

Introduction

When we think of the lust of the flesh, we normally think of sexual immorality. However, the first sin in the Bible involved food, not sex or money. Eve was tempted to eat the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden. She was tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Eve saw that the food that looked good to eat, it was a delight to her eyes, and because it would make her wise.

(Ge 3:6) “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

We still struggle with temptations of food. Statistically, 40.3% of American adults are obese, and 31.7% of adults are overweight (72% overweight or obese). Our children are also struggling, with 21.1% being obese, and 15.1% overweight.¹ 73% of Americans are now considered overweight or obese. The CDC considers someone with a body mass index (BMI) from 25-29.9 as overweight, and someone with a BMI over 30 as obese. Obesity is not always about a lust of the flesh; it is often a result of a sedentary lifestyle, and eating the wrong types of foods. There can also be natural causes of obesity, so clearly not all obesity is a result of the lust of the flesh, or sin. We have to be very careful in making assumptions.

Food is not the only lust that we struggle with. We live in a time where sexual immorality and pornography are rampant. In America, Barna reported that 75% of men and 44% of women regularly look at pornography. It would be naïve and incorrect to think that it is outside the walls of the church; it is within the church. Covenant Eyes reports that 75% of “Christian men” watch pornography, and 40% of Christian women consume pornography. It is not just in the pews, 67% of pastors have a personal history with pornography, and 18% of them currently struggle with pornography. The porn business is big business. The online porn business generates about \$18 billion dollars a year, and the global revenue generated by the porn industry in 2023 was \$97 billion.² Porn is accessible by phones, and children are being exposed to it before they are teenagers. The lust of the flesh is a very serious problem around the world.

When John wrote this epistle, he had a number of purposes in mind. In 1 John 5:13, he said that he wrote it so that people would know if they have eternal life. He wanted people to know if they are saved. Throughout this epistle, he weaves in various characteristics of those who are believers and those who are not believers.

(1 Jn 5:13) “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

In John 2:4-6, he said that those who do not keep God’s commandments do not have the truth in them, and those who keep His word have been perfected by His love. Then he wrote, “By this we know that we are in Him.”

(1 Jn 2:4–6) “The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; {5} but whoever keeps His word, in him

¹ National Center for Health Statistics, August 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult-obesity-facts/index.html>

² https://worldmetrics.org/porn-industry-statistics-2/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: {6} the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

In John 2:10-12, he said that those who hate their brother are in the darkness, and those who love their brother are in the Light. This is just another way to know if you are a believer.

(1 Jn 2:10–11) “The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. {11} But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

In our passage today, John gives another way to know if you are a believer. He said that those who love the world do not have the love of the Father in them, but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

John had just finished saying that he had written them so that they would not sin. John is letting them know that those living for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life is sin. If they are truly believers, they will not succumb to these sins. John was also refuting the teaching of many of the Gnostics, who said that it did not matter how you live because it will not affect your spirit. John said that you cannot walk in the flesh, in sin, and in darkness if you are a believer.

(1 Jn 2:1) “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”

John has also just finished giving three levels of spiritual maturity. The young men have overcome the evil one and are strong. That is a benchmark. There may be some young, immature believers that are still struggling with these lusts, and he is setting a benchmark or standard for them. A young man has learned to overcome these lusts that the evil one tempts us with.

In our passage, John exhorts the believers not to love the world or the things in the world. Then, he gives three reasons why they should not love the world, or the things in the world. First, if they love the world, the love of the Father is not in them. Second, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father. Third, he tells them that those things are temporal. The world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one that does the will of God lives forever.

Do Not Love the World

1. The love of the Father is not in him
2. It is not from the Father
3. It is temporal

(1 Jn 2:15–17) “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. {17} The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

1. **The love of the Father is not in him** (1 Jn 2:15)

John begins with an exhortation not to love the world nor the things in the world. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. If we look at our lives to see what we love, and if we see that we love the world and the things of the world, that is a huge red flag, a warning sign. It tells us that the love of the Father is not in us. We cannot love the things of the world and love God. In Luke 16, Jesus said that no servant can serve two masters. He said we cannot serve God and wealth, or money (ESV), or mammon (KJV). Anything that we put before God is an idol, and we cannot put the pursuit of wealth or the things of the world before God.

