



Made For More Community
Oct 14: I Will Not Love the World

Series Summary: One word defines the message of 1, 2, & 3 John: Love. Specifically, God's sacrificial and perfect agape Love. This love is so perfect and so powerful, it does not lead us the way it finds us. It transforms us. It marks us. In this small group series, we will see how God's agape love for his people transforms us and every part of our lives.

Big Idea: We cannot love the Lord and the world at the same time. If we genuinely love the Lord then we will not give our hearts over to the things of this world.

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Series Lead in: One word defines the message of 1, 2, & 3 John: Love. Specifically, God's sacrificial and perfect agape Love. This love is so perfect and so powerful, it does not lead us the way it finds us. It transforms us. It marks us. In this small group series, we will see how God's agape love for his people transforms us and every part of our lives.

Overview of the series: We have received the agape love of God. A love that is defined by sacrifice, choice, and placing the needs of others first. The question is: how will we respond to this love?

- **Wk 1** - Will we love God in return? Will we respond to God's sacrificial love by rejecting any and all false teachings that are opposed to God? If the Gospel is the expression of God's love, we will reject any false gospel.
- **Wk 2** - Jesus showed the love he had for us by his actions, his obedience. Will we reciprocate that love by obeying his commands?

So far, we have been talking about God's love for us and how we reciprocate that love back to God. **The vertical.**

This week and next week... We will be shifting gears to discuss how God's love impacts how we interact with the world and those around us.

NOT LOVING THE WORLD

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

The command - Do not love the world!! In fact, do not love anything in the world. And if you do love the world, the love of God (the Father) is not in you.

- Think of it this way: Do not live for the gratification of this world. Do not try and find your purpose from anything that this world offers.
- Do not lord your life over to the things of this world. Do not base your life around the teaching of this world. This is what loving the world looks like.
- Why was this such a black-and-white issue for the Apostle John? Because he was clear on what Jesus had given him and what the world had to offer.

Everything that God has given us is good. He gives us good gifts (Matt 7:11).

- Our Hope... from God (John 14:27)
- Our adoption... from God (Eph 1:5)
- Eternal life... also from God (John 10:28-30)

The world has something else to offer us.

1 John 2:16 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.

Lust of the flesh - it promises to satisfy legitimate desires in illegitimate ways (the lust of the flesh).

- We desire to be loved...so we throw physical boundaries out the window. We welcome people into our lives that shouldn't be welcomed.
- We desire to be accepted...so we believe that we can change our genders, or try to be something that I'm not.
- We desire to be valued...so we MUST be dating someone, or else I feel inadequate and worthless if I'm not.
- We desire to belong somewhere...so out of desperation we pick ungodly friends because at least I have people around me.

Lust of the eyes - the world tempts your mind through what your eyes see. The biblical word for this is covetousness.

Pride - there is pride in one's possessions (2:16)—that is, living to impress others.

- Let me show you one of my most favorite possessions that I once took a lot of pride in...
- Here's what's crazy about this possession...

1 John 2:17 The world and its desires pass away,...

And to cap it all off, none of this lasts! The joy of sin does not last. The joy that this world offers does not last. But even more so, this life itself does not last forever. It is like a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow (James 4:14). Our earthly possessions are temporary, as one day they will be useless (Matt 6:19-21).

But what Jesus gives us is forever, because he gives us eternal life (1 John 1:2 & 5:13). And he gives it freely to all who believe in Him (John 3:16). John was not saying that doing the will of God merits eternal life. Instead, he was stating that obedience to God is a key outward sign that God has done eternal work in our lives, as was discussed last week.

1 John 5:18-19 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. **19** We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

- There is compare and contrast in vs 18-19. We see the protection of God's grace for those who have believed in Jesus in vs 18. But we also see the state of the world.
- Let's take a look at the impact on human life when we consume the world vs when we consume the Word of God.

THE WORLD VS THE WORD

Whether you realize it or not, we literally consume the world each day for hours...aka our phones and social media. Listen to what consuming the world does for humanity:

- 63% of teens say that social media is important— so let's see about that...
- By 2018, approximately 95% of U.S. teenagers had access to a smartphone.
- In a 2018 Pew survey, 45% of teens said they were online "almost constantly"; this rose to 97% in a 2022 survey.

