

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO LOVE THE WORLD AND THE DANGERS THEREIN?

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In the bible, the term “world” can refer to the earth and the physical universe (**John 13:1**) but it most often refers to the humanistic system that is at odds with God – **John 17:9, 1 John 4:5, Romans 12:2**.

When the bible says that God loves the world, it is referring to human beings who live here (**1 John 4:9**). And His children, we are to love other people – **Romans 13:8, 1 John 4:7, 1 Peter 1:22**. The parable of the Good Samaritan makes it clear that we cannot pick and choose whom to love – **Luke 10:30-37**.

When we are told not to love the world, the bible is referring to the world’s corrupt value system. Satan has made itself the god of this world and he has his own value system contrary to God’s – **2 Corinthians 4:4**.

**1 John 2:16** details that Satan’s system promotes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Every sin imaginable can be summed up in those three evils: envy, adultery, pride, lying, selfishness and more, spring from those three roots.

Loving the world means being devoted to the world’s treasures, philosophies and priorities. God wants His children to set their priorities according to His eternal value system through the cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit – **Galatians 5:22**. We are to “seek first” God’s kingdom and righteousness – **Matthew 6:33**. No one can serve two masters – **Matthew 6:24** and we cannot be devoted to both God and the world at the same time.

When we enter God’s family through faith in Christ, God gives us the ability to exit the world’s rat race – **2 Corinthians 5:17**. We become citizens of another kingdom – **Philippians 1:27, 3:20**. At this point our desires turn heaven ward and we begin to store up eternal instead of temporal treasures – **Luke 12:33, Matthew 19:21**.

In today's world, most people have an easy love for worldly things, but a hard time for Spiritual things. As kids, teenagers and young adults, we love to spend time with our families and friends. We love to play sports and video games, watch movies and football and be involved in whatever makes us happy at the expense of our Spiritual duties. Worse still, we Christians often use the world as a standard in what we do, say, or wear etc.

To resolve this imbalance, a line of distinction must be made clear between the Christian and the world. By what standard can a Christian today determine what is permissible as Christian recreation and what is worldly, harmful and therefore wrong?

The bible does not deal with this problem in specific "*thou shall not*" statements but in principles. They have application to those things that are not wrong in themselves but are made wrong because of their influence and effect.

Apply these principles to your problems concerning your conduct and relationship with God:

1. Does it destroy your identity as a Christian by causing you to be regarded of the world? **Romans 12:1,2, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 7:1.**
2. Is the practice questionable in your own mind and therefore an offense to your conscience? Note: the approval of the conscience does not make anything right which is otherwise wrong.
3. Does it have a weakening influence on others and will become a stumbling block to them? **Matthew 18:6,7.**
4. Is it destructive to your body?
5. Does it conflict with your duty as a Christian? **Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 2:4.**
6. Does it cultivate an inordinate fleshly appetite? **Colossians 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 8:2-7.**
7. Does it bring you under weakening association and influence? **1 Corinthians 15:33, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22.**
8. Does it bring upon you an unequal yoke and place you at a disadvantage in serving the Lord? **2 Corinthians 6:14-18.**

If the above questions or any of them must be answered in the affirmative in our relationship with the world, then the gospel of Christ demands that we leave that thing off. In other words, we must examine our choices and decisions with a view to ensuring that they are in conformity with what and who proffer to be. If any aspect therein destroys our identity as Christians, then such must be avoided.

## The Dangers of Loving The World

Christians are strongly warned about the dangers of worldliness by the apostle John. He wrote, *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 –* **1 John 2:15-17**. Two specific spiritual dangers are mentioned by the apostle. No Christian should consider these dangers to be trivial matters. Herein we have a very crucial message for the modern Christian who is increasingly embracing worldliness.

The love of the world excludes the love of the Father. Firstly, John warned, *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”*, that is to say, such a man has no relationship with God. It is impossible to love the world and God at the same time. Love for the world pushes out love for God. The subtle existence of worldliness within the hearts of Christians keeps them away from God and His kingdom. A look at such Christians tells us that they have much of earth and little of heaven. They rather cherish the company of worldly men than that of Christians. They choose to stay away from fellowship and other Christian activities. When the pursuit of the material world increases in their hearts their delights in the things of God fades away.

The danger is further emphasized by John in verse 16 when he wrote *“<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.”* Once the world takes over the heart of a Christian, he will soon lose his enjoyment of the Father’s love and his desire to do his Father’s will. The bible will become boring and prayer a difficult chore. Worldliness embraces the temporal at the expense of the eternal.

Secondly, John warned, *“<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 world and its lusts are heading towards everlasting destruction, while the obedient Christian is going to live eternally. The world and the genuine Christian do not share the same destiny.

The world is passing away! It is rushing into eternal hell. For anyone to set his heart on the perishing world is to inherit heartache and misery at the end. Would you like to spend a day to relax in a sinking ship?

So if you love the glories and the pageantry of this world, you will pass away together with them. You will not only lose your treasures but also your soul. So if you are stuck in some worldly living, be forewarned of your destruction.

Another danger of loving the world is that it can lead to progressive compromise and ultimately to backsliding. One sign of knowing that your love for God is waning is that you will begin to make excuses for certain sins or wrong doings. God's standard will become so high and unreachable, that you will come up with ungodly substitutes. Do you find yourself explaining away adultery, corruption, theft, manipulation of records, forsaking the assembly of the saints? If the standards of the world are now being favoured above standards of God, it shows your love for God is fast ebbing. It starts with little complaints and finding faults with the church, church leaders, activities and programmes. Before long, one would realize how far one has drifted.

## Conclusion

For us to overcome the world we must first realize that there is a character at the centre of it all; he is satan, the devil. His purpose is to draw men's heart from God. In doing that he does not even spare the leaders. This is why we must pray for the leaders. A leader who loves the world will be incapable of making effective intercession for the flock. Can you imagine a leader and a fellow companion of Paul becoming victim of this? Demas who was so consumed with things of the kingdom, gradually allowed worldly lusts to seep into his heart until it was too late – **2 Timothy 4:10**.

The question now is: *"is it possible for us not to love the world with its tempting pleasures?"* Yes, we can, if we but imitate our Master Jesus. Recall that satan offered Jesus all kingdoms of the world if He would only fall down and worship him but Jesus refused this ungodly offer but instead He chose to go to the cross where He died for our sins.

The Lord Jesus not only overcame satan's world system but He also delivered us from it. In **Galatians 1:4**, it is said that Jesus *"gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."*

By the symbolic death, burial and resurrection with Christ, we have been delivered from satan's world system. We are in the world but not of the world – **Colossians 1:12,13**.