

## The Love God Hates

### I John 2:12-17

**Introduction:** 1) I was blessed to grow up in a home with a godly mother who taught me to love Jesus and believe the Bible. When I was young I remember asking my mom, “Does God hate the devil?” She answered me in the way a little boy probably needed answering, “Honey, God doesn’t hate anybody. He loves everyone and everything and so should we.” I am sure that probably is what I needed to hear at the time. However, I have since learned that my mother’s well intended answer was not altogether correct. The fact is the Bible teaches that there are some things God hates and so should we.

- **Psalm 5:5-6**-“The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.”
- **Psalm 97:10**- “O you who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”
- **Psalm 119:104**- “Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.”
- **Psalm 119:113**- “I hate the double-minded, but I love your law.”
- **Psalm 119:163**- “I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.”

- **Proverbs 6:16-19**-“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devised wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”
- **Hebrews 1:9**- “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”
- **Revelation 2:6**- “Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

2) Our text would add to this list. Interestingly, and surprisingly, that which God hates, which He stands in strong opposition to, is a particular kind of love: love for the world (2:15). James 4:4 teaches us to not even make friends with the world because to do so is to become “an enemy of God.” Here John teaches us not to love the world, for if we do, “the love of the Father is not in him” (v.15).

3) At first glance, verses 12-14 and 15-17 do not seem to go together. However, on closer inspection we see that they complement each other beautifully. Verses 12-14 provide the encouragement necessary to heed the exhortation of verses 15-17. We belong to God. We know Him as Father. We are part of His

family. He is our Father and heaven is our home. It is hardly conceivable that knowing this, we would give our affections to the things of this life, this world, and set our heart on the fleeting and transitory things of a system and worldview perspective that stands in defiant opposition to God.

**I. Know what you are in Christ and cannot lose            2:12-14**

- C.S. Lewis well said, “We don’t come to Him [God] as bad people trying to become good people, we come as rebels to lay down our arms” (*Mere Christianity*, 56). True! And, as we surrender, God takes us not only into His Kingdom, He brings us into His Family. We become His children (vs. 12-13) and He becomes our Father (vs.13). We become strong in Him, His Word takes up residence in us, and we gain victory over Satan “the evil one” (v. 14, cf I John 4:4).
- Verses 12-14 are beautifully structured, rhythmic and poetic. 6 times John says, “I am writing” (vs. 12-13) or “I write” (vs. 13-14).
- 3 different terms are used to identify his audience: 1) children, 2) fathers, and 3) young men. And, each group is addressed twice for emphasis. Now, why does John address his readers in their fashion? Perhaps he has in mind all believers, new believers, older believers and maturing believers. That would make sense. There is little doubt that he is addressing us in terms of

spiritual maturity and not chronological age. I do like the way John Piper answers the question:

“I think the three groups of “children,” “fathers,” and “ young men” originated something like this. In these verses John wants to reach out to the church with affection and encouragement. So he begins by calling them children, just like he does five other time (2:1, 18; 3:18; 4:4; 5:21).

Then he pauses and thinks: “I certainly don’t want to give offense to the leaders in the church—the venerable old men or the virile young men—with this affectionate term ‘children.’ Perhaps I should address these two groups: the venerable fathers have knowledge, and the virile young men have conquered. But don’t skip over these verses if you don’t happen to be in one of the those groups. What is true for them is true for all believers.” (*The Strong Need Strength*, 3-3-85).

1) You are forgiven 2:12

- John begins with one of the most simple and basic truths of Christianity: we have been forgiven for all of our sins because of “his name’s sake.” This speaks to both the person and work of Christ, especially His perfect atoning work (2:2). Matthew 1:21 reminds us, “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their

sins.” Jesus cleanses us from all sin (1:7) and unrighteousness (1:9). He is faithful to forgive all the sins of those who trust in Him. Having run to Jesus as our advocate and atonement (2:1-2), we have been welcomed by God as His children. What a wonderful truth that, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous man runs into it and is safe” (Prov. 18:12).