(1 Jn 2:15) “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

(Lk 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.”

In Luke 12, Jesus told the rich young ruler to go sell his possessions and give it to the poor, and then come follow Him. The rich young man went away grieving because he was wealthy. His money was more important to him than following Jesus. Jesus had put His finger on the idolatry in this man’s life that he needed to repent of. You cannot serve God and wealth at the same time. You cannot serve two masters.

(Lk 18:18–23) “A ruler questioned Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?... {22} When Jesus heard *this*, He said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” {23} But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.”

Jesus told people on many different occasions that if they wanted to come after Him, they needed to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. It was not a watered-down gospel presentation.

(Lk 9:23) “And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

He exhorted people to count the costs. He said, “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if has enough to complete it.” He told people to give up their possessions and follow Him. The gospel message often shared today does not tell people to count the cost and to deny themselves, and take up their cross in order to follow Christ.

(Lk 14:27–33) “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. {28} For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?... {33} So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

John is a spiritual father, and he was drawing some boundaries for his children. We need boundaries in life, and it is the role of fathers to set some boundaries. One of the problems in our society is the lack of fathers in the home. There are some homes with fathers, but they are not

setting boundaries; they are allowing their children to flow with the culture. John is a man of truth, and he speaking truth in love. He is sharing a message that they needed to hear, and that the church today desperately needs to hear. We are not to love the world nor the things of the world.

What does he mean by the world? In Scripture, the world can refer to several things. First, the world can refer to God's creation. In Psalm 89, Ethan wrote that the heavens and the earth are Yours; the world and all it contains, You have founded them." When God created the world and everything in it, He said, "It is good." In Psalm 19, the world that God created is telling the glory of God, and declaring the work of His hands. In this sense, the world is good, and this is obviously not what John is referring to. It is okay to love the beauty of God's creation. It is okay to enjoy the beauty of the sunset at the beach. It is okay to enjoy the flowering trees in the spring. It is okay to enjoy watching all the different species and colors of birds feeding on your bird feeders. God created the world and said it was very good.

(Ps 89:11) "The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them."

(Ge 1:31) "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."

The second thing that the world can refer to is the inhabitants of the world. When God said in John 3:16 that He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten son to die for our sins, He was referring to the people in the world. Jesus did not come to die for the roses and tulips. He did not come to die for the apple and peach trees. He came to die for the sins of the world, that is the sins of the people of the world. God does not love sin, but He loves the people of the world, despite their sins. He sent Jesus to die for the sins of the world so that He could have fellowship with Him again. Jesus came to take away the sins of the world and to redeem us from our sins. When John exhorts us not to love the world, he is certainly not telling us not to love the people of the world. God loves them, and He wants us to love people, even our enemies.

(Jn 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

(Mt 5:44) "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,"

When John exhorts us not to love the world, he is referring to the world system. In Romans 12:2, Paul exhorts us not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we can prove the will of God in our lives, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. He is telling us not to be squeezed into the mold of the world. We are not to be conformed to the culture of the world, and the ways of the world. We have a different standard, a different mold that we are to be conformed to, the image of Christ. We are to renew our minds with the word of God so that our lives reflect and represent God.

(Ro 12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

In Ephesians 6, Paul wrote that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of

wickedness in the heavenly places. He is talking about the evil world system run by Satan. He has forces of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness. It is a world system and he is the ruler of this world system.

(Eph 6:12) “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

Jesus referred to Satan in John 12 and also in John 16 as the ruler of this world. Satan is behind this evil world system. He said that this ruler of the world will be cast out and he will be judged.

(Jn 12:31) “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

(Jn 16:10–11) “and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; {11} and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

In this evil world system, there is every sort of evil. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul wrote about the difficult times that will come in the last days, which we are in. He said that men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. These are just some of the characteristics of this world system that we are not to be conformed to.

(2 Ti 3:1–4) “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. {2} For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, {3} unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, {4} treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,”

This worldly system is characterized by fleshly living. Paul wrote in Galatians 5 that the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” This is the world system that John is telling us not to love, nor the things in this world system.

