

## What We Love

I John 2:15-17

6/17/07

### Intro

What do we love? That is a question we must answer because as A.W. Tozer once wrote, we are becoming what we love. We are all in the process of becoming something, the question is, “into what are we becoming?”

The problem John was addressing was that false teachers were bothering the church with very dangerous doctrines. They had found a way to wrap religion around worldliness and John was not amused.

The Apostle John is an old man at this point in his life and has no time to mince words, he calls it straight out and asks us to take a good look at our lives and consider carefully what we love.

**These are the insights that God that affect  
what and who we will become.**

### **I. We are Becoming What We Love**

#### A. Do not love the world

- John said that he was writing that we do not sin, but that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.
- Here, he continues with the strong theme when he tells us that we should not love the world.

- This is because love is transforming.

**Illus – A.W. Tozer wrote a powerfully insightful work when he wrote,** “We are all in the process of becoming. We have already moved from what we were to what we are, and we are now moving toward what we will be. Not only are we in the process of becoming, we are becoming what we love. We are to a large degree, the sum of our loves; and we will of moral necessity grow into the image of what we love most; for love is among other things, a creative affinity. It changes and molds and shapes and transforms.

What we love is therefore not a small matter; it is of critical and everlasting importance. It is prophetic of our future. It tells us what we shall be, and so predicts our eternal destiny. Loving wrong things is fatal to spiritual growth; it twists and deforms the life and makes impossible the appearing of the image of Christ in the soul. Love is within our power of choice, true spiritual love begins in the will. We should set our hearts to love God supremely and joy is sure to follow.

- John is referring to the world system here, not the world itself, which was made by God.

**Colossians 3:2-4, Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth; for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

B. Hold the things of the world loosely

- John wrote that we should also not love the things of world.
- The problem is that the world uses the things of the world to define whether you are a success.
- Have you ever noticed that the world judges by external things...?

**Illus – Next summer our high school will be having their 30 year reunion. These are always competitions about what job you have, how much you make, what clothes you wear, what names you can drop, and how far you’ve climbed the ladder of success.**

- The problem of course is that the world system is opposite of God’s system.
  - The world says, “Nice guys finish last,” God says, “if you want to be greatest, be least.”
  - The world says, “me first,” God says, “consider others more important than yourselves.”

**Luke 16:14-15, Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”**

- The key is to hold the things of the world loosely, to not become attached to the things of the world.

**Illus – We recently went shopping for a barbeque, which is a very macho piece of equipment. It’s very tempting to take things very seriously and to spend too much money.**

**This could be said of almost everything we shop for; clothes, cars, toys, etc.**

**II. Love God Most Closely**

A. Return to your first love

- “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” John wrote in verse 17.
- Loving God closely is to give Him the highest place and there cannot be two things in the highest place.
- Jesus gave us this lesson in the gospel of Luke...

**Luke 16:13, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”**

- What John is telling us is that we must love God most closely.
- John also wrote the Revelation and there he wrote to the church in Ephesus ...

**Revelation 2:3-4, 7, “and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.**

**But I have this against you, that you have left your first love... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”**

B. All that’s in the world is from the world

- First, we must understand what world John is referring to. There are many spheres of commonality that exist, for example, there is the “wide world of sports,” there is the world of art, etc.
- But what he is referring to here is defined in verse 16. Paul also gives a clear definition.

**Ephesians 2:1-7 Surpassing riches in Christ**

- What Paul describes as surpassing riches reminds us of *the surpassing riches* in Eden. There we see the original problem of wanting what we don’t have.

**Genesis 3:1-6 Wanting what they didn’t have**

**Illus – Our two dogs are a lesson in the basis desire of wanting. No matter which bone Romeo has, he wants the one that Theo has.**

**Illus - To our dear African friends, much of what tempts us must be truly foreign to their understanding.**

**- Sepa doesn’t have electricity five days a week. Raphael has a church of almost 250 and yet doesn’t see a regular income, George has 43 orphans and prays that they be fed.**

C. This world is passing away

- In verse 17, John gives us the reason we should not love the world or the things of the world;
- ...because this world is passing away; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

**Illus – I used to own a 1971 AMC Javelin. It was everything it should not have been; it fulfilled every aspect of verse 16. AMC also came out with the famous Gremlin. At first their ads touted, “A Gremlin with the heart of a Javelin.” Then later, in a different ad they showed a guy making hoagies in the back.**

**Not only have these cars passed away, American Motors itself has also passed away.**

**Illus – But in that same year, 1971, there was an article in LIFE magazine that talked about hippies coming to faith in Jesus Christ.**

**So many things from 1971 have passed away, but one thing remains the same, God is still saving souls and changing lives; that will remain forever.**

Martin Luther wrote, “I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But the things I have placed in God’s hands I still possess.”

Remember the word of that superior young missionary, Jim Elliot, who died at the hands of the Auca Indians? “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep (i.e., his life), to gain that which he cannot lose.”

**I Peter 1:24-25, For, “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word which was preached to you.**