

What In The World Is The World?

James 4:4 1 John 2:15-17

When you read the Bible you find the “world” mentioned on many occasions. When you look at the many references to the “world” in the Bible, you might find yourself asking, “What in the world is the world?”

The word “world” is used to describe three different things.

On some occasions it refers to the earth. We read in Acts 17:24 “God made the world and all things therein...” The “world” that is referred to is the planet on which we live.

The word at other times refers to mankind. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world...” the word as used here refers to mankind, all the people that live on planet earth.

There are times when you find both the earth and mankind spoken of as the “world” in the same verse an example is found in John 1:10 where we read “He was in the world (earth), and the world (earth) was made by Him, and the world (mankind) knew Him not.”

We also find that the word refers to a system of things, such as in our text where we are told not to love the world. James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17. The world in this case is a system that is opposed to God, and is going in the opposite direction of God. It is a system of things that seeks to turn us away from God.

We could speak of the world of sports, the world of finance, the world of politics. We are not referring here to a planet, but certain attitudes, activities, and purposes. There is a system, an economic, social, political and religious system.

Often when we speak of the **world**, and read about the **world** in the Bible, we are speaking and reading of Satan’s system for opposing the work of God on this earth. It is the very opposite of what is Godly, holy, and spiritual. And this is why God’s people are so reluctant to get caught up in entertainment, sports, etc.

How can a **true** Christian be so bound by T.V., sports, etc, where many of the athletes are on drugs and steroids. Not to mention scenes of a naked woman on Monday night football. Is this helping you to get ready for Heaven?

What you are saying to your small children and teenagers, and wife, is, “I choose the **world** over God and Heaven.”

Romans 12:1,2; 2 Timothy 3:1-4

How can you claim to be a Christian, let alone a Holiness Christian, when you have to have these things to **amuse** you?

Merriam Webster Classics Edition Dictionary—amuse: To divert the attention of.

Amuse stresses engaging the attention so as to keep one interested or engrossed.

Muse: A state of deep thought, meditate, ponder. Consider the word, “amoral”, which means “outside the sphere to which moral judgments apply. Lacking moral sensibility.

In other words, you have parked your moral sensibility in neutral. You are willing to go either way.

Amuse means your mind is parked in neutral. It is open to entertainment. This is in direct

disobedience to Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 5:14-16; Philippians 4:8.

We read in 1 John 5:19, “The whole world lieth in wickedness.” John speaks of this world system as one of wickedness. Satan is called “the prince of this world.” (John 12:31). Satan is the energizer behind this system. Unsaved people are called “the children of this world” (Luke 16:8), simply meaning that lost people live according to this system. Their attitudes, behavior, and life is governed by the world.

John speaks to us about this system (world) and reminds us that believers are to live for another world. We may live on this world (planet) and in this world’s (system), but we are not of this world (system). We are to live for another world.

Notice with me what John says about:

1. OUR LOVE FOR THIS WORLD

He says in verse 15, “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” In verse 10 John said, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” We are to love everybody, but we are not to love everything. We are not to love the world.

What is John saying to us? First, he is speaking of:

A. An attitude That We Are To Possess

John says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Implied in his words is that we are to have a hatred for the world. It is an attitude that is to affect how we feel and what we do. There is to be no affection for the world and no association with the world.

WHAT WE HATE DOES NOT HOLD OUR AFFECTIONS.

WHAT WE HATE IS NOT A TEMPTATION TO US.

We are to view this world for what it is. It is a system and society that is going in the opposite direction of God. It leaves God out of its plans, purpose, and procedures. As a Christian, how can we love such a system?

He also speaks of:

B. An Affection That We Are To Protect

Notice John’s words. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” To John everything was black and white. In certain areas there was no gray. He is very plain and clear that if we love the world, we do not love God. Stop telling lies—You do not love God.

The aim of the world is to keep us from loving God. The world does everything in its power to cool our love for God. The bottom line is, if the world cannot stop us obeying, it will try to stop us loving; if it is unable to stop us loving, it will make us love the wrong thing.”

John Wesley described worldliness as **anything** that cools our love for God.

Worldliness is anything that keeps me from loving God as I ought to love Him and from doing the will of God as I ought!”

A group of first-graders had just completed a tour of a hospital and the nurse asked if there were any questions. One asked, “how come the people who work here are always washing their hands?” The nurse replied, “They are washing their hands for two reasons. First, they love health; and secondly, they hate germs.”

As Christians, we are to hate the **world** and **love** God. We are to let nothing quench or cool the love we have for God.