(Ga 5:19–21) “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, {20} idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, {21} envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

As a pastor, looking at the current state of affairs in the church, and the disheartening statistics that are being shared about immorality in the church, I see that we have a challenging assignment from the Lord. We are charged with preparing the bride of Christ, because Jesus is coming back for a pure and spotless bride. The message that John shares in our text is very much needed in the church today.

In the book of James, the message is even stronger than what John wrote. James wrote, “You adulteress, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore

whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” It is not just that the love of God is not in him; it is that he has made himself an enemy of God. When I think about the various battles in the Old Testament where God destroyed the enemies of Israel, being an enemy of God is a terrible thing to do.

(Jas 4:4) “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

In one of my daily Bible readings this week I was in 1 Kings 20, and the Arameans went up to Aphek to fight the sons of Israel. The sons of Israel were mustered and they gathered together 7,000 men. The Lord fought for them, and said, “I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” The sons of Israel killed 100,000 foot-soldiers and another 27,000 by the wall in the city of Aphek. It was not the overwhelming army of 7,000 sons of Israel; it was that God was fighting against the Arameans. You do not want to make yourself an enemy of God; that is a terrible and dangerous thing to do.

(1 Ki 20:26–30) “At the turn of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. {27} The sons of Israel were mustered and were provisioned and went to meet them; and the sons of Israel camped before them like two little flocks of goats, but the Arameans filled the country. {28} Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Because the Arameans have said, “The Lord is a god of *the* mountains, but He is not a god of *the* valleys,” therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” {29} So they camped one over against the other seven days. And on the seventh day the battle was joined, and the sons of Israel killed *of* the Arameans 100,000 foot soldiers in one day. {30} But the rest fled to Aphek into the city, and the wall fell on 27,000 men who were left. And Ben-hadad fled and came into the city into an inner chamber.”

2. It is not from the Father (1 Jn 2:16)

The second reason that John gives for not loving the world and the things of the world is that all that is in the world is NOT from the Father. Then, John breaks down the things of the world into three categories: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. When we look at sin in the world, it basically comes from these three areas, and it is not from the Father.

(1 Jn 2:16) “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

A. The lust of the flesh

The first area that John brings up is the lust of the flesh. The Greek word for lust is *epithymia* (Strong’s G1939). *Epi* (Strong’s G1909) means on or upon; and *thymos* (G2372) means a desire, passion, fierceness, or lust. Sometimes the word is used for anger, which is a strong passion. Sometimes it is used in a positive sense, in that a pastor needs to be passionate about shepherding the flock. (The word used there is *prothymos*.)

(1 Pe 5:2) “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;”

The definition for the lust of the flesh is a sinful desire that seeks bodily gratification apart from God's will. Here are some other definitions given by scholars:

- Albert Barnes: "The desire of unlawful gratifications pertaining to the body."
- John MacArthur: "The desire to satisfy the illicit cravings of the flesh."
- Matthew Henry: "The excessive appetite of pleasure."
- J. Vernon McGee: "The urge to satisfy physical appetites apart from God's will."
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon: "The craving for sinful pleasure." (Spurgeon preached frequently on this passage.)

So, all the scholars are in one accord. The lust of the flesh is a sinful desire that seeks bodily gratification apart from God's will. God gave physical desires, but he also gave the proper ways for those desires to be met. A sexual desire was God's design, and because of it, the world has been populated, just as God desired. However, He gave the institution of marriage in the very beginning, and Adam and Eve were to be of one flesh. A sexual desire fulfilled outside of marriage is immoral and sinful.

God gave hunger as a healthy desire. When a person loses his appetite for food, something is wrong; it is a red flag. However, God tells us not to be gluttons. Therefore, when we satisfy this desire in a wrongful way, it is sin.

When we look at the example of Eve, she saw that the fruit from the tree of life was good for food. There is nothing wrong with her desire for food. However, God had forbidden them to eat the fruit from that particular tree, so it was a desire or lust for something that was not lawful.

