

Do Not Love ...

1 John 2:15-27

"Do Not Love the World"

1. Read 1 John 2:15-17. John writes, "*Do not love the world¹ or anything in the world*" (2:15a, *NIV*). Elsewhere John records the following words of Jesus: "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*" (John 3:16a). Are these verses inconsistent with each other? Do they contradict each other? Explain.²
2. The things that "come from the world" include 1) the cravings (desires) of sinful man (*and woman*); 2) the lust (desires) of their eyes, and 3) the boasting of what they have and do (2:16).³ What specific types of attitudes and actions fall into these categories?



3. What is wrong with "loving the world?" What is wrong with "worldly desires?"

"friendship with the world is hatred toward God" (James 4:4, NIV)

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24, NIV)

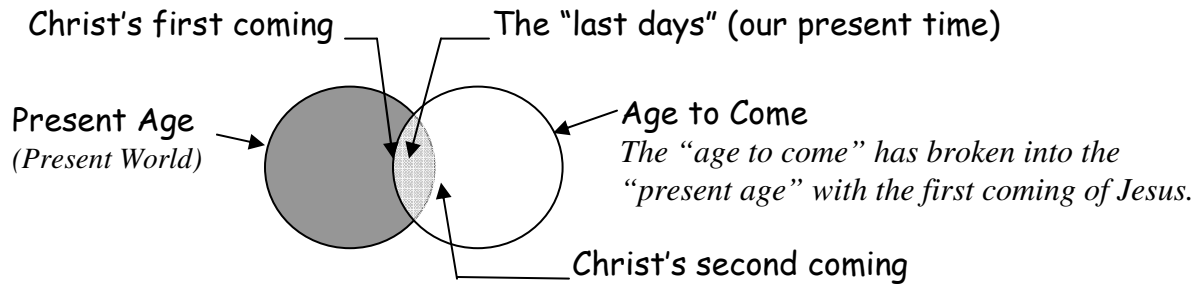
Personal Reflection

- Do you recognize any symptoms of "loving the world" in your life? When someone looks at your life, do they see "friendship with the world" or "devotion to God?"

¹ In this context the word κόσμος (world) means "the world, and everything that belongs to it, as that which is hostile (opposed) to God." This is the most common meaning of the word κόσμος in John's writings.

² God's "love" in John 3:16 is a holy love of redemption. The "love" in 1 John 2:15 is a selfish love of embracing worldly things. Some also say that "world" has a different nuance in John 3:16 (i.e., "the world as humankind").

³ More literally, "the lust of the flesh" (επιθυμία της σαρκος), "the lust of the eyes" (επιθυμία των οφθαλμων) and "the pride of life" (αλαζονεία του βίου). "Desire" (επιθυμία) can be good or bad, but the desires of fallen, sinful humanity tend to be bad. And "*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).



Beware!

4. Read 1 John 2:18-23.⁴ John talks about the “antichrists” (*those “against Christ”*).⁵ What are characteristics of these “antichrists?” What essential Christian teaching do they deny?

And Take Care!

5. Read 1 John 2:24-27. In telling believers what will keep them safe from being led astray, John uses the word “remain” (μένω) several times. What will keep the believer safe?⁶

“[God] anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21b-22, NIV).

Jesus said, *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17a, NIV). “... he will guide you into all truth” (16:13b)*

Personal Reflection/Application

- How do you answer the question? - Who is Jesus Christ? What you believe really matters!
- It is important to know the difference between authentic biblical Christianity and unbiblical (false) Christianity. Read Jay’s “Are They ‘Christians?’” (on the ICF website) and “Confused by So Many Churches?” Beware of “new” and strange teachings (relative to the teaching you hear at BCF).⁷ Beware of groups that seem isolated from true Christians you know. *Beware, and take care!* As Christians, stay in fellowship with the church, hold tightly to God’s Word (read it, know it), and pray for the Spirit’s illumination and guidance.

⁴ The “last days” (which include the “last hour”) denote the period between Christ’s first coming and his return to fully establish his kingdom (Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2). The Scriptures foretell the coming of a great enemy of God before Christ’s return. Among other descriptions, this person is called “the antichrist” (2:18) and the “man of lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). The “many antichrists” (2:18) are forerunners to the one Antichrist yet to come. These forerunners reveal the “spirit of the antichrist” (4:3). They deny that Jesus is the divine Christ.

⁵ The prefix “anti” can mean both “against” and “instead of.” Thus the term “antichrist” might also have the sense of “counterfeit Christ.” Jesus said, “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect – if that were possible. So be on your guard” (Mark 13:22-23a, NIV).

⁶ Both “what you have heard from the beginning” (the objective apostolic teaching) & “the anointing you received” (the subjective experience of the Spirit) must be kept in balance. Stott notes, “Some honor the Word and neglect the Spirit who alone can interpret it; others honor the Spirit but neglect the Word out of which he teaches” (Stott, 119).

⁷ This assumes that the basic teaching at BCF is biblical, which I believe is true. The same can be said of various other churches and groups. See Jay’s “Are They ‘Christians?’” to help distinguish true Christian groups.