

Separate from the World

I John 2:15-16

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“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. 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” (I John 2:15-16).

Why not love the world? What's wrong with the joy that comes to my heart and the affection I feel for the streets of my old home town? Especially when I go back and see the little one room school house where I began my education, or the old farm with its big red ramshackle barn and rambling two story house. What's wrong with my feeling good when I go outside today and stand beside the creek that runs through our back yard, or glance up and gaze at the awesome majesty of Pikes Peak? Wasn't the world made by God, and doesn't the Bible say, “and God saw everything that He had made and behold, it was very good”?

Yes, of course, it does, but this passage is not talking about that. John is talking about an attitude of rebellion against God, the worldly ambition, vanity and pride that permeates our society. All that traps us into forgetting God and makes us antagonistic to the will of God, that's what we are to “love not.”

Remember when Jesus taught the parable of the sower: “And these are they that are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:18, 19).

I watched a cornfield be destroyed by weeds. We had a neighbor who planted a field of corn and cultivated it once, and then left it alone. Every farmer in the state of Iowa knows you have to cultivate corn three times, but he cultivated it once.

After the crop had been ruined my older brother asked him why he had done it. “Well,” he said, “it was just an experiment.” In the parable, Jesus spoke of two things: the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Cares can sap my vigor and riches can divert my faith.

The real reason for not loving this world is found in the context. “The world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (I John 2:17).

It is the basic problem of setting our affections on the temporal rather than on the eternal. We are prone to be short-sighted, to begin to grab for things that are in the world and not see as God sees, or love as God loves.

So the Apostle John is trying to protect us from a life of frustration and disappointment. The world and all of its tinsel, glitter and empty praise cannot satisfy. All we do is pour our affections down a rat hole when we set our minds on the things of this world. What a waste!

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