



1 JOHN: Light. Life. Love.

Worthy of Our Love

1 John 2:15-17

Jesus Christ is worthy of our ultimate love.

I. Introduction

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2:15

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Q: How do we reconcile these two scriptures? If God loves the world so much that He sends His Son Jesus, why is John now telling us not to love the world?

These two scriptures illustrate why the Bible can be confusing to read and why context is critically important for understanding the author’s intent.

The word “world” (*kosmos*) may have three different meanings in Scripture, and it is the context that determines its meaning.

“World” may mean the natural world which God created (Psalm 24:1). It may mean the human race, which God loved enough to send His Son Jesus Christ to rescue (John 3:16).

Here “world” means the organized system of human civilization and activity, which is opposed to God and alienated from Him (John 3:19).

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Since humanity’s rebellion against God, there is a collective momentum of human sin based on a deep commitment to living our life independently of God. This commitment gets worked out in assumptions and values that are largely unexamined by those living in their culture.

John is taking up his line of thought that was specifically addressed to the younger men and women in the church (1 John 2:13b, 14b). He is also simply passing on what he learned from Jesus (John 15:18-19, 16:33).

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”
John 15:18-19

“... don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”
James 4:4

There is an unholy trinity that wars against our love and devotion to Jesus Christ: our sin nature, Satan, and the world.

II. The Kingdom of this World (Revelation 11:15)

- A. Ruled by Satan, the Prince of this world (1 John 5:19, John 12:31, 14:30)
- B. Exaltation of the ego or self - pursues its own ends in self-sufficient independence from God (1 John 2:16)

The primary god of Western, modern culture is now the “sovereign self.” The individual has replaced the Creator God as the center of reality, and the ultimate goal of life is happiness as determined by the individual self. All external ideas of truth or morality are rejected from one’s personal feelings and desires.

Ex. “My truth” ... “You above all” ... Coke commercial – “Just do you.”

Ex. (see pic) Abundant Living – A Workshop on How to Connect with Your Inner Authenticity”

The self is the epicenter of the world, but God is the epicenter of the Kingdom of God.

- C. Greed aroused by what one sees (1 John 2:16)
Ex. Advertising ...
- D. Life is all about now – what can one have, accomplish, or experience (1 John 2:16, Matthew 16:26)
- E. Passing away (1 John 2:17, 1 Corinthians 7:31, Revelation 11:15)

III. Our Only Hope: Rescue & Regeneration (Colossians 1:13-14, John 3:3-8)

“For wherever the human soul turns itself other than to You, it is fixed on sorrows even if it is fixed upon beautiful things.” Augustine

Back to John’s command – “Do not love the world...”

Our problem: our hearts must love something. Left to ourselves, apart from God’s regenerating grace to give us a new heart, we can only love the world. We need both rescue and regeneration, which is what Jesus Christ came to offer us.

Every human being is made in God’s image, made to love God, but every human being is blinded and marred by sin. We are all under the spell of Satan and the power of sin that keeps us loving the world. We need Someone to rescue us!

This reality permeates popular culture in the belief that true love breaks the spell or curse. This message permeates our fairytales like Sleeping Beauty and Beauty and the Beast.

Ex. Sleeping Beauty – she falls under the witch’s curse – imprisoned in a castle in a sleep that can only be broken by the kiss of true love ... the prince fights the dragon to rescue her and awakens her with his kiss.

Ex. Beauty and the Beast – Belle sacrifices herself to rescue her father by trading places with him in the Beast’s castle; she sees the good that others don’t see in the Beast, and she eventually brings him back to life with the kiss of true love.

Q: Do you see the Gospel in these stories? They are reflective of the human longing for God’s rescue.

Jesus Christ came to fight Satan, the “prince of this world.” By his death on the cross, Jesus demonstrated God’s true love for us. By his resurrection and the power of the Spirit, Jesus breaks the spell over us.

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IV. Expulsive Power of a New Affection

“Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have something to lay hold of - in which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void in a vacancy as painful to the mind as hunger is to the natural system.” Thomas Chalmers

He was saying we must exchange an old affection for a new one. The misplaced love of our hearts can only be replaced by the far greater love given to us in the Gospel. Mere willpower or moral commitment will never be enough to break the spell of sin and the seduction of the world.

Application: Confession (Hosea 6:1-3). Pray John 3:3-8, Ephesians 1:16-22, 3:14-19. Obey Jude 17-21.

“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.” Jude 20-21

Recommended: RansomedHeart podcasts “The World” (6 part series).