

# 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

Application  
(continued)

# Diagnostic Questions

1. Diagnostic questions related to the **moral character** of (X):
  - Does Scripture say anything about (X), either directly or in principle?  
(If so, the remaining diagnostic questions may be interesting, but the issue is already settled.)
  - What kind of people originated (X)?
  - What was (X)'s original function within its culture?
  - Has that function changed? / Does (X) still function similarly?

# Diagnostic Questions

2. Diagnostic questions related to the **cultural function** of the issue in question (X):

- When (X) is functioning within its cultural setting, how would that setting be affected if (X) were removed or exchanged for something else?

Observing how the setting changes when (X) is modified helps us recognize how (X) is functioning.

- If the cultural function of (X) has changed over time, *what* has changed? The character of (X), or the character of the culture? Is any relevant change moral in nature?

# Diagnostic Questions

3. Diagnostic questions related to the **cultural associations** of (X):
  - Is (X) significant because of an inherent moral character, or because of its association with some culture or subculture?
  - How strong is the association?
  - How evil is the (sub)culture with which (X) is associated?
  - To what extent does the (sub)culture use (X) to express its evil?

# Diagnostic Questions

4. Diagnostic questions related to how the issue in question (X) relates to **knowing God**:
- Does (X) reflect ignorance of God's true character?  
Would my culture do (X) if we really knew God as He is?
  - Is (X) something that our culture uses to suppress the knowledge of God as He really is?
  - Would (X) help or hinder my own growth in knowing God as He really is?
  - Would (X) help or hinder my ability to make God known to others as He really is?

# Diagnostic Questions

These diagnostic questions are not simple. They require of us

- Honesty 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

# Specific Points of Application

- Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock
  - The origin and history of the goatee (mine is probably actually a Van Dyke) turns out to be pretty negative.
  - But it is not *purely* negative.
  - We are “called to consecration in *our* culture.”
  - A survey of 23 of my students this week revealed that
    - Zero perceived my whiskers as worldly, although
    - 15 of 23 would perceive a praise band playing in a classic Rock style as definitely worldly (side note: all 23 perceived at least a little worldliness in the band).

# Specific Points of Application

## - Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock

- Is a goatee in a different moral category from Rock music?

Diagnostic: How naturally compatible are the following trios?

- “Gay marriage, binge drinking, and goatees!”

vs.

- “Sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll!”

- The goatee and Rock music do appear to be in different categories.

# Specific Points of Application

- Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock
  - A goatee can function in various ways, depending upon the man's overall wardrobe and grooming.
  - Can't the same be said of Rock music?
  - Robert Pattison, a Rock music lover, saw no compatibility between Christianity and his music:

# Specific Points of Application

## - Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock

“Some dreamers have hoped to harness rock to propagate the values of transcendent ideologies. Populist Catholics sponsor rock masses, trendy educators produce textbooks using rock lyrics as a vehicle for inculcating traditional values, [and] various Protestant denominations commandeer the airwaves on Sunday mornings to broadcast uplifting advice larded with rock songs to make the message palatable to young ears.... But rock is useless to teach any transcendent value. The instigators of these projects merely promote the pagan rites they hope to coopt.”

*(The Triumph of Vulgarity, 1987, p. 137.)*

# Specific Points of Application

- Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock
  - Facial hair is a simple physical feature, culturally flexible.
  - Rock is a medium of communication, a product of intense human craftsmanship whose whole history has revolved primarily around:
    - The world's musical expression of its godlessness, and
    - Christians' conformity to the world's favorite music.
  - The mainstream position that Rock now occupies more likely reflects a degradation of the culture than a cleansing of the music.
  - Rock has not yet shown itself within our culture to be a valid carrier of the knowledge of God as He really is.

# Specific Points of Application

- Further discussion on my goatee and Christian Rock
  - “But,” someone says, “Christian Rock provides the best setting for worship that I’ve ever experienced. Isn’t it conveying a knowledge of God?”
  - If what we call worship is something we experience only or primarily under the influence of a certain musical style, on what Scriptural basis can we be sure that we are worshipping and not merely responding to music?
  - Does Christian Rock convey a knowledge of God *as He really is*?
  - The *best* that can be said about Rock is, again, that it has not yet shown itself within our culture to be a valid carrier of the knowledge of God as He really is.

# Specific Points of Application

## – Movies and Entertainment

- Combining the elements of sight and sound, and narrative and musical art, film is perhaps the most powerful medium of communication yet devised.
- The major films comprise the bulk of our culture's most widely shared experiences.
- But viewers entrust themselves to film creators to an extent that requires the believer to exercise great vigilance.

# Specific Points of Application

## – Movies and Entertainment

- How will this film affect my ability to know God and make Him known as He really is?
- Will this film draw me into temptation and sin?
- Will this film elicit an approval of others' sins? (Rom. 1:32)
- If an unbeliever asked me if I have seen this film, will saying that I have seen it
  - aid in my pointing him to Christ?
  - or
  - hinder my testimony by seeming to approve something that a divinely quickened conscience would condemn?

