1 John 2:15-17 | Sunday December 7, 2025

It is interesting that sometimes the simplest commands or rules are the hardest to follow. For instance a doctor telling someone to stop eating dairy is a very simple command. On its surface we might think it will be fairly easy to follow, just no ice cream, butter or cheese. Even though it seems simple the huge ramifications of this command have not been fully understood. The longer we try to stay away from dairy the more we would see how it is in seemingly everything. From bread, to chocolate, to Italian food, to buttermilk fried catfish, even to smoked ribs (if they are wrapped with butter). A seemingly simple command all of a sudden becomes very complex and far reaching. This describes our passage today. On its surface John's command seems simple and straightforward, but in reality it is farther reaching then we can fathom.

1 John 2:1; 12-17 ESV

> (1) My little children, **I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin**. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
>
> (12) I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.
> (13) I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.
> (14) I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.
> (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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.
> (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

John is sharing these truths so that believers would be encouraged not to sin. He desires for each generation in the audience to glorify God in the various seasons of life they are in. Each stage of life and maturity can have a great walk with Jesus. He wants all believers to walk in the light and experience true fellowship with Jesus. In order to experience this fellowship sin has to be dealt with in our lives, and John's audience has some areas to grow in. The command "**Do not love the world"** is written in such a way to show it is an **ongoing action that needs to be stopped.**

1 John 2:15 Wuest Expanded New Testament

> (15) **Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it**, and the things in the world…

These believers were actively loving the world and John is commanding them and us to stop it. This is important to see because none of us little children, fathers/ mothers or young men/ women are immune from falling into sin and loving the world. **No Christian, no matter how old or mature will outgrow this temptation.** This is not out of reach for any of us, and we have to be careful not to pridefully think that we do not have this struggle.

1 Corinthians 10:12 ESV

> (12) Therefore let anyone who **thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall**.

There is no stage of the Christian life where we do not need a constant dependence on Christ and prayerfully rely on His protection. To better understand how far reaching this command is we have to understand what John means by **“the world.”** He is **not** referencing nature, and its beauty that should draw us to the power and majesty of God (Rom 1:20). If we do not carefully define “the world” this verse can seem to contradict John 3:16.

John 3:16 ESV

> (16) **“For God so loved the world**, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

God’s love for the lost sinful world is so deep that He was willing to send Jesus to die on its behalf. He loved, self sacrificially, **the sinners** that make up the world system. John is warning us as believers to stop loving that **world system** itself. John uses the same word for love. Meaning as believers we will sacrifice ourselves for the sinful world system. It is a system that stands opposed to God and His truth and is ruled by Satan. It is a **system** that all of us were apart of at one time.

Ephesians 2:1-3 NLT

> (1) Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins.
> (2) **You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil**—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.
> (3) All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. **By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.**

Satan is called the god and ruler of this world (2 Cor 4:4, John 14:30). We all were apart of this system **that values self, and living for our own desires and will**. It is a system that stands opposed to every truth of God. The world system has a morality, values, organization and is seductive to us. Ultimately it is hostile to God. Through Christ, believers have died to this world system and do not belong to it anymore.

Galatians 6:14 ESV

> (14) But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, by which the world has been crucified to me**, **and I to the world.**

Through Jesus’ death we have been set free from this world. **This is why John’s command would make no sense to a nonbelieving audience.** A nonbeliever still belongs to the world system and needs the cross to free them from it. **As believers we are to use our freedom to walk with Jesus and His commands and not love the world system we have been saved from**. We tend not to see the worlds thinking and values as dangerous and seductive but scripture is very clear. Even being friendly to this world system makes us an enemy of God.

James 4:1-5 ESV

> (1) What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, **that your passions are at war within you?**
> (2) **You desire** and do not have, so you murder. **You covet** and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.
> (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on **your passions**.
> (4) You adulterous people! Do you not know **that friendship with the world is enmity**

> **with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** (5) Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us"?

The world system is still attractive to our old sin nature and its desires. Instead of seeking God to satisfy us we turn and try to find satisfaction in the world and through world means. **We try to keep the world at arms distance**, **close enough to be friendly with it but far enough away that we can judge it** and think we are better than it. Being friendly with this world system means we are God's enemy, because it is hostile to Him. He yearns our the Holy Spirit that is within us. We have access to new life and He so desires for us to walk in that light and fellowship with Him. Loving the world separates us from our fellowship with Him.

1 John 2:15 ESV

> (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.**

If we love the world the love of the Father is not in us. We have already seen this phrase and truth, back in verse 5.

1 John 2:5 NET

> (5) But whoever obeys His word, truly in this person **the love of God has been perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him.