Secondly, we see that John speaks of:

2. OUR LIVING IN THIS WORLD

We read in verse 16, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” John reminds us that the world is after us. It wants to suck us into its way of thinking and living. As I stated earlier, as Christians, we are in the world, but not of the world. Therefore we are to live in this world in such a way that we reflect that

we are not of this world. John 17:11-19

How should we live in this world? First, we should:

A. Recognize The Methods Of The World.

John describes 3 ways in which the world tries to pull us down and in. First, he speaks of the lust of the flesh. The word “lust” speaks of the cravings and longings of the flesh. The “flesh: is our fallen nature, the old man, that part of us that still longs after the things of this world. By our flesh, the world seeks to get us to fulfill the desires of the flesh in a wrong way.

You take the matter of thirst. Thirst is a God-given desire. There is nothing wrong with satisfying our thirst, provided we satisfy it in a way that honors God. A cold “bud” is not God’s way of satisfying this desire. The same is true about sex. As with thirst, the desire for sex is God-given. There is nothing wrong with satisfying this desire so long as one satisfies it within the bonds of marriage. Sex was never intended to be between a man and woman. It was intended to be between a husband and a wife. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex is the fulfilling of this desire outside of God’s plan.

Because our flesh seeks to pull us away from God, Paul said, “have no confidence in the flesh” Philippians 3:3, and “Make not provision for the flesh” Romans 13:14. We are not to give our flesh an inch, for if we do so, it will become a ruler.

The second method of the world is the “lust of the eyes.” The eyes are a gateway to the mind. The world puts things before our eyes for the purpose of getting us to think about certain things. A good example is found in the story of Achan. We read in Joshua 7:21, “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.” Achan first “saw” and then “coveted.” What he saw tempted him and pulled at him. The eyes see and the flesh longs.

Thirdly, John speaks of the “pride of life.” The word “pride” describes a braggart, one who was trying to impress others with their importance. The world seeks to get us to become self-centered instead of Christ-centered. The world seeks to get us living for self rather than God.

When you look at Adam and Eve you find that these were the methods the devil used to seduce them: We read in Genesis 3:6, “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” There was the “lust of the flesh” for she “saw that the tree was good for food.” It possessed that which could satisfy her desire for food. There was the “lust of the eyes” for she “saw that the tree was good for food” and was “pleasant to the eyes.” Finally, there was the “pride of life” for she saw it as “a tree to be desired to make one wise.”

These are the methods of the world that we must recognize. Secondly, as we live in this world we should also:

B. Resist The Mastery Of The World

The Bible says in Romans 12:1-2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The world not only wants to pull us away from God, but also squeeze us into its mold so it can shape and fashion us after its image. The world is going in the opposite direction of God and seeks to pull us in that image. The world seeks to so influence our life so that there is nothing about our life that resembles Christ. Therefore, we must not let the world master us.

It has been well said that our flesh is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master. Likewise, the world is a terrible master. If allowed, the world will dominate and control our lives. It will so influ-

ence us so that our affections are set on things around us rather than above us. As believers, we must be aware of the world's methods and flee the world's mastery.

Thirdly, John speaks to us of:

3. OUR LONGING AFTER THIS WORLD

We read in verse 17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." We find within ourselves longing for this world and the things of the world. How foolish when we consider the nature and future of the world. In verse 17 John challenges us to ask ourselves two questions. First, we should ask ourselves if we are:

A. Living For That Which Is Passing

Johns says, "And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof." Paul made a similar statement in 1 Corinthians 7:21, "the fashion of this world passeth away." The world will one day pass away. Because this world shall one day pass away, how foolish to live for that which is temporary.

However, like Demas, there are those who are saved that are drawn in and away by this passing world. Paul said, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" 2 Timothy 4:10. Like Demas, there are those who are living for the temporal and temporary.

Are you living for that which is passing? Secondly, John challenges us to ask ourselves if we are:

B. Living For That Which Is Permanent

He says, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." When we live for God we are living for that which is permanent and eternal. When we put God's will first in our lives, we are investing in that which will last for all eternity. To live for the world is to live for that which is passing. To live for God is to live for that which is permanent.

We will never put this world beneath us until we have seen a better world above." Only when we understand the nature of the world and the will of god will we set our affections on things above rather than on things around us.

When it comes to the world why do we want to invest our lives in something that will not last? The poet said it well:

ONLY ONE LIFE TO LIVE AND TWILL SOON BE PAST

ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR CHRIST WILL LAST

If T.V. comes between you and serving God, then T.V. is your God.

If Videos come between you and serving God, then Videos are your God.

If Basketball comes between you and serving God, then Basketball is your God.

There is a multitude lost and on their way to a devil's hell and we ignore their cry, and their fate because we want to be entertained.

Charles Finney and the love of the world...How do we spend our money?

2 Timothy 3:1-5