(Ge 3:2–6) "The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; {3} but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" (forbidden)... {6} **When the woman saw that the tree was good for food,** and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

When we look at the example of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness, Satan waited until Jesus had fasted for forty days, and was hungry, a legitimate physical desire. Jesus was hungry and Satan tempted him to turn a stone into bread. Jesus responded to Satan with Scripture, a quote from Deuteronomy 8:3. He said, "It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." It was not time for Jesus to eat. He had to finish all the temptations before eating. After commanding Satan to leave, the devil left, and then angels came and began to minister to Him.

(Mt 4:1–11) "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. {2} And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. {3} And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." {4} But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'... {10} Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" {11} Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him."

I did a forty-day fast, and at the end of it, my weight had dropped from 180 pounds to 128 pounds; and I was cold and hungry. When I finished my forty-day fast, my wife was the angel that took care of me. She researched what minerals and nutrients I would need and juiced vegetables and fruits to bring me off the fast.

B. The lust of the eyes

The second type of sin that John mentions is the lust of the eyes. The lust of the eyes is a sinful desire aroused or awakened through seeing. Here are how some scholars have defined it:

- Augustine: “The desire excited through the eyes.”
- Albert Barnes: “The desire of that which the eyes behold.”
- John MacArthur: “Sinful desires triggered by what we see.”
- J. Vernon McGee: “The desire to possess what one sees.”
- Charles Spurgeon: “The craving for sinful possession.”
- Charles Wesley: “Covetous longing for earthly things.”

While the lust of the flesh dealt with temptations for pleasures, the lust of the eyes is normally associated with temptations for possession. When Eve was tempted in the garden, she saw that the food was a delight to her eyes. Because it was a delight to her eyes, she wanted to have it. It was not just a lust of the flesh, to satisfy hunger; it was a desire to possess something that she was not allowed to have.

(Ge 3:6) “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

When we look at the example of Jesus in the wilderness, Satan took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and offered to give them to Him if He would fall down and worship him. Jesus responded, “Go Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” Jesus saw all the glory; it was a temptation to possess what His eyes could see. Jesus was not going to sin and worship Satan to get or possess what His eyes could see. Again, Jesus responded with Scripture; He quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 and Deuteronomy 10:20. When we are faced with temptations, we need to have Scriptures in our heart so we can use them in overcoming the temptations.

(Mt 4:8–10) “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; {9} and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” {10} Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

C. The boastful pride of life

The third area of temptation is the boastful pride of life. The KJV and ESV both render it as the pride of life. The Greek word for boastful pride is *alazoneia* (Strong’s G212), which means: boast, boastful, boaster, pride, vainglory or vainglorious. The root word is *alazon* (Strong’s G213), which means a braggart or boaster. The pride of life or boastful pride of life is an arrogant, self-confidence based on one’s possessions, accomplishments, status, power, or

circumstances rather than on God. I believe that the NASB captures the whole picture of being prideful, which is to be proud and boastful of what a person has in this life.

Here are how some scholars have defined it:

- Augustine: “The ambition of worldly glory.”
- Albert Barnes: “Pride arising from the possessions and honors of this world.”
- Joseph Benson: “The pomp, grandeur, and glory of this life.”
- John MacArthur: “The arrogant, pretension and self-sufficiency of worldly living.”
- J. Vernon McGee: “The ambition to be somebody, to gain prestige, position, and recognition. The desire to shine before men.”
- Charles Wesley: “Self-exaltation and desire for worldly honor.”

When we look at Eve, she saw that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate. Satan had told her that if she ate it, she would not die, and that God knows that the day you eat from it her eyes would be opened and she would be like God, knowing good and evil.”

(Ge 3:4–6) “The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! {5} For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” {6} When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

There is nothing wrong with wanting to be wise, and to have God’s wisdom. There is nothing wrong with trying to become wise. I read, meditate, and study the word of God so that I can grow in wisdom. Solomon wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to give us wisdom.

(Pr 1:1–2) “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: {2} To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding,”

James tells us that if we lack wisdom, we should ask God and He will give it to us generously and without reproach. He wants to give us His wisdom. He gives it generously, and does not reproach us or put us down for asking for wisdom.

