

“Returning to God from Worldliness”

1 John 2:15-17

Introduction

Many of us enjoy stories about good versus evil. We love to watch the good guy defeat the bad guy. Still, we often underestimate how enticing and persuasive the bad guy can be. Our spiritual enemy wants to defeat us by trapping us in his warped way of thinking called worldliness, a satanic system that compromises our faith, twists our values, and distorts our priorities. This worldly way of thinking leaves God out completely. Scripture says that when we are friends with the world, we become enemies of God, and it compares us to someone committing adultery (James 4:4). Worldliness creates competing loyalties in our hearts, pulling us toward our sinful desires and away from God’s best for us and from God Himself. Christians must not allow the values of this world to interfere with our relationship with God.

We will pay a high price for our worldliness as it causes us to lose out on experiencing God’s presence, protection and perspective. While we will not lose our salvation due to a worldly mindset or behavior, we can lose our connection with God, no longer feeling His presence. This is because our sin puts a wedge between Him and us and blocks our prayers (Psalm 66:18). Second, we do not experience God’s protection fully because we face consequences for our sin. When our hearts and minds are under the spell of worldliness, we often do not confess our sins and are more likely to feel the sting of consequences. Third, when we operate with a worldly mindset, we do not have access to God’s thoughts and His perspective because our thinking is confused and double-minded. A double-minded believer is unstable (James 1:8).

Worldliness turns our priorities upside down by making pleasure more important than purpose and the temporary more important than the permanent. We become more interested in feeling good than fulfilling God’s purpose in our lives and pursuing His Kingdom Agenda. This great reversal causes us to treat temporary things as if they will last forever and things that are eternal as if they will not last. We must remember that eternity is more important than time. We must keep our eternal future in focus. We cannot let ourselves be distracted and confused by the worldly system so that our relationship with the Lord is not hindered. On this issue, the Bible is crystal clear: You are either on the side of the world or the side of God. Love the things of this world, and you do not have the love of God in you (1 John 2:15). On which side do you want to live?

Getting Started

1. What does our culture view as more valuable than God?
2. What are some worldly things that people pursue which bring instant satisfaction but have lasting, negative consequences?

Let's Get Personal

1. What tempts you to focus on the world instead of eternity? How have your values been twisted by worldliness?
2. What new perspective did you gain about worldliness in light of this message?
3. How has worldliness affected your relationship with God or damaged your relationships with others?

Take the Next Step

1. How can you begin to reorder your priorities to value eternal things above temporal things?
2. What sins do you need to confess to the Lord? How could you begin to strengthen your prayer life? Have an accountability partner help you pray consistently and prioritize confession this week.
3. How can you help a friend or family member pursuing worldliness to return to God?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2; Galatians 1:4; John 15:18-19; James 4:4; 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Galatians 6:14; John 12:31; John 14:30; 1 John 5:19; John 16:11; John 17:15-16; 1 Corinthians 7:31; John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Colossians 3:1-11.

Renew Your Mind

"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
