



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 2:16 - ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD!

WYOMING JANUARY 23, 2019

Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235-1088/303-345-8830 / filefamily@centurytel.net

John writes to his “little children” in this letter of 1 John, to encourage believers about their salvation and security in Christ. It is also with the exhortation to “excel still more” (1 Thessalonians 4:10 and grow deeper in Christ. Peter wrote these words, “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on you guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:17-18) In such uncertain and difficult times, Christians can be assured of their relationship with Christ and confident in their beloved standing with God.

I. ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD! 1 JOHN 2:16

“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.” 1 John 2:16

John solemnly warns believers about the allurements of the world, to which Christians are not immune. He writes in 1 John 2:15, “Do not love the world, nor the things of the world...” John makes it clear that there is no neutrality. Either you love the world or you love God. The world may look so inviting, so enticing, so enjoyable, but just as fool’s gold may look like real gold, it’s fake...a mere image of the real deal, the real gem of eternal value. All that glitters is not gold and the attraction, glamor and appeal of “all that is in the world” is only a trap to deceive. John warns that Christians are to avoid sharing in the sinful, God dishonoring ambitions, desires and activities of this fallen world. John’s warning is very solemn, “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1John 2:15)

The world is the human society and way of life governed by Satan with its false values, false claims, and false gods. It is the organized, evil system that hates and openly defies God Who made everything. It is the world where the desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes and the pride of life dominate life. The world is at war against the kingdom of God. Scripture tells us that the whole world lies in wickedness in and under the power of the evil one. (John 14:19) It is this world we are not to love, court its favors, adopt its maxims, nor covet its prizes. The Christ-less world has always opposed the will of God and it would be impossible for the heart to be set upon the world and at the same time be filled with love for the Father.¹ So John proceeds to describe the things of the world that reveal whether the love of God is in us or not.

Christians have been redeemed and possess the ability to resist the temptations of the world. It is only because of Christ that we can overcome the world, for Jesus Himself said, “These things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

A. “THE LUST OF THE FLESH...” - 1 JOHN 2:16B

John begins his description of the “world” as the “lust of the flesh”.

“lust” Greek “**epithumia**” refers to a strong craving or desire.

John describes a strong desire of a carnal sort. It is an excess in desire, out of balance or proper order. It is a certain fondness for the good things of life that turn into an unholy desire to be kindled. Commentator Robert Candlish writes, “I may be out of the world, but this that is in the world may not be out of me.”² A thought worthy of our consideration as a believer in Christ.

This is a selfish craving of self-indulgence that is sensual and leads to sin. It is pursued and praised. It is a system that makes my pleasure, not God’s glory the chief pursuit in life. John is not condemning pleasure, rather a system that makes my pleasure the chief end rather than God’s glory. It’s when we make our pleasure and satisfaction the goal of our existence. And self-gratification eventually leaves people unsatisfied and craving for more. (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Only the living God can satisfy our longing in life.³

B. “THE LUST OF THE EYES...” - 1 JOHN 2:16C

This is not the flesh lusting through the eyes. The eyes themselves have their own lust. It is a lust that can be satisfied with mere sight. This is selfless jealousy and envious grudging. It’s being captivated by outward show that can be seen where happiness is found in what money can buy, and the eye can see. Compare these temporal externals to the value of what is unseen and eternal found only in Jesus Christ. He is real gold.

For example, what if I can’t stand the sight of more good in my neighbor’s possessions than in my own. What if I would be relieved if I saw him worse off. This is the way of the world. I may not desire the sinful happiness I see the world enjoying, but I might begrudge the world’s enjoyment of it. Even King

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David struggled with the prosperity of the wicked, writing in Psalm 73. Could this love for the world in this dangerous and hidden form be winning its way to my heart, and supplanting there for a time, the love of God?

Being a Christian does not make me immune to the world's allurements. Could it be that I as a believer have given in to the "lust of the eyes"?

C. "THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE..." - 1 JOHN 2:16D

And what about this characteristic of the world?

"pride" Greek "*alazoneia*" vivid Greek word that describes the braggart who claimed possessions, deeds, achievements which didn't belong to him in order to impress others and exalt himself.

John is talking about claiming for yourself what really isn't true. It's elevating yourself, status or position just to impress. Even a little bit is sinful. Are you ever tempted to inflate yourself just a little bit? That is the pride of life John is referring to.

What pains are taken by the world to save appearance, to keep up a good status to be politically correct? Everything is to be in good taste, good style; correct, creditable, commendable as the world sees it. It is the world's pride to have it so. It is this pride that puts men and women of the world on a poor struggle to out maneuver, outshine one another and outdo one another often with mere externals. This is the world's boastful pride of life.⁴ We see this all around us.

But could it be that while I may not struggle with sensuality or jealousy, I care about the world's opinion of me? Can I dispense with the world's approval and brave its frown. Am I more concerned with the world's approval, worldly forms and fashions than my integrity in the sight of God? Am I more concerned with what the world will think or say? We cannot acquit ourselves altogether of the love of the world as long as we have in our heart a liking for the world's good report, which the world's "pride of life" implies.⁵

John doesn't want us to be deceived. Much that meets our eye as we look on the world and its ways may seem fair and excellent with graces most attractive, devotions most fervent, amenities most desirable and ideas most admirable. But God is not really in them. They are "not from the Father". A pure and simple regard for His will is not their desire. They are "from the world" and there is nothing in them that rises above the natural influences of self-love.

But give a moment to consider this. The world that we are not to love...the world which has rejected, forsaken God and is at war with God...is yet itself the object of the Father's love...God so loved this world. (John 3:16) This world, having nothing in it or about it that God the Father can recognize as his Own, as what He made or meant it to be...it is this world He would give His only Son on its behalf. (Romans 5:6-8) And God calls on us to love it too! With the same sort of love...with love moving us to the same effort and the same sort of sacrifice. And it is loving the world as the Father loves it that will be our best security against loving it as the Father forbids us to love it. Let the world be to us what it is to the Father. Let us look at it as the Father does; a deep, dark mass of ungodly woe. Let us plunge in to the rescue! And if we love the world as God loves it, we will have no heart for loving it any other way. It's attractions and fascinations will have no charm for us. We see them only as snares to catch and ruin souls that we- that God- would have been saved.⁶

Satan will never weary himself of tempting us to believe life can be found outside of God's will and ways. Satan wants us to believe all that glitters is gold, but it's not. John writes these words *not* to those who are unbelievers, but to those who are Christians that we may heed their warning. Look at your life. Let God examine you and submit to His will and ways. Ask yourself if the love of the Father is in you. If it is, does your life reveal this as true?

"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. 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." 1 John 2:15-16

¹ Erdman, Charles R., *The General Epistles: An Exposition*. The Westminster Press: Philadelphia, PA, 1919. Pg.123.

² Candlish, Robert S., *A Commentary on 1 John*. (1st Published 1866), Banner of Truth, London. 1973. Pg.172.

³ Hamilton, Ian, *Let's Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 22.

⁴ Candlish, Robert S., *A Commentary on 1 John*. (1st Published 1866), Banner of Truth, London. 1973. Pg.172-173.

⁵ Candlish, Robert S., *A Commentary on 1 John*. (1st Published 1866), Banner of Truth, London. 1973. Pg.174-175.

⁶ Candlish, Robert S., *A Commentary on 1 John*. (1st Published 1866), Banner of Truth, London. 1973. Pg.177-178.