

## LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Love makes the world go round. So they say. But you're deceived if you make love all about yourself. Fall in love with this fake present world, and you'll miss eternal reality where real rewards await all who make love all about Jesus Christ. He alone is love personified. Put Him first, and all the rest falls in place.

That's because the Bible says we only know what love really is because God gave Jesus to pay for sin. And you are commanded to love Him, and one another, as He does - but "*do not love the world.*" This means the earthly philosophy and culture and all that's antagonistic to the eternal Lord God, the Creator. These things attack you from the fallen world of sin and rebellion against Him.

**The great Chinese** general Sun Tzu wrote a classic book "The Art of War" about 500 years before Christ. It's still studied in military academies and corporate boardrooms around the world. He said, "*The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster.*" The Bible presents a similar approach for spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the big three enemies of believers. How is the world your enemy?

1 John 2:15 says "*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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*" Let's look deeper at this worldly warfare.

**1- PLEASURE.** The desires or lusts of the flesh is "pleasure." It's the way the world qualifies value. It's all that the world tells you to CRAVE. What the world claims is worth doing to satisfy your desires. Putting yourself first. Let nothing stop your satisfaction. One of the saddest verses is 2 Timothy 4:10 where Paul writes, "*Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.*" A formerly faithful friend was seduced by the world. Could this happen to you? Don't make the Demas mistake. The Bible says God's love for His people leads us to love HIM, not the world. Our greatest pleasure comes from knowing Him.

**2- MEASURE.** The desires of the eyes is "measure." It's the way the world quantifies value. It's all that the world teaches you to see and COVET, desiring what you don't have. It's what the world says to go after to gain and outdo everyone else. You haven't made it until you've checked everything on its list. In contrast, the Bible says everything about this world is transient and passing away. What God gives believers far surpasses anything you could imagine. He is all we need. Nothing else measures up, or comes close.

**3- TREASURE.** The pride of life is "treasure." It's the way the world quarries and tallies the value of possessions. It's what the world trains you to collect and keep. What the world says is worth accumulating and flaunting to others. Jesus warned in Matthew 13:22, "*the seed sown among thorns are those who hear the Word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it proves unfruitful.*" It's a warning. Your life is not about riches, it's about fruit. Not material stuff, but eternal. Your character, becoming more like Christ. That's what endures to eternity. That's what goes to heaven.

The craving of the flesh. The coveting of the eyes. The collecting of pride. Lusts, desires and pride take great pleasure in the measure of their treasure. Pleasure, power, pride and possessions are twisted by sin in this fallen world - distorted from the Creator's original good creation. When your eyes are on desires, your heart is on the flesh, and your pride is in possessions, the world slants you to worship temporary created things rather than the eternal Creator (see Romans 1).

**True pleasure is Christ** - who is true treasure - and He is the true measure of your life. Convicting? Yes. But when God convicts He also leads to repentance and restoration. He gives you His resources and strategies. His resources are truth and power. Believe the truth of God's Word instead of the lies of the world. Then act on His truth, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Your strategy is trust and obey. That's living by faith according to God's will. Next time, we'll dig deeper into warfare with the world.