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# JOHN'S WARNING TO BELIEVERS

1 John 2:14-19  
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## PREAMBLE

*"I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. 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. 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

*Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us". (1 John 2:14-19 NKJV).*

## KEY DEDUCTIONS

- General warnings to faithful Christians.

- Earnest caution for Christians not to love the world or things in the world.
- John shared three temptation model that Satan operates with in "the world" that damns the soul viz.
  1. The lust of the flesh
  2. The lust of the eyes
  3. The pride of life
- The fallen World is passing away, and the lust of it; but faithful Children of God abides forever.

## ❖ Warning of the Antichrist THE FALLEN WORLD

*"I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one. 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 2:14-15 NKJV)".*

Westcott describes the world as "That which finds its proper sphere and fulfilment in a finite order and without God". It is life as organized apart from God.

The phrase “Do not love the world or things in the world” does not suggest that we close our eyes to the beauties of nature. ***There is a story of a Puritan {a person who adheres to strict moral or religious principles, especially one opposed to luxury and sensual enjoyment} who was out for a walk in the country with a friend. The friend noticed a very lovely flower at the roadside and said, “that is a lovely flower”. The Puritan replied, “I have learned to call nothing lovely in this lost and sinful world”.***

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This attitude certainly misrepresents the spirit of our text. The text does not suggest that we as God’s people, are to be isolationists. Although “Chosen out of it, “we are nevertheless to remain “in it” (compare ***John 17:6*** with ***John 17:11, 15***).

**We are to neither conformed to nor contaminated by the world.** Our task is to be unworldly without becoming other worldly {non-natural}. Worldliness is thus a state of mind, or a philosophy of life expressed in anything which hinders man companionship with God. Billy Graham once said, ***“Show me the young man who is totally committed to Christ, and I will show you the young man who has solved the problem of worldliness.”***

The best commentary of the verse is to be found in the words of Jesus: ***“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You***

***cannot serve God and mammon”*** (***Matthew 6:24*** NKJV).

Worldliness is much more subtle in our day than when the words of our text were penned, for now the choice lies not between paganism and Christian standards, but between nominal Christianity {not practicing Christians living} and personal conviction {practicing Christianity; those that have strong belief of their calling}.

That, which may be legitimate to others, but hindering your companionship with God, could thus be classified as worldliness. Thus, worldliness is basically an attitude of mind which, of course, will be reflected in our behaviour.

After the fall of man, the world became corrupted with sin, disease, and death (***Romans 5:12***). Since we live in a fallen world, we now must deal with the sin and temptations of the world. The world is described to be at enmity with God.

The Lord’s half-brother, James tells us, “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (***James 4:4***). A person cannot be a friend to the world and still be a fully devoted follower of the Lord.

This does not mean God hates the people of the world as we are told God loves the world so much that He sent His Son to die for us (***John 3:16-17***). God does not hate the people in the

world, but He does hate the evil practices of the world (**Proverbs 6:16-19; 8:13; Psalm 11:5**).

The practices of the world are evil, sinful, and wicked. If a person loves the ways of the world, then they do not truly know God.

### **THREE TEMPTATION MODEL THAT SATAN OPERATES WITH IN “THE WORLD” THAT DAMNS THE SOUL**

*“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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever”. (1 John 2:16-17 NKJV)*

#### ❖ **THE LUST OF THE FLESH**

*“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace”. (Romans 8:5-6 NKJV)*

The lust of the flesh simply means wanting to gratify our body’s desires at the cost of morality and what’s good for our soul. It can be adultery, drugs, alcohol or food — **whatever meets a physical need in a manner that competes with the role Jesus plays in our lives.**

Interestingly, the things that become temptations to our flesh are never bad in and of themselves. For instance, sex is good for you, in the right circumstances; it is a gift to a husband and wife in the context of marriage. Similarly, drugs are good for you if they are treating an illness

and food is needed to sustain life; it’s also a great way to socialize.

The point is that good things become bad when they have been twisted and perverted by Satan so that we believe that they are the most important thing, or when we become *obsessed* with them; this is when our lives begin to unravel! We are no longer able to control our emotions or what is happening around us.

My beloved brethren, one of the greatest tricks the enemy plays are to get one to focus on a *particular* thing in his/her life so that one takes his/her eyes off Jesus; it creates a great distraction from the cross. When all your energy is invested in something else — something that will ultimately perish — then.

One will be in an exposed or vulnerable position; such a person begins or seems to be walking on a slippery slope. Though you believe it will satiate you (Pleasure of sin), it’s like scratching an itchy skin; giving into the urge will only cause the wound to grow worse.

#### ❖ **THE LUST OF THE EYES**

The lust of the eyes can be described as the sinful desire to want to have the things we see, such as money, material possessions, houses, cars, a certain physical appearance, or even looking at someone lustfully. Our eyes see everything physical around us and our own eyes can cause us to covet or want something we do not possess.

As an example, Eve committed the sinful desire of the lust of the eyes when she saw the forbidden fruit. The Bible tells us, ***“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (Genesis 3:6).***

Eve had seen the fruit as being “good for food,” “pleasing to the eye,” as well as “desirable for gaining wisdom.” **Despite God having clearly forbidden Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:2), Eve chose to listen to the serpent and desired, pursued, and ate the fruit.**

Just as lusting after the fruit with her eyes caused her to want to physically eat the fruit, the sinful desires of the lust of our eyes today can cause us to commit physical sin. Jesus told His disciples that if a person even looks lustfully at a person, the individual has already committed adultery with that person in their heart (***Matthew 5:28***).

**If we merely look and covet after any material possession, we are sinning against God.** The Lord tells us clearly that we must not covet, *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:17).*

In the same manner, Paul reaffirms the importance of abstaining from covetousness when he wrote to the Church in Ephesus (***Ephesians 5:3***).