## 2) You know the Father 2: 13,14

- When we receive Jesus as our Savior we also get God as our Father (cf. 2:23). John says to the fathers in the faith that “you have come to know Him who is from the beginning” (v.13). The reference “Him” may be to the Father or even to Christ. Possibly both! Of course both are true. We now know in an abiding permanent relationship the One who has existed from all Creation and the One who we have come to know in the Gospel. Echoes of John 1:1 and 1 John 1:1 ring out in our spiritual ears. He repeats this wonderful truth in verse 14. He doesn’t want us to forget it. There is a deep and abiding knowledge that has grown throughout their Christian experience. The longer they have lived the deeper and better do they know Him.
- John then says to the children in verse 13 “they know the Father.” The beauty of this statement is in its simplicity. The One who is God

is now our Father. And, He is a good Father, a great Father, a perfect Father.

- The promises of forgiveness of sin and knowledge of God reflect the New Covenant promises of Jeremiah 31:31-34. There is verse 34 we read, “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

### 3) You are victors in the faith 2:13-14

- Warriors in the faith are now addressed by the term “young men.” These are believers who are maturing in the faith, young champions for Christ who are actively engaged in spiritual warfare against Satan, identified as the “evil one” in both v. 13 and 14.
- 3 distinctive observations are made about the young men who are at war with the devil: 1) they are strong, 2) the Word of God abides in them and 3) they have overcome the evil one. There is no doubt in my mind that our strength and our ability to defeat the evil one has a 2-fold source. One is the work of Christ (see 3:8) and the other is the Word of God abiding in us.

- Satan will accuse us on the one hand and tempt us on the other. The work of Christ answers his first tactic and the Word of God addresses the second.
  - Satan accuses me of sin → I trust the work of Christ
  - Satan tempts me to sin → I turn to the Word of God
- I am again helped by the way John Piper summarizes how the work of Christ and the Word of God empowers us to gain victory and “overcome” (Gr. *nikao*, perfect tense) the evil one (v.14).
  1. Jesus Christ, the righteous (2:1), died in our place.
  2. The wrath of God is propitiated; its removal is sealed.
  3. Christ is raised from the dead and intercedes as our advocate in heaven on the basis of that propitiation.
  4. The Word of God—the gospel—comes to us and by grace we receive it and it abides in us.
  5. In this way, we abide in Christ so that *He becomes our personal propitiation and advocate*, that is, we experience what Christ obtained for us.
  6. Satan accuses us of damning sin and tries to destroy us with guilt.

7. We—like the young men of 1 John 2:14—overcome the evil one because the Word of God abides in us and we are strong. (*“The Word of God Abides in You, and You Have Overcome the Evil One”* 1-7-07).

## II. Know what the world offers but cannot give      2:15-17

- Having provided a word of encouragement in verse 12-14, John now gives a word of exhortation and warning concerning something he identifies 6 times as “the world.” Here he is not using the word “world” (Gr. *cosmos*) to speak of God’s good creation (Acts 17:24) or even the world of people for whom Christ died (2:2; John 3:16). No, here is a worldview perspective (John 16:11) led by “the evil one” we have overcome and is characterized by 1) the desires of the flesh, 2) the desires of the eyes and 3) pride in possessions (v.16). To love the world is to be devoid of love for the Father (v. 15) and to give ourselves to things that are temporary and transient, things that have no lasting or eternal value.
- Worldliness or being of the world is often misunderstood. Often it is identified with cultural issues that are of a particular concern to us. John is not telling us to reject any and at all aspects of culture, much of which reflects the glory, goodness and gifts of God. What he is telling us is we are

not to love and idolize thoughts, values and behaviors that are contrary to God's word (v. 14) and His will (v.17). Things that appeal to our sinful flesh (addictions, drunkenness, gluttony, abundance of possessions, sexual perversions, etc.) and are fleeting and passing are not to be the things that we live for. My friend Mark Driscoll put it like this,

