

for the love

the first letter of John 

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 2:15-17: **the love God hates.** Text updates: 4 weeks of prayer.
TRC to 252-632-6650

Since the very beginning of time, humans have struggled with temptation and sin. We don't know exactly how long Adam and Eve lived in the garden of Eden before they were tempted, but Moses records what happens in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

God creates Adam and then Eve and places them in the Garden of Eden. It was a place of

harmony and provision. It was God who was there and had a perfect relationship with Adam and Eve.

There was one rule... Don't eat from this one tree. All other trees were available for them including the Tree of Life. But this one tree was off limits. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Let's think about this... Adam and Eve lived in harmony with God and each other and the world. They lived in kind of a paradise. All of their needs met. Good relationship with each other, with nature and with God.

And as long as they could reach out and take and eat from the Tree of Life they would live in this paradise and harmony for eternity.

Eve understood these terms...

Genesis 3:2

²The woman said to the serpent,
“We may eat fruit from the trees in
the garden, ³but God did say, ‘You
must not eat fruit from the tree that
is in the middle of the garden, and
you must not touch it, or you will
die.’”

But the tempter had other plans.

The Bible doesn't specifically say this is Satan, but most Bible students make this connection.

The Bible also doesn't specifically say that Satan is a fallen angel, but rather alludes to the idea that Lucifer led a rebellion in heaven and was cast out of God's presence until judgement. And now he and the demons are in a cosmic battle to take as many of us with them into a Godless eternity.

And what is the enemy's strategy? A full frontal attack on God? Not really. It starts in the Garden

with Adam and Eve where he tempts the first humans to be like God knowing good and evil.

The enemy works in the grey area and in half-truths.

Genesis 3:4-5

⁴"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Notice the grey area... **"you will not certainly die."** They would not die in that moment, but that disobedient act would usher in the curse which included physical death.

Notice the half-truth... **"God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** That's partly true Adam and Eve would see good and

evil, for the first time they will know that they have done evil.

Adam and Eve are seduced by the serpent's temptation...

Genesis 3:6-7

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Adam and Eve give in to temptation and disobey God. They sin.

Mark Moore, the author of the book Core 52, says this...

We've all felt the effects in our souls, like an odor in the room we can't identify or remove.

And that which now hangs over us... that stench in the room we can't identify enters the world. Sin.

Like the smell that couldn't be identified in Caleb's office, sin hangs in this world like a foul smell. Caleb moved to an empty classroom instead of working in his office. But sin is not so easy to escape. ***We all have this brokenness we can't shake or justify.***

Whether we realize it or not, SIN is that thing which we all know and feel, but may not realize the full ramifications of in our world and lives.

SIN is defined as "missing the mark that God set for us." It is our moral failure.

Sin is the thing which separates us from a Holy God. Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden and from the Tree of Life. Out of that place of peace and harmony with God.

For the last several weeks we have been studying through the apostle John's letter to the churches. It has been really great reminder of the love and forgiveness we can experience because of God's grace.

Even for those who are already christians, God continues to love us and offers forgiveness.

Today in 1 John 2, John directs our attention to...

The Love God Hates.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father, the Father's love is not in them. ¹⁶For

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. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Just like Adam and Eve, we are still tempted to turn our backs on God's desire for us to live without sin. To live without missing the mark that He has set for us.

Remember how John started this chapter?

1 John 2:1

¹My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Today, John gives us an outline of how to avoid temptation, by understanding our circumstances and where our temptations may come from.

First John encourages us to identify the source of our problem with sin...

The World

1 John 2:15

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father, the Father's love is not in them.

The World referred to here is not the physical world- not the tangible creation.

Genesis 1:31

³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was

evening, and there was morning—
the sixth day.

God saw creation as good

Throughout the creation story, God looks at what was made and says, “it is good.” And then after the six days of creating is over, God looks back at everything that was made and says, “it was very good.”

When John says “do not love the world,” he isn’t talking about the earth or universe, because God had said that it was “good.”

So, maybe John is talking about mankind.

Maybe we came into the world that God said is “good” and messed things up?

Maybe we are the stench in the room?

In John’s gospel he says...

John 3:16

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

It can't be mankind that John is talking about since earlier in his gospel he writes... "For God so loved the world!"

I don't believe John changed his mind. God loved the world and demonstrated that love by sending Jesus.

Romans 5:8

⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God loved everyone so much He sent Jesus. So what does John mean when he says, "do not love the world?"

This is the place where evil lives.

1 John 2:15

¹⁵Do not love the **(domain of sin in this)** world or anything **(that has to do with sin)** in the world. If anyone loves **(the sin in)** the world, love for the Father, the Father's love is not in them.

This domain is where evil lives, steer clear.

John says, "do not love the domain of sin in this world or anything that has to do with sin..."

And what is that? What is...