Covetousness or desiring something someone else has is a sin. When we are not content with what God has given us, we are ultimately complaining against God.

The lust of the eyes does not come from God but comes from the world. This sinful desire comes from the world because the world entices us to want and covet things we do not need or things that will be harmful to us. God does not want us to fall into the temptation of the lust of the eyes because it will only cause us pain, grief, and despair.

#### ❖ THE PRIDE OF LIFE

“The pride of life refers to hunting after honors, titles, and pedigrees, boasting of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honorable acquaintance, and the like”. *Reference: Adam Clarke’s Commentary*

“The pride of life refers to whatever there is that tends to promote pride, or that is an index of pride, such as the ostentatious display of dress, equipage, furniture, etc.” *Reference: Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary.*

The phrase “pride of life” is found only once in the Bible, in ***1 John 2:16***, but the concept of the pride of life, especially as it is linked with the “lust of the eyes” and the “lust of the flesh,” appears in two more significant passages of Scripture—the temptation of Eve in the Garden and the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness (***Matthew 4:8-10***).

The pride of life can be defined as anything that is “of the world,” meaning anything that leads to

arrogance, ostentation, pride in self, presumption, and boasting. John makes it very clear that anything that produces the pride of life comes from a love of the world and *“if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).*

The first example of the temptation of the pride of life occurs in the Garden of Eden, where Eve was tempted by the serpent to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve perceived that the fruit was “good for food,” “pleasing to the eye,” and “desirable for gaining wisdom” (*Genesis 3:6*). She coveted the fruit in three ways. **First, it was appealing to her appetite. This John refers to as the “lust of the flesh,”** the desire for that which satisfies any of the physical needs.

**The fruit was also pleasing or delightful to the eye, that which we see and desire to own or possess. Here is the “lust of the eyes” John refers to.** Finally, Eve somehow perceived that the fruit would make her wise, giving her a wisdom beyond her own. Part of Satan’s lie was that eating the fruit would make her “like God, knowing good and evil” (*Genesis 3:5*). **Eve wanted to be like God in her knowledge, not content to live in a perfect world under His perfect grace and care for her.** Here is the essence of the pride of life—anything that exalts us above our station and offers the illusion of God-like qualities, wherein we boast in arrogance and worldly wisdom.

Satan tried these same three temptations on Christ during His 40

days in the wilderness (*Matthew 4:1-11*). He tempted Jesus with the lust of the flesh, bread for His hunger (vv. 2-3), the lust of the eyes, “all the kingdoms of the world with their splendor” (vv. 8-9), and the pride of life, daring Him to cast Himself from the roof of the Temple in order to prove that He was the Messiah by an ostentatious display of power that was not in the will of God or His plan for the redemption of mankind (vv. 5-6). But Jesus, though He was “tempted in every way, just as we are” (*Hebrews 4:15*), resisted the devil and used the Word of God to ensure victory over him.

Christians have always been, and will always be, enticed by the same three temptations Eve and Jesus experienced. Satan doesn’t change his methods; he doesn’t have to because they continue to be successful.

- He tempts us with the lust of the flesh—sexual gratification, gluttony, excessive alcohol consumption, and drugs, both legal and illegal, as well as the “deeds of the flesh” about which Paul warned the Galatians, *“sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” (Galatians 5:19-21).*
- He tempts us with the lust of the eyes—the endless accumulation of “stuff” with which we fill our homes and garages and the insatiable desire for more, better, and newer possessions,

which ensnares us and hardens our hearts to the things of God.

**Satan most evil temptation may be the pride of life, the very sin that resulted in Satan's expulsion from heaven. He desired to be God, not to be a servant of God (Isaiah 14:12-15).** The arrogant boasting which constitutes the pride of life motivates the other two lusts as it seeks to elevate itself above all others and fulfill all personal desires.

- The pride of life is the root cause of strife in families, churches, and nations. The pride of life “comes not from the Father, but from the world.” And, as such, it is passing away with the world, but those who resist and overcome the temptation of the pride of life - do the will of God, and “the man who does the will of God lives forever” (**1 John 2:17**).

#### **WARNING ON ANTICHRIST - vs 18,19**

They went out; apostatized. From us; from the church or company of Christians or Believers. Not of us; not

#### **CONCLUSION**

Right before John tells us about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, he tells us not to love the things of the world. **1 John 2:15** reads, “*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*”

In other words, if a person loves the world, they cannot love God at the same time. The practices of the world are evil, sinful, and wicked. If a person loves the ways of the world, then they do not truly know God.

real Christians. That they were not all of us; or, that all are not of us; that some who belong to our body are not really of us, but Christians only in name. When professors of religion apostatize, embrace error, and live in sin, they show to all that they are not the children of God. **Job 17:9; John 4:14**. Our next Teacher will share more insight on Anti-Christ next Lord's Day

The last time; the same last time as that spoken of in **1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Titus 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3**. It agrees with the time foretold by our Lord when iniquity should abound, and false Christs and false prophets should arise. {**Matthew 24:10-12; Mark 13:22; Luke 21:8**}. It had a fulfilment in the last days of the apostolic age, but a higher fulfilment is reserved for the last days connected with Christ's second coming. **Anti-Christ; the opposer of Christ and his cause.** Whereby we know; because it had been predicted that in the last times such persons will arise. See also **Matthew 24:24, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 1:7**.

The Apostle John tells us that there are three things the world will tempt us with: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Each of these three temptations comes from the evil, wicked world. The Bible tells us the world is under the control of Satan and has blinded the minds of unbelievers (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

I encourage everyone to set your mind and thoughts on things above and *make God your only obsession*. He is all we will ever need, and only God offers us a more abundant and satisfying life than any fleshly passion you can imagine!