

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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

I John 2:15-17

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Foundations

Review

What will we study?

Definition of “the world” in its evil sense

A short biblical definition:

The totality of unregenerate persons living on the earth within some period of time, along with the habitual patterns of thought and behavior by which they express their ignorance of and insubordination to God.

What will we study?

Definition of “the world” in its evil sense

Excerpt from the longer, theological definition:

The world...corrupts the various aspects of God's earthly creation into avenues for the gratification of self instead of the glory of God.

A simple, more functional definition:

*“The bad part of culture” (John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*).*

The world: “The bad part of culture”

Culture: General patterns of thinking and behavior, both good and bad.

The world: Ungodly thinking and behavior, all bad.

Culture

The World

What are the conditions for success?

Honesty with ourselves before the Lord

Humility before the Lord

Desire to learn of our failures before the Lord

Willingness to accept correction from the Lord

Willingness to pursue change through the Lord's power

Willingness to persevere, through the Lord's power, in mortal combat with the world, the flesh, and the devil

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Core Biblical Teachings

Review

Both Testaments teach that:

God has chosen His people to be

- A special people
- Bound to Him by covenant
- Different—not only in destiny but also in lifestyle—from those who do not know Him.

Our Big Challenge

How do we know which aspects of our culture are “the world” to which we must not conform?



How do we reliably locate this boundary?

Summary

1. Biblical teaching about the world and worldliness begins with OT teaching about Israel's relationship to God and to the nations.
2. The NT extends that teaching to believers of the church age.
3. Both Testaments assure us that the ultimate destiny of God's people is deliverance from, not conformity to, the world.
4. Our big challenge is to discern the boundaries of worldliness accurately amid ever-changing culture.
 - Scripture deals explicitly with many issues.
 - Scripture leaves many issues to mature discernment.
 - The world's opposition to the knowledge of God provides a valuable diagnostic key.
 - Mature discernment is impossible apart from selfless love.

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Application

Anchor Points for Application

1. Our ability to discern absolutely depends upon our setting aside personal preference and self-interest in pursuit of accurate assessment of moral character (Phil. 1:9-11).
 - Glorifying God requires the fruit of righteousness.
 - Righteousness requires sincerity and blamelessness.
 - Sincerity and blamelessness require preference for the excellent.
 - Preference for the excellent requires knowledge and discernment.
 - Love (a self-giving disposition to serve the true interests others) is the starting point of the whole process.

Whether I like or dislike an aspect of my culture has no bearing whatsoever on the question of whether or not it is worldly.

Anchor Points for Application

2. The first question is always, “Does the Bible establish the moral character of the matter at issue?”
 - By explicit statement?
 - By obviously applicable principle?

Only when the Bible does not speak directly do the remaining anchor points come fully into play.

Anchor Points for Application

3. No physical objects in their natural state are intrinsically evil.
 - The original creation was all very good.
 - The physical creation “groans and travails” under the curse for man’s sin, but neither sin nor the curse morally corrupted the physical world.
 - Satan has no ability to create evil physical substances.
 - Satan has no power to corrupt the physical substances God has created.

The world does misuse such objects for disobedient self-gratification.

Anchor Points for Application

4. No basic human capacity, bodily function, or aspiration is intrinsically evil.

The world does misuse and misdirect these good gifts of God for disobedient self-gratification.

5. It does seem that the world can fashion God's good substances into objects which, in that fashioned state, are inherently evil.
 - E.g., immoral or blasphemous art.
 - Most humanly crafted objects, though, are not intrinsically evil.

The world does misuse humanly crafted objects for disobedient self-gratification.

Anchor Points for Application

Out of time! More to come next week, the Lord willing.

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