

Open your Bibles to 1 John 2:15-17 (page 1302 in the Bibles in front of you)

I. Introduction

- A. Game I like to play with my kids when they're little. Flashlight on the floor.
- B. It's cute when it's a game with your kid, but it's not cute, it's not so fun when this happens in real life.
 - 1. When you go chasing after that relationship, that purchase, or that accomplishment. You give yourself to it and invest all you have in it.
 - 2. But when you finally get it, you realize it wasn't what it promised to be.
 - 3. At the end of the day, you open up your hand and it's empty. All that you've given of yourself, and there's nothing to show for it.
- C. As I studied our passage for today, it just hit me how HUGE our heavenly Father's love for us is. He's leveraged all of His power and wisdom and care to write this letter to us, so that we don't get to the end of our lives and say, "I wasted it! I pursued so many things and I have nothing!"
- D. Today I want to give you a big-picture overview of what this passage is saying first and then zoom in on some really important gold mines of God's wisdom within the passage.

1 John 2:15-17

"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. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

- 1. If you're like me, you read those first two sentences and you're already totally bummed.
- 2. Because I "loved the things of this world" about a hundred times this week.
- 3. We need to understand what John means by using the words "love" and "the world."

E. Definitions

- 1. Love: Active, persistent, self-giving pursuit.
- 2. World: The systems and values of sinful humanity and all that it has to offer.

- II. The main idea: Don't give yourself over to the things this world offers. If you do, you don't love God.
 - A. If you make a lifestyle out of pursuing and being satisfied by the things this world values and offers, you don't know God.
 - B. John supports this main idea with three points.
 - 1. What the world offers doesn't come from the Father.
 - 2. What the world offers will not last.
 - 3. The one who gives himself over to the Father WILL LAST.
 - C. In other words, only a fool would invest his life into something that:
 - 1. Isn't TRUE
 - 2. Isn't SIGNIFICANT
 - 3. Isn't ETERNAL
 - D. I want us all to stop right now and take stock of what we're investing our lives in.
 - 1. What do you spend most of your energy pursuing?
 - a. Is it the *true* and *good* things that come from the Father?
 - b. Is it significant enough to give your whole life to? In other words, "Would you want it to be the motto on your gravestone?"
 - c. Will what you're pursuing last beyond the grave?
 - 2. In this room, if we're all honest, we probably have to admit that, at best, it's a mixed bag.
 - a. But in this passage, God says some things to us that pull back the curtain to help us understand the playbook the Devil uses to either *prevent* our pursuit of God or *distract* our pursuit of God.
 - b. Let's zoom in on verse 16

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.

- E. Realize what was just said: "*all* that is in the world"
 - 1. John is showing us the ENTIRE playbook of the devil in your life.
 - 2. This is the nature of ALL temptation and sin.

III. The Nature of ALL Temptation and Sin

- A. 1 John says:
 - 1. Flesh: what can be experienced with our bodies
 - 2. Eyes: what we perceive that is *outside* our bodies-material things
 - 3. Pride of Life: identity we acquire from status

B. Or as another pastor so discerningly summarized it:

1. The Desire to FEEL (Flesh)
2. The Desire to HAVE (Eyes)
3. The Desire to BE (Pride of Life)

C. As far as I can tell, there is no temptation or sin that falls outside of these categories.

1. In fact, this is the same temptation playbook Satan used against Eve in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:6 says that Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was: Good for food (Taste=Feel), delight to the eyes (something I see that I want=Have) and desired to make one wise (status and identity on par with God=To Be)
2. Satan tried, and failed, with these same tactics on Jesus after His baptism. Fasting in the desert. Matthew 4: You're hungry, make bread out of stones (Feel), Prove You're the Son of God by throwing Yourself from a high place and escaping injury (To Be), Look at all the kingdoms of the world, worship me and You can have them (To Have)
3. Satan's playbook hasn't changed since the very beginning, but we still fall prey to it every single day.
4. Next time you're watching TV commercials, categorize them under these three.
 - a. In surrendering to Jesus and fighting the terrorist attacks of the Devil, it is of HUGE value to understand his tactics.
 - b. When those desires to feel, have or to be-outside of God's provision- come, you need to know what's happening.

D. I also want to zoom in on a second part of this passage, the results of falling for these tactics. Look at verse 17

17 And the world is passing away along with its desires ...

1. All that the world offers is so very temporary. It is "passing away."
2. Feelings, possessions and status are NOT eternal things.

IV. And so here's the tragedy of loving the world

- A. When God created the world, He made it as a place, full of things, to sustain and serve His ultimate creation-the only creation made in His image. All the things this world had to offer was made to serve man.
 1. He made land and animals and plants to serve man's needs so that man could pursue and serve God.

2. This whole place was an environment and context that served the purposes of man's relationship with his Father God.
 - B. In other words: Before sin, man *used* things and *pursued* relationship. After sin, man *uses* relationships and *pursues* things.
 1. Feelings and material things and status are not evil things in and of themselves.
 - a. They become evil when they become ultimate.
 - b. They become evil when they no longer serve the purpose of relationship with God.
 - c. They become evil when they *become* the object of service.
 2. The problem is not having things. The problem is when *things* have *you*.
 - a. Living this way not only ungodly, but it is also by its very nature inhuman.
 - b. You were not created to pursue things.
 - c. Things were created so that YOU could pursue GOD.
 - d. This is creation turned upside down.
 3. And here are the devastating consequences that this upside-down value system has for you. If I offered to give you the deed to a 20-million-dollar luxury mansion and all that came with it, in exchange for your house and your possessions, would you take that offer?
 - a. If you're like most people, of course you would!
 - b. But what if you found out, after you made this trade, that THIS was the house you'd traded for? (Picture of burning mansion)
 - c. Friends, pursuing the things this world offers is infinitely more devastating than this.
 - d. Because you'll keep throwing all your time, talents, and resources into this burning house and have literally NOTHING to show for it.
 - e. You'll chase that flashlight around the floor your whole life, thinking, "This time it will be worth it!" "No, this time it will be worth it."
 - f. And when you finally attain what you gave yourself over to, you'll open your hand and see that there's nothing there.
 - g. All the while, rejecting the invitation of a Father Who was saying, "Come, trust Me, be with Me, receive from Me, and you'll have ME forever!"
 - h. And you traded an all-satisfying relationship for vanishing things. You traded a Father for a burning house.
 - C. This question about what you're giving your life over to is not a small one. This deserves your time and deep contemplation. And, if you're wise, it calls for change.
- V. How do I change?

- A. Surrender your life to Jesus. You will never overcome sin if you haven't been saved from your sin.
- B. Daily: with love for God as your motivation, seek to know Him through His Word and prayer.
 - 1. If you don't plan daily to see, know, and surrender to God, you're planning to fail.
 - 2. This is preemptive love for God. I'm frontloading my heart to see Him and want Him more than I want the things the world offers.
- C. In the moment: Say "help," identify the temptation, ask God for the opposite
 - 1. Which is it: Feel, have, be? Ask God to make you satisfied, generous, and humble.
 - 2. This is responsive love for God. None of us can predict how we'll be attacked, but a surrendered person yells "help" to their Father and follows Him into what He provides.

Invitation