

“LOVE NOT THE WORLD...”

-1JOHN2:15

As we know, the author of 1John along with the next two letters, 2John and 3John, as well as the Gospel of John were all written by the Apostle John, himself. John also wrote Revelation which tells us what was shown to John concerning the end times and the ultimate destination for all of the true believers, as well as, the final destination for all those who choose to follow after the devil and his forces of darkness. John was

with Jesus throughout Jesus’ life. He was part of Jesus’ the “inner circle” of Apostles along with Peter and John’s brother, James.

Unfortunately, many people in these last days do not think John’s writings are correct. They are refusing to look into them or they tell us that his writings are not for today. I want to make it very clear that I do not agree with that way of thinking - at all. I believe that the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation and everything in between, was, is and always will be God’s true Word for all of His true people at all times.

The letter that I would like to take a brief look into is 1John that was written around 85-95 AD. John was an Apostle of Jesus. He was the leader of the church that was in Ephesus and he was well known in the area of Asia Minor. We do know that John was the last of the 12 disciples that remained alive at that time.

Ephesus was a city in Asia Minor which is modern day Turkey. Earlier, it was the apostle Paul who had actually established a small church in Ephesus around 52 AD during his second missionary journey as we read in Acts 18:19. However, by the time John was there it had grown to be a fairly good size church. It was the main church in that region. We know that John writes to this church as well as the other six churches that were in that area, when he received the Book of Revelation which is the last book that we have in our New Testament.

This first epistle of John indicates that the believers were being confronted with the error which became known as the philosophy called “Gnosticism.” We must understand that “Gnosticism” was around long before the New Testament era. This thinking of “Gnosticism” said basically that everything that is of the natural realm – everything that a person can feel, see or touch, was inherently evil. Everything that was in the spirit realm was and is, inherently, good. “Gnosticism” taught that the solution between the “natural realm and the spirit realm” was the “knowledge” (gnosis) through which people could “rise from and out of the natural way of life and thinking, to now live in the “spiritual way,” the “good way,” of life and thinking.”

Outwardly, this does not necessarily seem all that incorrect. However, the real problem was that this led to two false “theories” concerning Jesus and who and what He was, to rise up and thereby, deceive people. We must realize that “Gnosticism” was around a long time prior to when Jesus came. The problem the “Gnostics” had was to find a way to “fit” Jesus into their way of thinking. Bottom line, “Gnosticism” was a tool of the devil to deceive people from knowing the truth – especially now concerning Jesus.

They did this by one of two ways – both of which were established by the forces of darkness to keep people deceived. The first concept was that of “Docetism.” This declared that Jesus was a “ghost” or a purely “spiritual being” who allowed His followers to see and hear Him - as needed. The second aspect was that of “Cerinthianism.” This stated that Jesus was a “being of dual personality.” What they meant by this was that Jesus, “at times,” was a human and “at times,” He was divine.

John wanted to set the record straight concerning these errors that Gnosticism brought forth. Therefore, he wrote this first letter, which in essence declares that Jesus was both, 100% God (spirit) and 100% man - at **all times**. Yes, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man everyday of every moment that He was on this earth. This simply declares the awesomeness and complexity of who Jesus is. Yes, He was both, at the same time when He was on this earth - 100% God and 100% man.

That was difficult and still is difficult for many people to believe and grab a true hold onto. It goes beyond anything of our natural understanding. It must simply be believed and accepted - by faith. Therefore, the key purpose of 1 John was to set the correct understanding on the content of faith in Jesus and to give believers the absolute assurance of their salvation. In doing this, one thing that John had to “clear up” was the misunderstanding of sin and how sin now affects the born-again believer in Jesus.

One of the most often-quoted passages regarding sin is found in 1 John 2:16. In this passage, John describes the three aspects of sin that were established upon this earth from the very beginning as John states, *“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.”*

This statement by John takes us back to the very beginning where sin was brought into and upon the earth. We find this in Genesis 3 where we read of the “fall” of Adam and Eve. It is in Genesis 3 that we read of the first “sin” that had come upon this earth. Yes, the first sin was a simple action of disobedience. Isn’t that what all sin is? Isn’t it simply the disobedience to what we are told of by God?

The first sin—the disobedience of Adam and Eve—was the result of them yielding to the same three temptations that we find John writing to us about in 1John 2:16. John tells us these three are the *“lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.”* We see this first came into operation when satan had tempted Adam and Eve back in Genesis. We refer to their disobedience in these three ways – they saw that the fruit was “good for food (lust of the flesh);” the fruit was “pleasing to the eye (lust of the eyes);” and by eating the fruit “they would be as wise as God” (the pride of life).

