

**1 John 2:15-17**  
**“Two loves”**

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**I. Intro**

The plan of God from the beginning is to reestablish fellowship with fallen humanity. John declares that this experience with him was the single most blessed experience he has had in his life. The impact that Jesus had upon his life 70 years earlier had only grown better over those years and now he only wants others to experience what he has enjoyed. The apostle John understood that this was not a mere intellectual exercise instead it was relational. So, John wrote to these believers of a twofold self-test that could enable the professor of faith to determine if they were indeed possessors of faith: **2:3-6 Obedience**, and **2:7-11 Love**. Furthermore, John wanted these same believers to understand that such fellowship and relationship with God was progressively increasing, (growing in maturity). **John wanted his readers to evaluate their true position** as his goal was the same as Jesus’ ....our maturity and spiritual growth! This is why as we noticed last week that the Apostle John wrote this letter to the **three different stages of growth with an appeal to each**.

1. **Children**: John identifies them as **“LEARNERS”**;
2. **Young men**: John identifies them as **“SOLDIERS”**;
3. **Fathers**: John identifies them as **“EXPERIENCED”**;

Chapter 2:12-14 was written to reassure his readers as John didn’t want them to think that he was questioning their salvation. In fact, he says just this that he had written them “because their sins were forgiven” and “because they have known Him who is from the beginning”. If the readers missed those truths then they have misunderstood John’s words to them. NOW, in this section

John goes on to reveal to them how to apply what he has just reassured. There is a balance in the life of the Christian between assurance of our salvation and pressing on in our sanctification so that we can grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. There is no better way to grow in our relationship than to “LOVE” but as John writes it is best realized in our refusal to love the World System that we were once devoted to.

## II. Vs. 15-16 Incompatibility

Vs. 15 In this verse John states the danger as he simply states: “**Do not love the world or the things of the world**”. The primary question for the Bible student is, “*What does John mean when he says the world?*” In 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2 we see that Jesus Himself died for the “whole world”. In 4:14 we read that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Using these words of John, we can determine that John is not referring to the material world or the world in which humanity dwells. John narrows his interpretation of this exhortation down based upon 2:19 as the world is that he is writing about here is the part of the world that is apart from God. It is what Paul wrote about in Gal. 1:4 as “*this present evil age.*” I believe that John is using this world for “world” which is Kosmos in the Greek; (as it appears 6 times in three verses in 1<sup>st</sup> John), for the “**the fallen world system that is apart from God**”. In that context **it applies to the fallen worlds: Values, Pleasures, Pastimes and Ambitions!** It is this “World system” that John in 5:19 declares is in the grasp and sway of the evil one. It is this system that rejected Jesus when He came according to John 1:10. So when John writes this exhortation here is he is not thinking in terms of the material world as in “THINGS” as he is addressing the “attitude behind materialism”. John is thinking of self-centeredness: that leads to worldly ambition, arrogance, and manipulation! **John is saying that we Christians that are aiming to continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus must not continue to court the temporary intimacy of the world system,**

by seeking a relationship to its morals, ideals, covet its trinkets or value its customs and adopt its laws. The only certainty of this “fallen world system” is that it is passing away! A person who is having an affair with the fallen world system, John declares has displaced the God’s love for him! This truth stands with John’s exhortation: It is only as the LOVE of God fills the Christian that the will of God will motivate the believer and it is this “LOVE conquered” Christian that God uses to be more than a conqueror! John now moves on to describe the danger of mixed affections by first giving the reader the two truths about trying to pursue both the love of the world system and a love for God:

1. Vs. 15-16 **Incompatibility**: The Christian can only love, one or the other but never at the same time! Humanity is mastered by that which they love but we must never forget that these two loves offer two very different results: If we love the things of this world system we will find ourselves enslaved by our affections. It is only when our love upon God that we find our true freedom! Jesus said in Matt. 6:24 that we cannot serve two masters. John proceeds to give the reasons for this in verse 16 as he mentions the “**trinity of the flesh**” that he prefaces as “For all that is in the world” makes it appeal to three aspects of our flesh that are certain to enslave us again:

A. “**The lust of the flesh**”: **The desire of having**! These “cravings” are directed at our flesh and carnal nature. The pursuit of this blinds the believer of goodness and blessings of obeying God’s word. The danger of loving pursuing “having” is that is that such pursuit never satisfies and takes away the desire of the things of God which will fulfill the true longing of our hearts.

B. “**The lust of the eyes**”: **The desire of seeing**! The second aim of the world system deals with “covetousness”. **Not only with the possession of material things but also**

**that of ambition and image.** The Christian who is caught up into the love the world system in this area is seeing their value in “THINGS” be that possession, image, wealth, status, power etc. These are the values of living vicariously through others and identifying with others success and position. It measures success on external things and not Christ like character! We are NOT to pursue the love of the world system that equates value on things we or those we identify with have achieved instead we are to love God who has shown us our true value in what He has done to have a relationship with us!

C. “**And the pride of life**”: **The desire of being!** The final appeal the fallen world system makes is the “**boasting of what he has or does**”! While ambition in itself isn’t sinful as we are encouraged by Jesus to be ambitious in being the “least of all” and the “servant of all” but that is not the appeal in the world system it is to be above others and to boast that we are superior to others based upon what we have or have done! So many wants to leave a legacy in the world after they have left where future generations will recall their name. Far too often those of history that we recall are not remembered for their beneficial works but for their evil actions that hurt and destroyed others.

### III. Vs. 17 Impermanent

2. Vs. 17 **Temporary verses eternal!** John warns that the pursuit of the love of the world system is one that not only will never satisfy it also won’t last even if for a moment we enjoy it’s pleasures. The world system is heading for destruction, its passing away. Think of all those who have moved it the object of their love; what have they once they have died? What did they get for their love’s investment? How foolish to have ones hopes and dreams invested in something that was never designed to last. All its pleasures are

temporary satisfaction and will end up in nothing. They amount to a mirage to a parched soul and illusion that will end up with dirt on the mouth instead of living water. But compare that with the love of God and at once we note that not only is what God grants us that pursue His love that which only satisfies the longing of our hearts it never ceases to do so as it is eternal and temporary. The Christian who tries to love the world system will lose the peace and security they have in the love of God as the world system is constantly in a state of flux. Jim Elliot once said, "***He is no fool who gives up what he can never keep to gain what he cannot lose!***"