

# “Do Not Love the World - 1 John 2:15 Meaning”

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by Mr. Whitney V. Myers



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***"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." (1 John 2:15)***

This lesson is the fourth in the series on "Christians and the World" (Ref. 1, Ref. 2, Ref. 3). This lesson explains what John meant in his instruction that Christians should not love the world.

***Consider.*** When John wrote to believers in Christ, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world," what did he mean?

## 1. As believers in Christ we should prefer the things of God, not the things of the world

The Apostle John, writing to believers in Christ, uses the English word "love" three times in 1 John 2:15 -- "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." In the first two occurrences of "love" in 1 John 2:15, the Greek word is *agapaó* and means to *prefer* (Ref. 4). In the third occurrence of "love" in 1 John 2:15, the Greek word is *agapé*, which means *divine love, what God prefers* (Ref. 5).

With these definitions inserted, 1 John 2:15 means, "Do not *prefer* the world or the things in the world. If anyone *prefers* the world, the *divine love* of the Father is not in him." Remember that Jesus taught us about keeping our thoughts and actions focused on God. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [*the things God knows you need*] will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)."

## 2. As believers in Christ we should avoid the lusts of the world and the worldly culture that seduces us from loving God

The New Testament refers to the "world" (Greek word *kosmos*) in five main ways (Ref. 1, Ref. 6):

- The world which God created through Christ (John 1:10)
- All the inhabitants of the world (John 3:16) (note, "God so loved the world ...")
- People who do not know Christ (John 1:10 and John 14:16-17)
- People who are hostile to Christ and to Christ's followers (John 15:18 and John 17:14)
- The affairs of the world which seduce us from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ (1 John 2:15-16)

Even though God loved and still loves the inhabitants of the world (John 3:16), John instructs us not to love worldly culture that is alienated from God or the lusts and pride of the world. John goes further to say, "For

everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:16). Note that Satan used the same three sins to tempt Eve. "The woman saw that the tree was good for *food*, and that it was a delight to the *eyes*, and that the tree was to be desired to make one *wise*" (Genesis 3:6, italics added).

It is good, not wrong, to enjoy God's creation, to have godly affection for people (John 13:35), and to work for a living so we have the material things that we need for daily life. Instead of loving and lusting after the things of the world, we should always love and prefer God. He will provide what we need (Matthew 6:33).

*Apply.* Ask God to give you strength to love him and to overcome the lusts and pride of the world.

### **Related Lessons**

"Biblical Definition of the World" (John 1:10)

"The Holy Spirit Whom the World Cannot Receive" (John 14:16-17)

"The World Hates Jesus and His Disciples" (John 7:7, John 15:18-19)

"God's Offer of Salvation and Eternal Life" (John 3:16-17)

### **References**

1. <https://www.ScriptureWay.com/home/biblical-definition-of-the-world>
2. <https://www.ScriptureWay.com/home/the-most-important-offer-you-will-ever-receive>
3. <https://www.scriptureway.com/home/the-world-hates-jesus-and-his-disciples>
4. <https://biblehub.com/greek/25.htm>
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