Verse 15 says it in the negative and verse 5 says it in the positive. As a believer when we walk in sin, and love the world, our love for God and His love for us is not being perfected. **It is not practically in us at that moment**. Yet when we obey His Word, His love for us and our love for Him is brought to completion. John is being very practical and approaching this with sanctified common sense. **We can only love one thing at a time, either God or the world.**

Luke 16:13-15 ESV

> (13) **No servant can serve two masters**, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money."**
> (14) The Pharisees, who were **lovers of money**, heard all these things, and they ridiculed Him.
> (15) And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. **For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**

Jesus is sharing the same truth. **Our hearts were created to be worshipers, to love something and for our actions to reflect that love**. When we fall in love with God we will desire to reflect that love in our lives. When we are in love with money, we will orient our lives, schedule, and decisions based on that love. **Who we love, is reflected in our actions**. Which raises a very convicting question, **who do our actions show that we are currently in love with?** Are we in love with our loving and gracious God or with a world system, that values and exalts things that are an abomination to God. The world only knows how to get it wrong.

1 John 2:16 NAS95

> (16) **For all that is in the world**, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father**, but is from the world.

The world system is not from the Father. So when we see the world start to shift and value something new, we have to remember it will only find a new way to be against God. This world system can be summarized into three categories. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. All sin in the world can be categorized into one of these three grouping. The lust of the flesh are the **desires, longings, cravings,** of our sin nature.

Galatians 5:16-25 NKJV

> (16) I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and **you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**
> (17) **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh; and **these are contrary to one another**, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
> (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
> (19) **Now the works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,
> (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,
> (21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, **and the like**; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
> (22) **But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
> (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.
> (24) And those who are Christ's **have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**
> (25) If we live in the Spirit, **let us also walk in the Spirit.**

The lusts of our flesh, our old sinful nature, are contrary to the desires of the Holy Spirit. They are at war with each other (1 Peter 2:11). **The Holy Sprit desires to produce its fruit of,** love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our lives. The lust of the flesh desires sexual immorality, inappropriate sensuality, jealousy, anger, disputes, fighting, and drunkenness. If you are not sure if what you are doing is coming from fellowship with God and loving Him or coming from the world and walking in the lust of the flesh, use these verses as a test. **Which descriptions fit better?** As a believer our flesh was crucified and its lusts and desires have been defeated. We do not have to walk in them anymore through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The lust of the eyes is motivated by the lust of the flesh. **Our sin nature has a strong desire so our eyes start looking for it. The path to sin starts internally then finds an external outlet.**

James 1:13-17 ESV

> (13) Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He himself tempts no one.
> (14) But each person is tempted **when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.**
> (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Temptations does not come from God, He does not want us to sin. We are lead astray when we are lured and enticed, by our internal desires. When these desires are not dealt with according to truth

then we act on them by sinning**. It is the picture of a hungry fish biting a hook. The satisfied fish swims right by the same hook.** The lust of our flesh direct what our eyes pursue, what we are looking for. As we walk in our lusts, **we want to be independent and leave God out of it all.** In pride we try to be self-sufficient. We can see all three categories as Eve sins.

Genesis 3:6 ESV

> (6) So when 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**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Eve saw that that the tree was good for food. **She had a desire within her** for food, she was hungry. **Eve had no sin nature yet**, this was a natural desire of her body. The desire itself was not sin she needed to satisfy that hunger in a way that God said was allowed, by eating from any other tree. Then she saw that the fruit was a delight to the eyes. **Her inner desire is now motivating what she is looking for.** She desires to eat so that she could be wise. Instead of relying on God for wisdom **she pridefully desired to have her own**. Eve is never credited with the first sin, she was deceived (1 Tim 2:14). Adam's heart was in open rebellion against God. Once they sinned, they quickly found out the emptiness and destruction that sin causes.

1 John 2:17 ESV

> (17) And the world is passing away along with its **desires**, but whoever **does the will of God abides forever.**

As believers we should not love the world system because it is not from the Father and it is passing away. **Everything the world has to offer is temporary.** Abiding with God is permanent. This can even be seen comparing the worldly pride of life to the eternal life that is found in Jesus. For Pride of life John chose the word **bios** which references the **earthly, physical, temporary life on this planet**. The life that plants and animals experience. This is the only kind of life the world can offer. It is empty and is currently in the process of passing away. **There is no future in worldliness**. But God has offered us something entirely different.

John 10:10 ESV

> (10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they **may have life and have it abundantly.**

This word for life is **Zoe**. It is where real life is found in relationship and fellowship with God. Life that is eternal, **extraordinary**, and **remarkable.** We can choose to invest in a system that is dying or we can chose to live an abundant life and continue to abide with God forever. We invest in this abundant life by being obedient, by following His Word.

1 Timothy 6:12 ESV

> (12) Fight the good fight of the faith. **Take hold of the eternal life** to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
