

The Love That God Hates

1 John 2:12-17

Introduction

1. When I was a little boy growing up in Atlanta, Ga., I remember asking my mother, “Does God hate the devil?” Her response was probably what you would expect a mother would say to her small son. “Honey, God doesn’t hate anybody. He loves everyone and everything, and so should we.” I have since discovered, however, that my mother’s well intended answer was not altogether correct.
 - 1) **Psalm 5:5-6**, “The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.”
 - 2) **Psalm 97:10** admonishes us, “You who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.”
 - 3) **Psalm 119:104**, “Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.”
 - 4) **Psalm 119:113**, “I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law.”
 - 5) **Psalm 119:163**, “I hate and abhor lying, but I love Your law.”
 - 6) **Proverbs 6:16-19**, “These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.”
 - 7) **Revelation 2:6**, “But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”
2. No, there are some things God hates and so should we. To the list I just gave you, I would add one other. Interestingly, and surprisingly, it is a particular “love” that God hates. It is a love for the world. James 4:4 teaches us not even to make friends with the world, for in so doing we become the enemy of God. 1 John 2:12-17 teaches us not to love the world for if one does, “the love of the Father is not in him” (2:15).
3. At first glance, verses 12-14 and 15-17 do not seem to go together. However, on closer inspection these verses complement each other beautifully. Verses 12-14 provide the encouragement necessary to heed the exhortation of verses 15-17. We belong to God. 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 world and set our heart on the fleeting and transitory things of the world system that stands in defiant opposition to our God.

Transition

God provides a double warning concerning the seductive deception of the world, a word we must carefully give our attention to.

I. Worldliness discourages our maturity. 2:12-14

- × Verses 12-14 are beautifully structured, rhythmic, and poetic. 6 times he says “I write” or “have written.”

- × 3 different terms (of uncertain meaning) identify John's audience: 1) Little children, 2) Fathers and 3) Young men. Words of encouragement follow each address assuring them they belong to God and enjoy the blessings of that relationship.
- × The false teachers had forsaken the basic essentials of the Christian faith. This group no longer believed Christ came as a human being. They rejected the authority of Jesus' commands. They no longer believed they were sinful. They abandoned the idea of salvation through the work of Christ. They did not love one another. Righteous conduct for them was no longer a requirement of fellowship with God. They resisted the authority of John the Apostle. Their loss of faith reveals the love of the world had attacked and overcome their love for God. The Apostle John wishes to persuade them to abide in the love of God and to resist all temptations to love the world.

1. **As little children, you are in the family. 2:12, 13c**

Little children (*teknia*, cf. 2:1) – term of endearment which is addressed to all the members of the church “because your sins are forgiven (W.A.R.) you for His names sake.” They had fled to Jesus as their advocate and atonement (2:1-2). Because He was who He was He could do what He did. Through His person and work He had completely forgiven their sins.

Name thus stands for all Jesus is and does.

Transition - Note also v. 13c.

Little children (*paidia*) – no real difference in meaning from *teknia*, though it could imply youthfulness in the faith.

Known (W.A.R.) the Father. He is not only our God, He is Father; not a good or great Father, He is a perfect Father!

*These 2 promises: 1) forgiveness of sin and 2) knowledge of God mirror the promises of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34, as verse 34 says, “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

*God is not the Father of every person. He is everyone's Creator but not everyone's Father. For God to be your Father, you must have His Son Jesus as your Savior. Jesus said in Matthew 18:3, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

2. **As young men, you are in the fight. 2:12b, 14b**

*John moves from addressing the church as a whole to giving attention to young believers who are growing in the faith. The phrase young men can refer to either their age, spiritual maturity or both. These young champions for Christ are engaged in the battle against Satan (v. 13b, 14b) and the evil system of the world (v. 15). In this fight John notes the certainty of victory in verses 13 & 14 and the weapon of their warfare in verse 14.

Overcome (*nikao*) is in the perfect tense. It means to conquer or achieve victory. They conquered in the past and the results of that victory are and will remain in effect. The victory came the moment that they believed in Jesus as the Son of God (1 John 5:5). The certainty of victory is repeated for emphasis.

*The source of their spiritual strength and vitality is noted in verse 15 in the middle of a 3-fold word of encouragement: 1) They are strong, 2) the Word of God abides (cont.) in them and 3) they have overcome (W.A.R.) the wicked one. The wicked one is Satan, the Devil, the one who has sinned from the beginning and was defeated at the Cross by the Son of God (3:8). God's Word is the secret and source of our strength. From the 1st stanza alone of Psalm 119 we read:

Psalm 119:1-2, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!"

Psalm 119:9, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word."

Psalm 119:11, "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."

Psalm 119:16, "I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your Word."

And **Ephesians 6:10, 17** teach us, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

3. As fathers, you are in the faith. 2:13a, 14a

The final group John addresses is the great warriors of the faith, the Fathers. They have walked with the Lord for many years. Their faith has been tried and proven. The Lord and they had been through much together, yet some important things had remained the same.

*have known (W.A.R.) Him who is from the beginning

- repeated for emphasis
- here must refer to Christ

*Older in the faith, spiritually mature and possessing qualified spiritual authority and leadership, they well understood new is not always better and old is not always bad.

*As fathers they had children (converts).

*From the beginning (cf. 1:1, 2:7) looks to their conversion and the time when they began their journey with Him who is from the beginning (John 1:1, 1 John 1:1).

*They had come to know as a settled conviction that the Jesus who saved them would sustain them. He was there from the beginning and He would be there at the end. They had come to know Him, still know Him and will always know Him.