(Jas 1:5) “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

James tells us that there are two sources of wisdom, the wisdom from above and worldly wisdom. The fruit is very different. The wisdom from below has bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, and is arrogant. It lies against the truth. It is earthly, natural, and demonic. God does not want us to operate in that wisdom, the wisdom of the world. God wants us to have the wisdom from above, the wisdom that comes from Him. The characteristics of God’s wisdom is very different; it is pure peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, and without hypocrisy. Eve was tempted by selfish ambition and the boastful pride of life. She was not getting her wisdom from God. She disobeyed God and had bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in her heart.

(Jas 3:14–17) “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. {15} This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. {16} For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. {17} But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

When we look at the temptations that Jesus faced in the wilderness, Satan told Jesus to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and let the angels bear Him up. It would have been a public display of His power, and would have forced the Father to act on His behalf. It would have been arrogant and prideful. Jesus only did what the Father told Him to do. Jesus answered Satan with another scripture, Deuteronomy 6:16, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Most scholars classify the next temptation, of having all the kingdoms of the world, as the lust of the eyes. However, I believe that it was a temptation of the lust of the eyes, and of the boastful pride of life. Satan took Jesus up on a very high mountain and showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said to Him that He could have all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would bow down and worship him. He was appealing to the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

3. **It is temporal** (1 Jn 2:17)

The first reason that we are not to love the world and the things of the world is that we cannot love God and the things of the world. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. The second reason is that the world and the things of the world and not from God. The third reason that we are not to love the things of the world is that they are temporal. John wrote, “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” We need to have an eternal perspective. The things here on earth are temporal, not eternal.

(1 Jn 2:17) “The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

In the Old Testament, Solomon wrote about how temporal wealth is. He was not only a very wise king, but a very wealthy one. God appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what you wise me to give you.” Solomon asked for an understanding heart so that he could judge God people. Because he did not ask for a long life or riches, God said that He would give him a wise and discerning heart, and He was also going to give him what he did not ask for, riches and honor, so that there would not be any among the kings like him all of his days. Solomon became very wealthy.

(1 Ki 3:5) “In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, “Ask what *you wish* me to give you.”

(1 Ki 3:9) “So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

(1 Ki 3:11–13) “God said to him, “Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, {12} behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that

there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. {13} I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.”

What did Solomon write about wealth? In Proverbs 23, he wrote, “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.” He understood the uncertainty of wealthy, and urged us not to focus on wealth. He knew that wealth was temporal and could disappear quickly.

(Pr 23:4–5) “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration *of it*. {5} When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens.”

Paul wrote that we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. The things here are temporal. He warned about those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. It was a strong warning against loving the things of the world.

(1 Ti 6:7–10) “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. {8} If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. {9} But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. {10} For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

Paul instructed the rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God. Essentially, he was saying that we should not have a lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Instead, we are to put our hope in Christ and His kingdom.

(1 Ti 6:17) “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

Jesus talked about wealth on numerous occasions. In Randy Alcorn’s book, *Money, Possessions and Eternity*, he wrote that there are “twice as many verses to money than to faith and prayer combined.” He said that Jesus said “more about money than both heaven and hell.”³ What did Jesus say? He taught in Matthew 6 that we should not store up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. He said to store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. He was talking about storing up eternal treasures, not temporal treasures. We are not to love the world nor the things in the world because they are temporal. We need to store up treasures in heaven.

(Mt 6:19–21) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. {20} But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; {21} for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

³ *Money, Possessions and Eternity*, Randy Alcorn, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., page 16

In Matthew 16, Jesus was teaching about discipleship and following Him. He said that those who want to come after Him must deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow Him. He said that those who wish to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for His sake will find it. Then, Jesus asked the question, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” It will not profit him anything. We need to seek eternal, not temporal things.

(Mt 16:24–26) “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. {25} For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. {26} For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

John not only tells us not to love the world or the things in the world, he tells us what we should be focusing on. We are to focus on doing the will of God. He ends this section saying, “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” When we do the will of God, we will live with God eternally.

(1 Jn 2:17) “The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

Jim Elliot was a missionary in Ecuador, and was killed in 1956 while seeking to reach the Waodani (Auca) people. In his journal entry for October 28, 1949, he wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” His wife, Elisabeth Elliot, published that journal entry in the “The Journals of Jim Elliot.” He understood what John wrote. We are not to love the world because it is temporal. Instead, we are to live for the eternal things. Jim Elliot gave his life to gain what he could never lose, an eternity with Christ.