What happened was that satan had deceived Adam and Eve. As we read the account it seemed as if “they were on their own.” God had somehow gone away from them and left them on their own. Did God really do this? Is that what our God would really do if He really loved us? The answer, I believe to those questions is simply – No. God never leaves us alone to fend by ourselves. He never, ever leaves us alone. However, He does allow each of us to make our own decisions and choices. Yes, I believe God was nearby. God, from the beginning told Adam and Eve what they could and what they could not do. However, it would **always be their choice.**

They were simply not to eat of two trees that were in the midst of the Garden. One was the Tree of Good and Evil and the other one was the Tree of Life. We must realize that Adam and Eve already had the life that was meant for them to live and they would live it forever. However, the choice was always there for them to make. The main issue that led to the life that they already had and were living in was whether they would simply continue to live their lives believing and living in, what God had given them and told them.

That was the issue. They were tempted to think that God was holding back on them. I believe that if they had the opportunity to do it again that they would still have fell to the temptation. You see that is the real issue. The devil did not force them or hold them, nor did he put the fruit into their mouths. He did not force them to chew the fruit nor did he force them to swallow the fruit. He simply beguiled them into committing their own “fall.”

All of this shows us that it was an act of their own will and that they disobeyed God on their own account. Yes, they were deceived but, again, whose fault was that. It was theirs for even entertaining the snake’s words. They were the ones who chose to listen to the enemy’s words and pick of the fruit. They were the ones who bit of the fruit and chewed it and then swallowed it. It was totally their choice. Yes, they were deceived but it was still always up to them.

We see that God came immediately and called out to them. Now, we must believe that God knew exactly where they were. After all, there were only two of them on this entire planet. The idea was and still is, is that God simply asks us to own up to whatever we may have done wrong. He loves us and desires relationship with each of us. However, a true relationship depends totally on two major issues – truth and trust. These two major issues go both ways – God is truthful and trusting in you and you being truthful and trusting totally in God.

All Adam and Eve needed to do was to be truthful and own up to what they had done and simply trust that God would forgive them. Instead, we see what the result of sin really does and its true purpose. Sin's true purpose is to breach the trust that an individual would have towards God. Then, that sin would cause the individual to no longer trust totally in the God who loves them. They then become untruthful to Him. Trusting God always leads to being truthful to God. This is what a good relationship is all about.

Adam and Eve's sin caused **them** to have the problem – **not God**. God came immediately to give them an opportunity to get back into relationship with Him. He trusted in them to be truthful with Him. Instead, they went and hid. They went and tried to mask over their sin with "clothes" (skins) that they had made to try to cover their own nakedness.

By the way, to get these "skins" Adam and Eve would have had to, for the first time, kill an animal. Their sin caused them to try to hide themselves from God which caused them to sin again. You see, sin caused them to do things that they would have never have thought of doing before they sinned. Hmmm.....

Isn't it the same when we sin, today? Don't we make the same bad choices when we choose to hide our sin? The answer to that question is a resounding, "Yes!!!" It is exactly the same with the many choices we each make throughout each and every day, as well as in our entire life. That is why John writes this aspect **again** to each and every believer. He writes us in his letter in 1John 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."*

We see John refer to the word "lust" which means to have an "inordinate desire." In the Greek it literally means "to be hot after something." In this context therefore, the term "lust" is referring to any sinful desire that is contrary to the will of God. It is an intense longing, desire and craving to have something. The idea is that this type of "lust" controls and manipulates the individual's lifestyle and their actions.

The Bible declares that "lust" is an overpowering desire that drives and directs a person's lifestyle and actions in the opposite direction to that of God. This "lust" causes the individual to trust only in themselves and not God. They make their own truth while denying God and His truth. The concept of "lust" is an aspect of the believer's life that should no longer be leading the true believer.

God has forbidden and desires the true believer to no longer walk in this kind of lustful thinking and behavior. God is very direct to His people concerning this. It may "pop up," but when it does the Holy Spirit is there to try to direct us to cast it down. The question is, "Will we listen, hear and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit?" Hmmm.....

The *"lust of the flesh"* therefore, is relating to anything that would please a deep yearning of sin within the flesh of an individual. The Bible uses the word "flesh" to refer to the sin we either desire to do or the sin we actually do. The "lust of the flesh" simply means the inordinate and very strong desire to gratify the body's sexual desire or anything else for that matter, at the cost of all that is morally correct.

The *“lust of the eyes”* refers to things we look at causing us to increasingly want and desire those things that we see. In Matthew 6:22, Jesus asserts that the eye is the *“lamp”* of the body. Jesus states, *“If your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”* Your eyes are closely related to your heart! The *“lust of the eyes”* describes someone who is captivated by an outward show of materialism. It is an inordinate desire to have and to own something that you see but you do not have. It is not yours, but you want it.

