

**King James Bible Study Correspondence Course**

*An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries*  
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

**1 John Lesson 5**

1 John 2:12-17

return pages 6 & 7 only

**Look before you love**

*All Christians need to be careful to love God, not the world.*

What we love greatly influences how we live. Perhaps you have seen a young man develop a sudden interest in art, simply because the woman he loves enjoys it. Or a young woman who has never had an interest in sports suddenly finds herself cheering at a football game because the man she loves enjoys it. When we love something, we place a high value on it. Because of that value, we gladly invest our time, energy, and money in it.

In our spiritual lives we face the challenge of what to love. Of course, as Christians we know that love for God should take first place in our hearts. Nevertheless, in practice we do not always live up to what we know. We fail to love God as we ought, so we also fail to live for God as we ought.

John highlighted the reason our love for God is not always what it should be. We face the continual challenge of temptations that endeavor to compromise our love for God. The world provides many attractive alternatives. Through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the world tempts us to redirect our love away from God and on to other things. When we yield to this temptation, our love for God inevitably is lessened.

Christians at every stage of spiritual development need to recognize and resist temptation. Obedience to God's Word gives us power to overcome the efforts of the wicked one, who is trying to drag us down. Disobedience will lead to disappointment, because what the world offers will pass away. Only what God gives is permanent.

**Strong to Face the Foe**

After John taught about the qualities of obedience and love that mark the lives of genuine Christians, he turned his attention to an important challenge. Throughout this letter, John recalled that spiritual dangers are always close at hand. Therefore, he once again reassured his readers of their identity in Christ, and he reminded them of the foes that they must face and fight.

In 2:12-14, John addressed his readers as little children, fathers, and young men. When we speak of the stages of life, we often divide life into childhood, youth, and adulthood. The same can be said of spiritual life.

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People who have only recently been saved are spiritual children. Through faithful obedience and commitment, in time they grow into mature believers.

John made it clear that all of his readers were indeed true Christians. He stated that he was writing to the little children, "because your sins are forgiven you" (1 John 2:12). He was writing to the fathers "because ye have known him that is from the beginning" (v. 13). He wrote to the young men "because ye have over- come the wicked one" (v. 13). All of the groups demonstrate a vibrant relationship with God. In John's mind there was no question at all about their salvation.

To reinforce this truth, John repeated his addresses to the three groups with many of the same words (vv. 13, 14). Not only have the little children received forgiveness of sins, but they also have known the Father (v. 13). The fathers have known the eternal God as they have walked with Him over a period of many years (v. 14). The young men have overcome the wicked one because of the spiritual strength that comes through the Word of God (v. 14).

Although it makes good sense to view the little children, young men, and fathers as progressive stages in spiritual maturity, John's way of writing leaves open a question. Why did he address them in the sequence of little children, then fathers, and finally young men, rather than in their expected chronological order of little children, young men, and fathers? Some people have suggested that John may have used all three terms to refer to the whole group of Christians from different perspectives. It is true that John elsewhere used "Children" to speak of the entire group of believers. 2 John 1:4, 3 John 1:4.

If John used all three terms to address the whole group of readers, he was making a special point. As children, they had all been forgiven of their sins, and they had come to know the Father. Because they had known God for an extended period of time, they should have been mature, stable believers. Consequently, they needed to face the present foe as strong young men. As the Word of God dwelt in them, they would become spiritually strong. That strength would enable them to continue to overcome the wicked one.

As we live for God over a period of years, the challenges do not become easier until they at last disappear altogether. Instead, we always need to recognize and resist our spiritual foes. God calls us to be faithful warriors for Him, as we learn His Word and then live it out courageously.

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Scripture memorization

*I Jn 2:17*

*17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (KJV)*

### **Watch Your Heart**

One of the profound tragedies in life occurs when someone gives away his heart to a person who hurts him. When love goes sour, lives are often damaged permanently.

Christians, too, can ruin their lives by loving the wrong things. Throughout the Bible we are commanded to love the Lord with all of our hearts. Only in God will we find the true satisfaction and fulfillment that our hearts desire.

The problem is that we live in a world system that opposes God. The world is attractive because it seems to offer us what we want without the accompanying demands of obedience and commitment to God. The world tries to tempt us to shift our allegiance and devotion away from God.

Therefore, John gave a simple and clear command: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (2:15). Then he stated a crucial principle. If someone loves the world, then love for the Father is not in him. In other words, the more a believer gives his heart to the world, the less he is able to give it to God. It is impossible to love both at the same time. Love for the world necessarily chokes out love for God, just as weeds choke out true plants.

Living for God in the world is hard, but we have no alternative. When Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17, He recognized that they would have to live in the world (v. 11). Then He went on to ask that the Father would protect them from the evil one (v. 15).

The whole letter of I John does much the same thing. It repeatedly warns us about the dangers and deceits of the world around us. Then it describes how God protects His children in the world.

Our spiritual vitality and victory are really matters of the heart. If we give our hearts to the delights of the world, we will stumble into spiritual darkness. If we love God through our obedient lives, we will walk in the light with Him. Although we have to live in enemy territory in this world, we must choose to love the Lord, not the world.

### **Defining Worldliness**

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John's command not to love the world raises an important question: What exactly is worldliness?