II. Worldliness destroys our fidelity. 2:15-17

(cf. Gen. 3:6; Matt. 4:1-11)

- × More Americans than ever consider themselves irreligious. The percentage of Americans who call themselves Christian fell from 86% in 1990 to 77% in 2001. These are among the findings of the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) developed by the Graduate Center at the City University of New York. The study revealed 16% of Americans have a secular outlook on life, and 23% of those who now call themselves irreligious once had some level of faith.
- × Jesus still ranks in the top ten most admired persons, but in one study only 69% said they believed He rose from the dead. As for their own life after death, however, most people think there is such a thing, so long as you're talking about heaven.

Belief in hell after death plummets significantly to 53% of the population, compared to 71% who believe in heaven.

- × “Today, there are at least 200,000 American Neopagans and estimates of twice that number are not implausible.” (Professors Danny L. Jorgenson and Scott E. Russell, of the University of South Florida – quoted in *Religion Watch*, March 2000, page 4.)
- × The world constantly beckons us and woos us to come over to its side. Oh, you can still be spiritual, just don’t take it too seriously. You can think Jesus is important just not preeminent. You can love God and you can love the world. John says, not so.
- × In verses 15-17 John moves from assurance to warning. Who you are will determine how you live, but how you live will give evidence of just who you are and whose you are.
- × These verses provide a fitting commentary of the temptation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) and Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). It seems intentional.

1. **Know that the world is treacherous. 2:15**

Do not love (pre. imp. With the neg. *me*). Stop loving ...

The world (mentioned 6 times in verses 15-17) – *NEB* “godless world.” “World” used 3 ways in Scripture:

- 1) Creation – Acts 17:24, “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”
- 2) Humanity – John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
- 3) Evil organized satanic system that opposes God – John 16:11, [The Spirit convicts] “of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Satan and his worldly traps and enticements offer a fool’s gold, a cotton candy diet, a paradise of indulging our carnal fleshly desires. It is a system that seduces us, making sin look cool and righteousness intolerant and pharisaical.

- It is the Las Vegas Strip where *USA Today* headlined on its front page Feb. 15, 2002, “Skin and sin are in again on the Last Vegas Strip” (Forget family. The bosom is now the bottom line). It notes, “visitors come here for one thing: to party ... it is estimated on a typical Saturday night, there are now 1000 girls stripping at the major clubs ...”
- It is Montclair, New Jersey, where ½ of the population never attend any form of worship, many congregations celebrate Gay Pride and ministers like Stephanie Weiner, “tries not to make too many demands on her congregation” (*USA Today*, Feb. 19, 2002, 7A).
- It is Rosie O’Donnell “coming out merely about what’s right in her crusade for the right of homosexuals and lesbians to adopt children (*USA Today*, Mar. 12, 2002, front page).

Who would be against innocent fun, alternate lifestyles, low expectation churches and homosexuals who want to raise children?

John says be careful, be very careful. If you love this world, its things, its ways, its philosophy, its ideals ... “the love of the Father is not in you.” Our allegiance must

not be confused. Our devotion cannot be divided. Choose your lover, but choose carefully. The love of the world is treacherous.

2. Know that the world is tempting. 2:16

- × This is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It identified in vivid terms the weapons the world uses to seduce humans into joining its side, weapons that reside in us! The enemy is within!
- × These same 3 weapons slew Adam and Even 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 in the Temptation.
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

Transition

A close and careful inspection of each tempter is essential to spiritual health and victory.

A. The lust of the flesh appeals to our appetites.

Lust – (*epithymia*) – cravings, strong desires. The word is neutral, the object of our desire determines whether it is good or bad. Most often it is negative because its object is not the things of God and hence the object desired becomes an idol.

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.

- sexual appetite gives way to immorality
- physical appetite gives way to gluttony.
- sleep gives way to laziness.

*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.

B. The lust of our eyes appeals to our affections.

- Our eyes, like our natural desires, are not evil. Proverbs 20:12 says, “The earning 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.”
- The eyes say, “play now and pay later (or never!).”

*Men being creatures of sight, must be especially on guard here. It was his eyes that led David to lie, commit adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11).

C. The pride of life appeals to our ambitions.

Pride – vain glory, boasting arrogance. Refers to the braggart who exaggerates what he has in order to impress others. It is the “I, me, my” person.

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. 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.

Jesus set an example:

On pride in birth and rank, He was a carpenter’s son, a poor man’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, “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.”

On pride in righteousness, it was said of Jesus, “He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

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

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

3. Know that the world is temporal. 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 its lust (3 times) with it.
The darkness was on the run in 2:8.
The world is on the run in 2:17.
- × WHAT REMAINS? 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.”

Conclusion

His is a real Cinderella story. He played quarterback at a small obscure college (Northern Iowa). The NFL had no use for him so he was forced to play in Europe and then Arena Football back in the US. He married an abandoned divorcee on food stamps and worked in a grocery store after being cut by the Green Bay Packers making \$5.50 an hour stocking shelves.

God, however, had something special for him. In 2000 he led the St. Louis Rams to the Super Bowl. In 2001 he was named the NFL's MVP. His name is Kurt Warner and he is a wonderfully committed Christian. Commenting on his playing days in Europe he said, "I really got to know the Lord there, because of all the temptations from the devil in Amsterdam. Drugs, women, promiscuity everywhere you go. The devil tried to get me to fall, but I gave my life completely to the Lord."

When asked what he wanted his football epitaph to be he simply said, "He used his football platform to work for Jesus." (*World*, 2-19-02, p. 11).

The world loves us in order to abuse us and destroy us. Jesus loves us in order to save us and use us. The world's glory is for a moment, but God's glory is forever. "He who does the will of God, he will abide forever."