



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 3: Christian Behavior

Last week's lesson:

- “Growing Spiritually” is a series of lessons designed to help us grow to become more like Jesus.
- Last week we looked at 2 Peter 1:3-11... " make every effort to add to your faith"
 - ▣ Our Motivation for Wanting to Grow – God has provided us with everything that we need in order to grow and live fruitful lives.
 - ▣ Making Every Effort to Grow – Growth will not happen without effort.
 - ▣ Add to Your Faith: Goodness, Knowledge, Self control, Perseverance, Godliness, Brotherly kindness, and Love.
 - ▣ You Cannot Grow and Be Stationary
 - ▣ When We Forget the Cross

Today's Text

- Today's lesson is taken from 1 John 2:15-17... “Do not love the world”...
 - The world defined
 - The world is opposed to God
 - The world leaves its effects on all who reject it
 - Lust of the flesh
 - Lust of the eye
 - The pride of life
 - Memory verse

1 John 2:15-17

- 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.
- 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.
- 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
NKJV

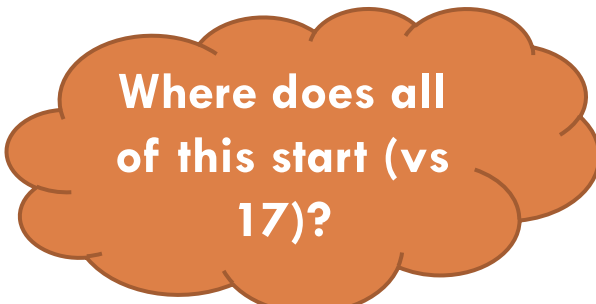
“The World” defined

- First, “the world” refers to the universe created by God.
- Second, it refers to all people, as in John 3:16.
 - ▣ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son"...
- Third, it speaks of everything that is opposed to God's will. This is how the word is being used in this text.
 - ▣ Loving the world and loving God is impossible (vs 15)
 - ▣ The world as defined by John is the source of all evil (vs 16)
 - ▣ The world won't last but the obedient live forever (vs 17)

The world is opposed to God

- Ephesians 4:17-19 - 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. NIV

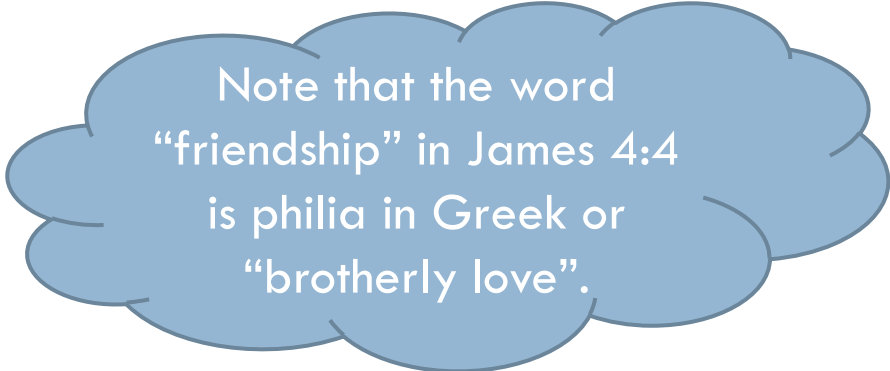
- ▣ Darkens our understanding
- ▣ Separates us from God
- ▣ Hardens our hearts
- ▣ Causes us to give ourselves over
- ▣ And continually crave more



Where does all of this start (vs 17)?

The world is opposed to God

- 1 Timothy 6:10 - For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NIV
 - ▣ Do not be ruled by the things of the world, they lead to evil
 - In this case, money specifically
 - But it could be anything that you set up as an idol
- James 4:4 - You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. NIV
 - ▣ Friendship with the world:
 - is hatred toward God
 - is a choice
 - makes one an enemy to God



Note that the word “friendship” in James 4:4 is philia in Greek or “brotherly love”.

Question:

- What does it mean - 'Do not love the world'? (vs 15)
 - Do not oppose God
 - Do not be ruled by the things of this world
 - That is, set up no idols for yourself
 - Do not befriend the world
 - That is, love the things that are opposed to God's will
 - We are commanded to love God
 - We cannot love God and love the world
 - Loving the world will separate us from God

'The world' leaves its effects

- 'The world' leaves its effects on all who love it.
- 1 John 3:13 – Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.
- James 1:27 – Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Question:

- What steps can we take to ensure we don't love the world?
 - Col 3:2 – “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
 - Think about things above, Godly things...
 - Grow in knowledge about God and Christ (get into the Word)
 - Allow the Spirit to fill your life.



Lust of the flesh

- Lusting means unlawful craving, the unholy desiring for gratification outside the will of God.
- What does the lusting of the flesh look like?
 - ▣ Rom 13:13 - Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. NIV
 - ▣ Gal 5:19-20 – 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. NIV

Lust of the eye

- The lust of the eye brought about the spiritual downfall of Eve, whom we read of in Genesis 3:6. It also brought about the fall of Achan in Joshua 7:21; and King David, whose sin is recorded 2 Samuel 11:2.
 - ▣ Gen 3:6 - When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. NIV
 - ▣ Josh 7:21 - When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." NIV

The pride of life

- Finally there is the boasting, the pride, the arrogance that is evil and which John identifies as being of the world.
- Anyone who has been captivated by the world's standards and how the world defines success etc. is being led astray. What the world applauds is condemned by God.
 - ▣ Luke 16:15 - 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. NIV

Questions:

- Do you think that there are situations where pride is OK?
- Is there a difference between taking pride in what you have achieved through hard work and ambition, and what John calls 'the boastful pride of life'? (vs 16)

Summary:

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.

- “The World” is everything that is opposed to God.
 - ▣ Do not oppose God
 - ▣ Do not be ruled by the things of this world
 - ▣ Do not befriend the world
- Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- Be aware of and control your cravings:
 - ▣ of the “flesh” – natural desires
 - ▣ of the “eye” – material desires
 - ▣ and our “pride” – boasting and arrogance



Memory verse: Col 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.