Conclusion and Applications

I want to finish with an account in Mark 10. A rich young man came to Jesus and asked Him what he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus told him to go sell all his possessions and give it to the poor and then to come follow Him. The man went away saddened and grieving because He owned much property. This young man valued the things of the world more than God. The things of the world were an idol to him. Anything that we place before God is an idol.

(Mark 10:17-22) “As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”... {21} Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” {22} But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.”

One of the signs of a true believer is that he has the love of the Father in him. If anyone loves the world and the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in him. We must put the Lord before everything else in our life. He must be preeminent. In the Ten Commandments, God said, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath...” We must make God preeminent in our life. He must be first place. We cannot love the world, nor the things of the earth; we must love God above all things.

(Ex 20:3–5) “You shall have no other gods before Me. {4} “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. {5} You shall not worship them or serve them...”

When we put God first in our lives, when the lust of the eyes tempts us, we choose to obey and follow God. When the lust of the flesh tempts us, we choose to obey and follow God. When the temptations of pride and glory tempt us, we choose to obey and follow God. We do not worship or serve any other gods or idols.

Today, do you have the love of the Father or the love of the world? What do your goals say about your priorities? What does your day timer say about your priorities? What does your check book and your spending say about your priorities? Are you pursuing the things of the world, or are you pursuing God? Are you doing the will of God, or are you pursuing the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life?

Let me exhort you today to reaffirm your commitment to love God with all your heart. Let me encourage you to make Him preeminent in your life. Let me exhort you to pursue the will of God and eternal things.

If God has been speaking to you today about loving the things of the world and succumbing to these various lusts and temptations of the world, let me encourage you to repent. Confess your sin to God and ask Him for forgiveness. Ask Him to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Tell Him that You love Him and want to serve Him with all your heart. Reaffirm your commitment to Him this morning.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for this passage in 1 John. Lord, help us not to love the world or the things in the world. Help us overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Help us pursue eternal things. Help us to put You above everything else in our lives. We want Your love in our lives. We want to fellowship with You. We want to love and serve You with all our heart. May we be a people that truly represent and reflect You in all our ways. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between appreciating the world God created and not loving the world and the things of the world?
- Why does Paul write in Colossians 3:5 that immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed amount to idolatry?
- What are some of the best ways to overcome the temptations of the lust of the eyes and flesh?
- What are some evidences of the boastful pride of life? How can we recognize it?
- Are all the things of the world evil? What constitutes whether it is a good or wrong desire?
- What are some examples of doing God's will in the Scriptures? (1 Th 4:3, 5:16-18, Ro 12:2, 1 Pe 2:15)

Do Not Love the World

Introduction (Ge 3:6, 1 Jn 5:13, 2:4-6, 2:10-12, 1 Jn 2:1, 2:15-17)

1. **The love of the Father is not in him** (1 Jn 2:15, Lk 16:13, Lk 18:18-23, 9:23, 14:27-33, Ps 89:11, Ge 1:31, Jn 3:16, Mt 5:44, Ro 12:2, Eph 6:12, Jn 12:31, 16:10-11, 2 Ti 3:1-4, Ga 5:19-21, Jas 4:4, 1 Ki 20:26-30)

2. **It is not from the Father** (1 Jn 2:16)

A. **The lust of the flesh** (1 Jn 2:16, 1 Pe 5:2, Ge 3:2-6, Mt 4:1-11)

B. **The lust of the eyes** (1 Jn 2:16, Ge 3:6, Mt 4:8-10)

C. **The boastful pride of life** (1 Jn 2:16, Ge 3:4-6, Pr 1:1-2, Jas 1:5, Jas 3:14-17)

3. **It is temporal** (1 Jn 2:17, 1 Ki 3:5, 3:9-13, Pr 23:4-5, 1 Ti 6:7-10, 6:17, Mt 6:19-21, 16:24-26)

Conclusion and Applications (Mark 10:17-22, Ex 20:3-5)