“John describes worldliness as the cravings of our sinful flesh (gluttony, sexual perversion, drunkenness, etc.), lust of our eyes (sexual lust, coveting, etc.), and arrogant pride that causes us to boast in ourselves without ever thanking God. In our age filled with advertising, rock stars, supermodels and celebrities, it is not an overstatement to say that if worldliness means living only to please our flesh and pursue what our eyes lust after—so that we can arrogantly boast about our conquests and accomplishments—then worldliness is a synonym for America. Therefore, John reminds us that the world is going to burn up in the end; but if we belong to God we will live forever with Him, and so we must remain ever vigilant to love God and not the world. (“Epistles of John Study Guide”, 18-19).

John highlights 3 things the world promises but cannot deliver. His words are strong medicine that can bring healing to our souls.

1) The world cannot give you what you need 2:15

- The longing of the human heart is to be loved and to love. The object of our affections needs to be rightly ordered and directed if we are to truly find ultimate and lasting satisfaction.
- John, therefore commands us, “Do not love (present imperative with a negative), stop loving the world or the things in it.”  
Why? To love the world is to not love Father God which is what you really need, what you were created for. John says choose your lover, but choose carefully, choose wisely. Choose God the Father not the worldly enticements of the father of lies (John 8:44).
- Recognize that turning even good things into god things becomes a bad thing. It is to give your love to a “lesser lover” and one who can never satisfy, who can never give you what you truly need.

2) The world cannot give you what it promises 2:16

- This is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It identifies in vivid terms the weapons the world uses to seduce

men and women into joining its side. Amazingly each of these weapons reside in us! The enemy really is within!

- These same 3 weapons slew Adam and Eve in the Garden.

Genesis 3:6, “The woman saw that the tree:

1. was good for food – lust of the flesh
2. was pleasant to the eyes – lust of the eyes
3. was desirable to make one wise – the pride of life

- These same 3 weapons were conquered by Christ, the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Adam, in the temptation in the wilderness. Luke 4:1-13, “The devil said to Him (v.3):

1. Command this stone to become bread (v.3) – lust of the flesh
2. Showed Him all the kingdoms of the world (v.5) – lust of the eyes
3. [from the pinnacle of the temple] throw Yourself down from here...He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you – the pride of life

A close and careful inspection of each weapon is crucial, essential to spiritual victory. Though they are old, they are still effective if we do not recognize and resist them thru the power of the Spirit and the Word of God.

- **The desires or lust of the flesh appeals to our appetites.**
  - “Desires” means cravings, strong desires, lust, passion. The word is neutral. The object of our desire determines whether it is good or bad.
  - Flesh (*sarx*) may refer to the whole person, but here it denotes the tendency and bent of humans to fulfill natural desires in a way that is contrary to God’s will. For example:
    - sexual appetite gives way to immorality
    - physical appetite gives way to gluttony
  - We are not sinful because we sin. We sin because we are sinful. Sin is fun, enticing, attractive. We are drawn to it like a fly to flypaper, like a fish to a baited hook.
  
- **The desires of the eyes appeals to our affections.**
  - Our eyes, like our natural desire, are not evil. Proverbs 20:12 says, “The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.”
  - However, the eyes are windows to the mind (soul) by which sinful desires enter in. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-29, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘you shall not commit adultery,’ but I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more

profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

- Men being creatures of sight, must especially be on guard here.

Remember! It was his eyes that led David to lie, commit adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11).

- **Pride in possessions appeals to our ambitions.**

- Pride is vain glory, boasting, arrogance. It refers to the braggart who exaggerates what he has in order to impress others. It is the “I, me, my” person.
- “Pride of possessions” or “pride of life” speaks of the person who glorifies himself rather than God. He or she makes an idol of their stuff, their career, their achievements, their social standing. They suffer from “affluenza!” Pride, power, possessions, prestige, and position is what life is all about. This person fails to see that the Lord Jesus, the King of Glory, turned the value system of this world and all this stuff on its head.
- A.W. Tozer draws our attention to the blinding deception of the “pride in possessions”:

“There is within the human heart a tough, fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets

things with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns my and mine look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into thing, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution." (Underlining mine, *The Pursuit of God*, 22).

