

Friendship With The World

By Joe R Wheeler

1 John 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

Introduction: To abide forever with God, we must become one with Him. Becoming a Christian makes us a part of Him, we are in His Church, we are in His body. The "Plan of Salvation" is the path to becoming "One" with God. In John 3:16 we learn that God sent His Son to save the world. We learn elsewhere in scripture the other elements of salvation. We become Christians from:

1. Hearing the Word (Romans 10:17)
2. Believing the Word (Romans 10:9)
3. Repenting from our sins (Acts 3:19)
4. Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9)
5. Being buried into His death by Baptism and arising to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4)

We call the process listed above "Conversion". It means to change something from what it presently is into something different and new. This conversion process is a CONTINUAL process...in other words, it takes a lifetime of effort.

One of the essential parts of converting is to learn to view things the same way God views things. In other words, while we may externally obey the gospel, the heart is where the real change must take place. Becoming a Christian is a first step, a beginning of a lifelong journey. We must change our way of seeing from physical to spiritual...God is the power that makes this happen. We have to supply our own desire (to be conformed to His will) and effort (submission and obedience).

If we do these things, He will give us the power to change our hearts. We will examine in this lesson one of the aspects of conversion...choosing who or what to love. We either love God, or we love the world. Lets look at what God's Word teaches us...

Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* We know from this verse that God will give us what we consistently seek after (note I said consistently)! Remember, we are talking about an internal change.

We all know how to appear better than we really are, but God looks at the heart. Conversion has to be from the heart first, then it shows itself externally. Sincerity is the difference between a "real" Christian and a "fake" one. God knows how to tell the difference.

If we look carefully at ourselves, and our attitudes towards worldly success, we can also know the truth and have assurance before God. This lesson is designed to help and point out some of the key things we need to examine within ourselves. We must meditate and consider how we stand in the eyes of God in relation to this subject.

From our text we first note verse 15:

1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

I. First, Let's examine the meanings of this word "world"...

A. The Physical World...everything that God has created.

Acts 17:24 *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;*

B. The World of Men...exclusive from the rest of creation i.e. animals, plants, etc.

John 3:16-17 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

C. The World System...this is the world John is speaking of here.

John 2:15-17 *And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

The "world" that we are focusing on is that which is used, or misused by man for his own purposes. This world is opposed to God because it is operating under rebellion to His will. This world is not the creation of God, but is allowed or tolerated by Him. It is the world from which we must be converted if we want to be saved.

II.Characteristics of the World System

A. The World System Is Influenced by Satan

1 John 5:19 *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

B. The World System Is Opposed to Christ and His Church

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

1 John 3:13 *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

John 15:18-19 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

John 17:14 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Ephesians 2:1-3 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

III.Consequences of Loving the World System

A. Loving the World Destroys Our Fellowship with God

1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Matthew 13:22 *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

James 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

Matthew 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

1 Timothy 3:4 *One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;*

2 Timothy 4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

B. Loving the World Denies Our Faith in God

1 John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

1. The lust of the flesh...physical lust...sexual or sensual. Gluttony (the Israelites lusted for flesh instead of manna Numbers 11:31-35)

2. The lust of the eyes...things that appeal to our covetous nature (Jesus warned of this in Matthew 5:38, lusting after a woman is adultery of the heart)

3. The pride of life...fortune, fame, ease of living (the rich young ruler went away sad because of this one Matthew 19:20-24)

We are tempted by these three types of lust, and sin by giving in to them...

Genesis 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

Denying these is a requirement to being right with God...

Matthew 3:4, 6, 8-9 *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Hebrews 11 is a whole chapter devoted to those "men of faith", who like John the Baptist forsook the world to follow God.

C. Loving the World Discounts Our Future with God

1 John 2:17 *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

By the same token, those who give in to these desires cannot abide forever with God.

IV. Two Final Questions:

A. Why Do Christians Who Have Been Saved out of the World End Up Getting Tangled in the World Again?

1. Friendship with the world

James 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

2. Spotted by the world

James 1:27 *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

3. Loving the world

1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

4. Conformed to the world

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

B. How Can We Overcome the World?

1. Through being born of God...being in the church through obedience to the gospel

1 John 5:4-5 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

2. Through being led by the Spirit...not led by our fleshly desire

1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

3. Through the power of the Word...God's strength instead of our strength

1 John 2:13-14 *I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

CONCLUSION: Conversion is a process that begins with us, but can only be completed

by continuing submission to God. His power is only given to those who are willing to submit their will to His. Friendship with God is an "Exclusive" not "Inclusive" relationship. He will not share the throne in our heart...He will not claim what is not given COMPLETELY to Him!

We understand that a bride who does not devote herself exclusively to her husband is an adulterous woman. How can we think that God would allow His Son to claim a bride who is not fully and completely devoted to Him?

We must understand the need to fully convert to Christ. We can not be seeking the things of the world and believe that we are accepted by God. We have to put to death those desires and worldly concerns that used to rule us. We are not to be like the world but separated from it. Friendship with the world leads to being destroyed along with it.

***2Corinthians 6:17** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*