Many Christians have used lists of activities to define worldliness. These lists, however, vary among different groups of Christians, and they often change over time. Moreover, they typically focus on external actions, which can be easily observed, rather than on the internal values of the heart.

In 1 John 2:16 John defined worldliness by three attitudes. The first worldly appeal is the lust of the flesh. "The flesh" speaks of our sinful human nature apart from God. The flesh tempts us to satisfy its desires rather than living for what pleases God.

The second appeal is the lust of the eyes. That term refers to desires for what appeals to our senses. Countless temptations in our environment prompt us to crave things that are contrary to God's will. The world appeals to us on the superficial level of what appears attractive. It offers us candy that will dull our appetite for God's nutritious food. The lust of the eyes encourages us to act on impulse, rather than using spiritual insight to determine what is genuinely profitable for our spiritual advancement.

The third worldly appeal is the pride of life. The term "pride" speaks of boasting. The pride of life is the desire to boast that we are better than others. For example, it prompts us to want what is bigger and better than what others have. It is the pride of life that motivates us to keep up with the Joneses, rather than being content with what is sufficient for our needs. This attitude makes us dissatisfied with God's provision, and it leads us away from humble dependence upon Him. These three attitudes are not as obvious as the items that usually are included on the lists of worldly activities. Nevertheless, they are the fundamental attitudes that lead us away from wholehearted love for God. Unfortunately, many Christians are worldly by John's definition because they have adopted the values of the world. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are what produce an undue emphasis on materialism, pleasure, entertainment, ambition, and power. These attitudes, which control many of our lives far more than we like to admit, do not come from the Father; they are from the world.

John's definition of worldliness forces us to look intently at our lives. It compels us to scrutinize the true motivations that control our decisions, attitudes, and thoughts. Compared with the lists of actions that often are presented as worldliness, this standard is much more stringent. It does not stop with external actions or types of amusement; it probes the values of our hearts.

**Loving What Will Last**

When we see someone invest in a house built on an earthquake fault line or board a leaking ship, we say that his choice is careless or foolishly

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shortsighted. It is quite likely that such a decision will lead to disappointment and disaster.

The same principle applies in our spiritual lives. The attractions of the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--focus on attractive appearances. However, the appearances are far better than the reality. The whole world system that opposes God is temporary. It cannot provide permanent, lasting satisfaction. In fact, even today the world is on its way out. Loving the world, therefore, is as foolish as moving into a house where experiencing an earthquake is just a matter of time.

There is another, better alternative. The person who does the will of God abides permanently (1 John 2:17). Loving the world has no future, so Christians should not give themselves to its values. Loving God is forever, so we should commit our lives to obeying His Word. Instead of loving the momentary attractions of the world, the wise person will love the things of God, because they will last for eternity.

**Related reading:**

Romans 12; Ephesians 6; James 4; Colossians 3; II Corinthians 4

In this passage John addressed Christians. Worldliness is not a problem just for unbelievers. Worldliness is a powerful temptation for Christians every day of their lives. If we unthinkingly follow our own desires, we will adopt worldly values. If we take our cues from those around us, we will become worldly in our attitudes. We must focus on pleasing God and obeying Him if we are to thwart the threat of worldliness. We have to choose between the empty attractions of the world and the eternal rewards of godly discipleship. The world attracts us by appealing to our desires. The world offers what our sinful human natures seek.

It excites us by what appeals to our senses. It feeds our pride by promising to make us better than those around us. It boosts our ego by fixing our attention on what we own, what we enjoy, and how we compare with others.

These temptations are powerful but doing God's will gives something much more valuable. Obedience to God gives true fulfillment that lasts forever.

**Notes**

**KJV**

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### 1 John lesson 5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What does God want to develop in all of His children?
2. What is worldliness?
3. Explain the "lust of the flesh"
4. Explain the "lust of the eyes"
5. Explain the "pride of life"
6. Where else in scripture are these three terms used figuratively (hint Genesis Chapter 3:\_\_\_\_\_?)
7. Explain the comparison between 1 John 2:12-17 and Colossians 3: 5-10
8. What is the key verse in this Lesson?
9. Which scripture best describes the controlling influence of the Christian's two natures?, explain!
10. What are the key verses in this lesson that prove we have eternal life?
11. List some temptations that the world uses to lure the true Christian's attention away from his LORD. (give this some thought, before you blurt out an answer, remember I said true Christian)
  - a.

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b.

c.

12. What is the definition of Pride?

13. From Isaiah Chapter 14 what was the sin that brought down the Lucifer (the devil)?

14. Explain how worldliness effects your life?, and what steps you intend to take so as not to be so worldly?

15. What does it mean to straddle the fence in your Christian walk?

16. John's description of worldliness should make us examine our own hearts. 17. What do we really value?

18. Are we controlled by our self-centered desires, or do we truly desire to please God?

19. Are we investing our lives for what is attractive but temporary, or are we living for what is truly valuable from the eternal perspective?

### True/False

- We live in a culture that craves instant gratification.
- Waiting exasperates us, because we want results immediately.
- The world tempts us by promising what appeals to us right now.
- The World is unable to provide satisfaction that lasts.
- God's will promises and delivers genuine fulfillment, but it requires faithful obedience over the long haul.



Scripture memorization (write these verse on the back page)  
 Romans 12:1,2; 1 John 2:12-17; Ephesians 4:13,14