# Specific Points of Application

## – Sports

- Pastor Minnick recently touched this topic on a Sunday evening.
- Evidence of ungodliness in sports as they function within our culture:
  - Money expended
  - Time expended
  - Emotional energy expended

# Specific Points of Application

## – Sports

- These inordinate expenditures show that sports are among our culture's major idols.
- Yet sports are not intrinsically evil; all of Paul's occasional references to athletics are at least partially approving.
- But a believer who shares the world's *devotion* to sports is worldly in that area.
- If the most important thing to you today is the Super Bowl (either the game or the commercials!), you would do well to heed Psalm 139:23-24.

# Specific Points of Application

## - Dress

- Does the world manifest its hostility toward God in its dress?
- The fashion world unashamedly declares seduction as one of its goals in the design of some clothing, both men's and women's.
- Jesus taught that when a man looks at a woman with lustful intent, he commits adultery.
- What is it, then, when a woman dresses with the intent to attract a man's lustful gaze?
- If we (man or woman) would not intentionally dress to arouse lust, yet we dress much like those who say they dress for just that reason, what kind of fools are we?

# Specific Points of Application

## – Dress

- Within our families, men should be willing to warn their wives, daughters and sisters:  
    “You don’t want the kind of attention that outfit will attract.”
- Women should appreciate such expressions of concern and heed them, even if they can’t feel the reality of the problem in their own hearts.
- A godly man who is willing to warn like this knows what he is talking about!

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - The huge range of variety present in our culture leaves us with only three options:
    - Disengage from the culture as fully as possible, allowing only what is necessary to live.
    - Engage in the culture as fully as possible, allowing everything that Scripture does not explicitly forbid.
    - Draw lines between things that do not greatly differ.

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - Ideally, we would not *draw lines*.
  - Instead, we would discern where the lines *are*.
  - Our first goal, then, should be to discern the real nature of things.
  - Failing to attain certainty, though, should not discourage us from drawing the best lines we can in doubtful cases.

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - Any reasonable line we draw in doubtful cases
    - will likely be imperfect.
    - will certainly be open to criticism.
  - Since we will likely err, we do well to err on the side of
    - spiritual safety
    - spiritual purity

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - We do well to measure our dogmatism and distance of separation in proportion to the degree that a rejected matter is clearly one of
    - inherently immoral character
    - immoral function within our culture
    - strong association with cultural evil
    - hindering our ability to know God and make Him known, as He really is.

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - A specific case for consideration: movies *in the theater*.
    - That line is open to criticism: “It’s the same movie; what’s the difference whether you watch it at home or in the theater?”
      - There is *some* difference: the theater setting
        - includes elements besides the movie itself.
        - with its large screen and powerful sound amplifies the movie’s cinematic power—including that of any evil it contains.

# Specific Points of Application

- But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?
  - A specific case for consideration: movies *in the theater*.
    - Though very possibly imperfect, it *is* a useful line.
    - Someone who dislikes the line between watching a movie at home and in a theater would do well to choose a different resolution than moving the line to allow theater attendance: Move it the other direction, and don't watch nearly so many movies at home, either!

# Specific Points of Application

– But, where Scripture is silent, where do we draw our lines?

## Summary

- An imperfect line is far better than no line at all!
- A line that errs on the side of safety and purity is better than one that errs on the side of danger and defilement.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Overcoming

# Who Overcomes?

**Our Savior has already overcome the world!**

- John 16:33 — “Take courage; I have overcome the world.”
- This is the ground of our confidence in overcoming.

# Who Overcomes?

We are active, not passive, in overcoming the world.

- I John 5:4-5 — “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.  
Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”
- The essence of our activity is faith.
- We overcame the world by coming to know God initially when we believed in Jesus as God’s Son.
- We continue to overcome the world by growing in the knowledge of God through a growing faith in Jesus as God’s Son.
- Romans 10:17 — “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

# How do We Overcome?

- The book, *Love Not the World*, contains some discussion on this point.
- A point not developed in the book is expressed by the title of a sermon by Thomas Chalmers: “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.”
- Our key text hints in this direction: “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (I John 2:15).
- It seems to follow that if the love of the Father *is* in someone, that one will not love the world.

# How do We Overcome?

- How do we come to love God and grow in that love?
- How do we come to love a person and grow in that love?
  - Notice the person favorably.
  - Make acquaintance.
  - Communicate.
  - Experience things together.
  - Communicate.
  - Love between compatible people who spend time together deepens spontaneously.

# How do We Overcome?

- It works the same way with God.
- The indwelling Spirit insures our compatibility.
- Walk with God by
  - saturating your mind with Scripture
  - living out the Scriptures obediently, in prayerful communion with Him.
- You won't be able to keep yourself from
  - loving Him more.
  - loving the world less.

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I John 2:15-17