall in an environment which has been fashioned apart from God's will.

Salvation enables a person to see life from God's standpoint instead of from man's. Then we enter into a beautiful and glorious life that is worth all the self-denial it cost. We prove to ourselves by living this kind of life **what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

An unworldly person is a changed person. He is a new man. He has a new Master, new life, new nature, new purpose, and new power. As a citizen of the heavenly country, he has renounced allegiance to the prince of this world and given it to the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

JUST A THOUGHT

**True education should make us more like Christ,
not more secular, it should deepen our Christian principles,
not lead us into uncertainty and doubt.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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