The Makeup of this World

1 John 2:16

¹⁶For 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.

John mentions three things in this verse for us to be aware. This is where you will be tempted.

The Lust of the Flesh

The Lust of the Eyes

The Pride of Life.

The word lust in this text comes from the greek word **ἐπιθυμία** *epithymía*, ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah: which means a longing (especially for what is forbidden):— desire or passion.

Epithymia comes from another Greek word, *thymos*. In its oldest root, this word is associated with the violent movement of air, water, earth, animal or men. It has the meaning of "boiling up", like the explosion of a volcanic eruption.

So John says, "everything in this domain of sin" will "flare up" and create problems in your life.

John mentions three areas to be aware of...

The **lust of the flesh** are those things which tempt us to gratify the desires of our carnal or fleshly nature. We are human and we live in a carnal world. John says, don't allow yourselves to be drawn into those temptations.

God created mankind men and women to live together in the sanctity of marriage and to be satisfied sexually with each other for life.

Anything outside of that relationship of husband and wife, sexually speaking, is sin.

Any images, relationships, desires that "flare up" outside of God's design eventually lead to sin.

There are other things that might lure us into sin when it comes to the lust of the flesh, like chasing after the desires of this world like wealth, status,

position, power. But the primary thing that tempts us in the flesh are sexual temptations.

The second thing John mentions is the **Lust of the Eyes**. The lust of the eyes are all the things that we see that we might want. Things we might desire. They may not be bad things, but if our desire for the things of this world are greater than our desire to follow God, we will sin.

It is not wrong to buy a new car, but if you stop giving to God to buy the car, your priorities may be wrong.

It is not wrong to buy a house, but if you look at a friend's house and want a better house so you can live like someone else, you might have the lust of the eyes.

It is not wrong to have certain things, but if you find you can't stop going into debt to have the

things you see, that you can't afford... temptation can lead to sin.

What we are talking about is materialism. Or what the Bible calls coveting.

Don't allow the things you see in this world, in this domain of sin, to lure you into sin.

Finally, John mentions the **Pride of Life**. The pride of life can be summed up in a simple phrase...

"Self-centeredness"

If your desires for self outweigh anything else, especially your devotion to God. It is sin. You are missing the mark.

Let's look back at what happened in the garden...

Genesis 3:6

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food (**lust of the flesh**) and pleasing to the eye (**lust of the eyes**), and also desirable for gaining wisdom (**pride of life**), she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Adam and Eve fell into the trap that John is talking about. They allowed the temptations of this world to ruin their relationship with God.

They were lured away by the lust of the flesh (they became hungry for this fruit),

lust of the eyes (something in this world looked good to them, even though God said don't touch it),

and the pride of life (remember what the devil told Eve? You will become like God).

That's exactly how temptation works in our lives. The embers are hidden, it smolders in our lives and before we know it, the conditions are just right and the wind of sin blows and we are caught in a full on blaze of lust and sin.

John is giving us the warning. This is the makeup of this world. Be aware.

As one demonstrates time and again that they are strong in the Lord, they progress to the final stage of the Christian life...

The Results of Loving the World

1 John 2:15

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father, the Father's love is not in them.

The results of the Wrong kind of Love are simple according to John.

First, we can't love the Father. If we are in love with the "domain of sin" in this world, then it is in direct conflict with our loving God.

You can't have it both ways. You can make mistakes and be forgiven, but you cannot willfully continue to sin and think that God is always going to rescue you.

Secondly, you will find it impossible to keep God's commands.

You will find that in the long run, if you try to play this game you will eventually give in to sin and say no to God.

But here's the good news...

1 John 2:17

¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of the Father abides forever (1 John 2:17)

Yet many of us are selling our souls to the devil and it's not worth it!!

Our lives are passing away

James 4:14

¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Let's get right if we are not, Let's stay right if we are faithful.

HOW TO AVOID TEMPTATION... (email me)

1. FEED THE SPIRIT.

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

2. GUARD YOUR HEART.

“Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.” Proverbs 4:25

James Thurber

Do not look back in anger, or forward in fear, but around in awareness.

3. HUMBLE YOURSELF.

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Matthew 23:12

SGL Questions:

1. How many unopened emails do you have in your inbox?
2. What has been one of your most memorable serving opportunities?
3. Discuss the idea, “the enemy works in the grey areas and in halve truths”.
4. Read 1 john 2:16 - what three areas does John write about? What are the significance of these areas?
5. How do we not allow the struggles in our lives “flare up”?

6. What are the differences of loving God and loving the world? Can the two exist together? Why or why not?

7. Read James 4:14 - what does it say about our lives? Discuss some ways we can make the most of our days. Why do we have the tendency to squander our days?

8. Dave said there were some ways to avoid temptation. They are: Feed the Spirit. guard your heart. Humble yourself. Why are these good ways to avoid temptations?