- **Major depressive episode among girls ages 12–17:** 13.1% in 2011; 29.2% in 2021 (more than doubled)
- **Major depressive episode among boys ages 12–17:** 5.7% in 2011; 11.3% in 2021 (basically doubled)
- **Persistent sadness or hopelessness among high-school girls:** 36.7% in 2011; 57.0% in 2021 (raises 20 percentage points)
- **Persistent sadness or hopelessness among high-school boys:** 21.6% in 2011; 36.6% in 2021 (raises 15 percentage points)
- In the United States, the share of students agreeing that they felt lonely at school rose from approximately 18% in 2012 to 37% in 2018...Research shows that roughly **65% to 80%** of Gen Z individuals experience regular feelings of loneliness.
- There are so many more stats about depression, anxiety, suicide, self-harm, self-image, and so on.
- All of these are directly tied to smartphones and social media use, aka consuming the world.

Now let's look at what happens when you consume the Word (Study done by Center of Bible Engagement) ...

- Read your bible once a week– no notable changes
- Read your bible 2-3 times a week– a small upward blip shows up

However, look at what happened when reading your bible 4+ times a week:

- Feelings of loneliness drop 30%
- Anger drops 32%
- Bitterness drops 40%
- Alcoholism drops 57%
- Feeling spiritually stagnant drops 60%
- Sharing your faith JUMPS 200%
- Discipling others JUMPS 230%

This is what consuming the Word looks like in comparison. Notice how these stats mention aspects of healing, peace, and joy...all things that are described that Jesus offers us.

- Look at the proof of Jesus working in great ways in our lives when we actually make time for Him and His Word!

THE CAVEAT

Many Christians have read these passages and understood this to mean that they are to hate the world. They become cold, judgmental, and isolated as they

see the world around them as a nuisance at best. I believe that this misses the point.

Instead, what the Apostle John teaches is that Jesus, who loves us perfectly, should not compete with the world for our love. Where did John learn this? He learned this years, decades earlier, while Jesus was still alive, and from spending 3 years with Jesus before he was crucified.

We can love God, or we can love the world. But we can not love God and the world. We can not have a divided heart (Ps 86:11).

To help us make the decision, we must remember that God loved us perfectly, sacrificially, and he loves us despite the fact that we have nothing to offer.

Transition to small group: The Apostle John makes it abundantly clear that we should expect the world to misunderstand us, and even oppose our God and his kingdom. Do we know how to love God fully while we live in a world that rejects God?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **Why do you think John uses such strong, black-and-white language in 1 John 2:15? What do you think is at stake if our love for God becomes divided?**

Leader Note: If our love for God is divided, we by default have an idol problem. This is why John ended his letter, which was all about God's agape love, with this warning, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

2. **What is the difference between enjoying something God has given us, and loving that thing in a way that competes with our love for God?**

Read: John 15:18-25 together as a group

3. **Vs 18. "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." How was Jesus misunderstood and hated in his own day? Does a version of that same misunderstanding or hatred exist today?**

Leader Note: Think about all Jesus did for people. He served and loved people perfectly. He met people's needs, healed the sick, fed the starving, gave sight to blind

people, and even died so that undeserving people could have eternal life. Yet people still hated him. They didn't like that Jesus challenged societal traditions, people's power, and asked for people to change their ways. People will always enjoy free hand outs, just how Jesus gave them, but will quickly hate someone when they're asked to change.

4. Vs. 19-21, "hate" is a strong word, but John used it here because that is what he meant. What God-honoring commandments, principles, and ideals are hated today?

Leader Note: There's plenty to pick from in today's world...

- There is only one, absolute truth seen in God's Word (as opposed to everyone having their own truth)
- Purity in marriage and sexuality (as opposed to LGBT agendas)
- Jesus is the only way to Heaven (there are many ways to heaven)
- The bible calls for us to pursue Jesus and be more like him (the world preaches "be the best version of yourself")
- Not affirming sin (as opposed to a world that preaches affirmation no matter what)

5. (Lead-In) Vs 21, The world is opposed to Jesus because it is filled with people who do not know Christ. Yet! We are still sent out into the world. To be a light to the world. So that the world may know Christ.

What does it look like to go out into the world with the hope of Jesus, even though the world is opposed to that hope?

Leader Note: Jesus' instructions to his disciples as he sent them out into the countryside are very valuable here (Matt 10:5-15, Mark 7:7-13, & Luke 9:1-6). In these passages, Jesus taught key principles that help us navigate being sent out into a hate-filled world.

- Rejection should not be taken personally. They are not rejecting you; they are rejecting Christ. Their rejection is not your fault.
- Rejection should not surprise us. Jesus was rejected throughout his life, and he said all the right things.
- Rejection should not deter us from taking the hope of Christ out into the world. While some may reject Christ, others will believe in Him and be brought into the family of God. That should inspire us!
- The world may be hostile, but it is still the mission field. Therefore, we must adopt Christ's way of seeing the world through the lens of compassion because they are "sheep without a shepherd". Our hearts should hurt for those who don't know Jesus.

Prayer/Dismiss