Discussion Questions: Impediments to Love 1 John 2:12-17

Drawn from the September 24, 2023 sermon by Dr. Jeff Chandler

I am writing to you, **dear children**, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name... because you know the Father. 1 John 2:12 & 14

I am writing to you, **fathers**, because you know him who is from the beginning. 1 John 2:13 & 14 I am writing to you, **young men**, because you have overcome the evil one... because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you. 1 John 2:13 & 14

Opening questions:
Read these verses not as if they were written to three different age groups or maturity levels, but to all followers of Christ at different points in their lives. What is John saying about all of us as Christ followers?
Share a personal experience when you felt torn between your love for something in the world and your love for God. How did you navigate that situation, and what did you learn from it?

Our discussion today is about Impediments to receiving and expressing love.

I. Identifying the Problem

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them." I John 2:15 NIV

1. How would you define "the world" as it is used here, since it is described in the Bible in different ways? (See personal reflection section for examples)

2.	What are some ways that people prioritize worldly pursuits or possessions over their relationship with God? How does it impact you?		
II. Providing Clarity For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. I John 2:16 NIV			
3.	How do the things described here take away the love of the Father?		
4.	In what areas of your life does love of the world (specifically the desires of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of riches) directly complete with your love for God?		
III. Offering Perspective The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:			
5.	How does doing things that please the Father counteract these strong cravings in our lives?		
6.	Pastor Jeff mentioned that we live in a world of constant change. Share some examples of how worldly desires are transient and fleeting. How has recognizing this impermanence affected your priorities?		

1.	express love in our relationships?
8.	. In light of our discussion, what practical steps can we take to prioritize our love for God over our love for the world and its desires?
Group Prayer Time: John wants to help believers to get their priorities straight. He wants to remind us that our sins are forgiven and that we have been given power from God to overcome the evil one and the temptations of the world. Pray that members of the group will take his message to heart. If there are any issues people are dealing with, pray that God will help them grow in that area. Pray also for any needs people are facing.	
F	or personal reflection on your own
Т	he World Defined (From the Harper Collins Bible Dictionary)
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When Paul says that "in Christ, God was reconciling the world" (2 Cor. 5:19), there is no doubt that, in his view, the world is estranged from God and, so, in need of reconciliation. Thus, "the world" can be the arena dominated by sin, which alienates people from God. Indeed, Paul refers to the devil as "the god of this world" (4:4). Nevertheless, because of what God has done in Christ, "the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31). Thus Paul can urge the Romans not to be conformed to this world (12:2). The book of Revelation likewise says that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord" (11:15).

In the Gospel of John, the world is the object of God's salvation in Christ (3:16; 12:47). It is God's creation through Christ (1:3, 10). Yet the world apart from Christ stands under judgment (16:8–11), hating Jesus's followers, who have been separated from the world and are not of the world (17:16). The dualism between God, Christ, and the disciples, on the one hand, and the world, on the other, is described in terms of a sharp antinomy. Disciples are urged to have nothing to do with the world, especially to not love it (cf. 1 John 2:15–17). At the same time, Jesus does not pray for disciples to be taken out of the world (John 17:15).

In general, the New Testament views the world as a mission field. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls his disciples the "light of the world" (5:14; cf. John 8:18), sends them to make disciples of all nations (28:19), and says that the "good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations" before the end will come (24:14). In Acts, Jesus informs the disciples that they shall be witnesses to the end of the earth (1:8), and those witnesses are later identified as people who turn the world "upside down" (17:6)

What has God done in your life recently to turn your attention to Him instead of the cheap substitutes the world offers?

We will not be covering the final verses of 1 John 2:18-29 in this series. You may want to read this passage and work through the following questions this week.

- A. How do you personally discern true and false teaching? How does the Holy Spirit help us with this?
- B. Why is saying "Jesus is the Christ" a good test of truth? In 1 John 1:1 it says Jesus was from the beginning and the Word of Life. In verse 4:2 it says we must believe he "came in the flesh". Why are multiple "tests" helpful in clarifying what John means?

C. How do you remain in fellowship with Christ? Can you list some ways?

Coming up:

October 1: Love in Action (1 John 3:11-24)
October 8: Love is the Theme (1 John 4:7-16)
October 15: Love to Change the World (1 John 5)