- Jesus set a beautiful counter example:
  - On pride in birth and rank, He was a carpenter's son, a poor family's child.
  - On pride in possessions, He said, "The Son of man has no place to lay His head."
  - On pride in pedigree, it was said of Him, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"
  - On pride in people, he knew it was said, "He is a friend of tax collectors and sinners."

- On pride in intellect, He said, “As the Father has taught me, I speak these things.”
- On pride in self-will, He said, “If you are willing, take this cup from me, nevertheless not my will Father but yours be done.”

**James 4:6** says, But He [God] gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

**I Peter 5:6** says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

3) The world cannot give you what will last. 2:17

- This verse brings to a conclusion John’s argument as he contrasts the 2 loves, 2 lives, 2 approaches to life.
- Why side with the world? Why give your life to an empty imitation, a worthless fake, a temporary illusion?
- The world, this evil and deceptive system of Satan, is continually passing away and it desires (3 times) with it.
- The darkness was on the run in 2:8. The world is on the run in 2:17. Light and that which will last forever has shown up in Jesus Christ.

- WHAT REMAIN? WHAT LASTS? WHAT ENDURES?

Answer: The one doing (cont.) the will of God. This one abides (cont.) forever.

- What did Jesus think about the will of God?

**John 4:34**, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and finish His work.’”

**John 5:30**, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

**John 6:38**, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

**John 17:4**, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

In the book *Embracing Obscurity* (p.87), a beautiful contrast is drawn between the things of the world and the things of the Father. I make only a few slight adjustments and additions. The differences between the two could not be more striking.

<b>Things of the World</b>	<b>Things of the Father</b>
The focus is on me.	The focus is on God.
Make as much money as possible.	Give as much money away as possible, and spend even yourself on others.

Live comfortably.	Life is not about comfort, but about doing hard things now so that we can reap rewards in the life to come.
Make a name for yourself.	Make His name great.
Do whatever makes you happiest.	Do whatever makes God happiest.
Teach your children to love themselves and seek self-fulfillment.	Teach your children to love and obey God. (“Behaving” is often, but not always, a blessed by-product.)
Look like a model in a magazine and turn your physical appearance into an idol.	Treat your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and cultivate an inner beauty.
Offer “acts of service” when you feel like it (on your terms).	Be a servant, even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient.
Stay married as long as your spouse meets your needs.	Serve your spouse (the way Christ modeled servanthood), and choose to love him or her for life.
Come across as powerful, influential, and/or interesting.	Give preference to others in words and actions.
Use (worldly) wisdom to accrue wealth.	Value true wisdom (which is the fear of God) over all the treasures on earth.
Stay up to date with the fashions.	Be content just to have clothes.
They are passing away.	They will abide forever.
I do the will of the world.	I do the will of the Father.

## **Conclusion**

- 1) One of the saddest stories in the Bible concerns a man by the name of Demas. He is not super well known, but his life serves as an important and tragic lesson for those of us who love the Father who sent His Son. We first

hear of him in Colossians 4:14 where he is working hard for the gospel alongside Luke. He is listed along with nearly 10 others for their faithful service to Christ (Col. 4:7-18). We do not hear of him again until 2 Timothy 4:10, toward the end of Paul's last letter as he anticipates his execution and martyrdom for Christ. There we simply read, "For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me..." The *NLT* says it like this, "Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life." You can almost feel Paul's heart break as he pens these words.

- 2) Let's learn from the unfortunate story of Demas. Don't let love for the things of this life eclipse your love for the Father. Don't let love for the things of this life cause you to chase after that which is fleeting and passing away. Let the love of the Father found in Jesus come in. Love the Father with all your heart, and see every room you enter become a sanctuary of love from the Father, all your work a sacrifice of love to the Father, every praise that rolls off your lips a confession of love for the Father. Love the Father supremely who has loved you so deeply. There will be no regrets. God's Word says so.