The third phrase, *“the pride of life,”* describes an arrogant lifestyle of self-sufficiency. It expresses the desire for self-recognition, applause, status, and advantage in every aspect of your life. The phrase describes the pride in what life can offer you and in what you can take from it. The word used here for pride describes a *“pretentious braggart.”* The *“pride of life”* involves the thinking that everything the individual desires to have, enjoy, or to pride them self upon, is what makes them *“think”* that they are someone *“special.”*

If we look closely at the account in Genesis 3, we can see that these were the exact tactics that the devil used and that Adam and Eve both fell into sin with. Unfortunately, the tactic of the devil does not change. He does that same thing with each of us whether we realize it or not. That is the difficulty of this whole thing. If we think very clearly and look at the things that we are doing or have done, we may see the same tactic used against each one of us by the enemy.

I am not saying that we must always be looking over our shoulder and be looking for when we do mess up and sin. On the other hand, I am also not saying that we need to forget about the possibility that we may have or actually are in a sinful behavior pattern. I believe that is exactly the lie and deception that the enemy is bringing upon the Body of Christ in this hour; that sin doesn't really matter anymore to a true child of God.

There is a very strong push in the Body of Christ these days to not even think or look upon any sin that any one of us may have done or still may be doing. There is a very strong erroneous teaching that is being brought forth today that says that there is absolutely no need for the believer to even think about any sin that they may have done or still may be involved in. They tell us that there is absolutely no reason any longer for the action of repentance. They tell us that this is because Jesus loves us and set us free from the bondage of sin. That is absolutely true. However, if you are still doing the things that the Bible tells us is sin than could it be that we are, I dare say, still being sinful - willingly. Hmmm.....

The false teachers tell us that there is absolutely, positively no reason to repent of anything anymore – even if you are still involved in these *“sinful”* things. They tell us that it was all covered under the blood of Jesus. Well, that is true. However, nowhere in the Bible, nowhere does Jesus tell us, no where do any of the writers in the New Testament (including Paul) tell us that we no longer ever need to repent of anything anymore. If anything they all tell us that this aspect of the believer's life must never falter.

We are not to live a life that is always afraid that we may be sinning. However, as a believer who now has the Holy Spirit within us, we know that it is the Holy Spirit's function to tell us and reveal to us when we do mess up or if there are areas that we are to change. When this is revealed to us, we simply repent of that sin knowing that Jesus already has forgiven us. We should never have the attitude of *“taking for granted”* the love and sacrifice that Jesus did for us 2000 years ago.

No one is ever exempt from sinning. We may not be judged for the sin any longer because of what Jesus did giving us our born again spirit and new life, however, that does not mean that while we are still living upon this earth that we can never sin anymore. The Bible tells us very clearly that now as a child of God that if we do sin, our God is faithful and just to forgive us of all our sin.

1John 1:9 tells us this as it states, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* However, notice how John begins this verse. He is very clear in telling us that God will forgive our sins only when we know that we have sinned and **“if”** we confess that sin. The **“if”** in that verse makes it clear that it is a decision on the part of the believer.

We may not be aware of all of our sin that we commit throughout this life. However, when we are aware of something that we have done, we are commanded to declare that sin and then we will experience the total forgiveness of God for that sin. We all know that the fact of the matter is that God has already forgiven all of mans’ sins when Jesus took the cross. The only sin that is worthy of hell is the denying of Jesus. However, we are still told that we are to ask God’s forgiveness when we do “miss the mark.” Why? Hasn’t God already forgiven us?

The answer to that is a resounding, YES!!! The reason that we do ask God’s forgiveness, even though He already has forgiven us, is because it is for us. We recognize our failure and we choose to willingly go before God and let Him know that we know that we did something that was opposite of His will. You see “forgiveness” is actually for our benefit. We repent, receive His forgiveness which He already has done for each one of us, and then move on.

1John 2:15-17 tells us, *“**Love not the world**, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.”*

The things of this world are not really a part of God’s forever Kingdom. Yes, we may be blessed with many things, however, we must always remember that everything upon this earth is temporary and will all one day pass away. The spirit, soul and body of an individual will never pass away. They will live on forever and ever. The question is, “Where will they live on forever and ever?” Will they be in God’s New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2) or will they be in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:13-15), forever and ever?

The choice is up to each and every one of us. We accept and know Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. If He is the absolute and supreme and final authority of your life then we are to live our life in the way that the Apostle John and all the other writers in the Bible, tell us in their writings. Love God. Love one another. Decide to let all the “lusts” of this world pass away from you. Always remember that, *“...he that doeth the will of God abides forever.”* **“Love not the world...”** Instead, **love the Lord, your God!!!**