

1 John 2:17 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

1 John 2:17 The **world** is **passing away**, and also its **lusts**; but the one who **does** the **will** of **God** **lives forever**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai o kosmos paragetai \(3SPPI\)](#) [kai e epithumia autou, o de poion \(PAPMSN\)](#) [to thelema tou theou menei \(3SPA\)](#) [eis ton aiona.](#)

Amplified: And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ASV: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

BBE: And the world and its desires is coming to an end: but he who does God's pleasure is living for ever.

GWT: the world and its evil desires are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever. ([GWT](#))

ICB: The world is passing away. And everything that people want in the world is passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

ISV: And the world and its desires are fading away, but the person who does God's will remains forever.

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

Macent: and the world is passing away, with all its vices: but he that obeys the divine will, shall enjoy a life of immortality.

NAB: Yet the world and its enticement are passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever.

NCV: The world and everything that people want in it are passing away, but the person who does what God wants lives forever. ([NCV](#))

NJB: And the world, with all its disordered desires, is passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains for ever

NLT: And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TEV: The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live forever.

Wuest: And the world is being caused to pass away, and its passionate desire. But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever.

Young's Literal: And the world, with its cravings, is passing away, but he who does God's will continues for ever.

The world is passing away, and also its lusts: kai o kosmos paragetai (3SPPI) kai e epithumia autou

- Ps 39:6; 73:18, 19, 20; 90:9; 102:26; Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 24:35; 1Corinthians 7:31; James 1:10,11; 4:14; 1Peter 1:24
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The world is passing away - When we love anything more than the true and living God revealed in the Bible, we are worshiping it. Whatever it is, it won't last. And it won't be able to help us when our plans shatter, our health fails, or death beckons. Only the one true and living God can help then. Beloved, time is passing -- have you chosen the eternal love of the Father for the passing, empty love of the world?

Jesus presented the proper perspective for the love for this present **passing away** world over the love for the future world without end asking...

For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole **world**, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26) (**Talk about the ultimate "Profit and Loss" Statement!**)

Adam Clarke writes that **the world is passing away** speaks of "All these things continually fading and perishing; and the very state in which they are possessed is changing perpetually, and the earth and its works will be shortly burnt up.

World ([2889](#)) (**kosmos** related to the verb **kosmeo** = to order or adorn, to put in order [Mt 25:7 = "trimmed"], to adorn literally [1Ti 2:9], to adorn figuratively [Titus 2:9-note]) means essentially something that is well-arranged, that which has order or something arranged harmoniously and has various meanings which are dependent on the context. In 1John 2:15-17, world is used 6 times and every use conveys the moral/ethical meaning, in this case the "ordered" system of which Satan is the head (1Jn 5:19), the fallen angels are his demonic emissaries and the unsaved men and women are his "subjects".

Wuest adds that in addition to spiritual forces and unsaved of the human race, the ethical aspect of kosmos also includes ...

those purposes, pursuits, pleasures, practices, and places where God is not wanted. Much in this world-system is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual. But it is anti-God and anti-Christ.

Vincent notes that the ethical meaning of kosmos refers to "The sum-total of human life in the ordered world, considered apart from, alienated from, and hostile to God, and of the earthly things which seduce from God (Jn 7:7; 15:18; 17:9, 14; 1Cor. 1:20, 21; 2Cor. 7:10; Jas 4:4).

Bishop Trench defines the ethical kosmos as "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.

Related Resource: [An Out-of-this-World Experience A Look at Kosmos in the Johannine Literature](#)

The following is quoted by **Steven Cole** - In 1989, Tom Sine wrote some insightful words that apply just as much now, as then (Christianity Today [3/17/89], p. 52): Whatever commands our time, energy, and resources commands us. And if we are honest, we will admit that our lives really aren't that different from those of our secular counterparts. I suspect that one of the reasons we are so ineffective in evangelism is that we are so much like the people around us that we have very little to which we can call them. We hang around church buildings a little more. We abstain from a few things. But we simply aren't that different. We don't even do hedonism as well as the folks around us ... but we keep on trying. As a result of this unfortunate accommodation, Christianity is reduced to little more than a spiritual crutch to help us through the minefields of the upwardly mobile life. God is there to help us get our promotions, our house in the suburbs, and our bills paid. Somehow God has become a co-conspirator in our agendas instead of our becoming a co-conspirator in His. Something is seriously amiss.

Spurgeon - This world is fading away! Hate the world, value its treasure at a cheap price, estimate its gems as nothing but fakes, and its strength as nothing but dreams. Do not think that you will lose any pleasure, but rather remember the saying of that early Church leader Chrysostom ... "Despise riches, and you will be rich; despise glory, and you will be glorious; despise injuries, and you will be a conqueror; despise rest, and you will gain rest; despise the earth, and you will gain heaven!"

J C Ryle - The possession of the whole world, and all that it contains — will never make a person happy. Its pleasures are false and deceptive! Its riches, rank, and honors, have no power to satisfy the heart! So long as we have not got them — they glitter, sparkle, and seem desirable. The moment we have them — we find that they are empty bubbles, and cannot make us feel content. And, worst of all, when we possess this world's good things to the utmost

bound of our desire — we cannot keep them! Death comes in and separates us from all our property forever! Naked we came upon earth, and naked we go forth — and of all our possessions, we can carry nothing with us. Such is the world, which occupies the whole attention of thousands! Such is the world, for the sake of which millions are every year destroying their souls!

Passing away ([3855](#)) (**parago** from **para** = beside, by + **ago** = lead) means literally to pass alongside or to pass by.

Thayer writes that **parago** has two senses in the NT...

1. transitive, (cf. **para** = beside); a. to lead past, lead by. b. to lead aside, mislead; to lead away. c. to lead to; to lead forth, bring forward.
 2. intransitive, a. to pass by, go past (Mt 20:30, Mk 2:14, 15:21, Mk 1:16) b. to depart, go away: (Jn 8:59).
- Metaphorically, to pass away, disappear: (1Co 7:31, Ps 144:5, in the passive voice with this same sense 1Jn 2:8, 17)

Thus in the present context **parago** means essentially to go out of existence or cease to exist. John used **parago** with this same sense earlier in this letter writing...

On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is **passing away**, and the true light is already shining. (1Jn 2:8)

Parago - 10 uses in the NT...

Matthew 9:9 And as Jesus **passed on** from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him.

Matthew 9:27 And as Jesus **passed on** from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, and saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

NET Bible note: Have mercy on us is a request for healing. It is not owed to the men. They simply ask for God's kind grace. There was a tradition in Judaism that the Son of David (Solomon) had great powers of healing (Josephus, Ant. 8.2.5 [8.42-49]). ([NET Bible](#))

Matthew 20:30 And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was **passing by**, cried out, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Mark 1:16 And as He was **going along** by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

NET Bible note: This is a parenthetical comment by the author. the tax booth was a booth located on the edge of a city or town to collect taxes for trade. There was a tax booth in Capernaum, which was on the trade route from Damascus to Galilee and the Mediterranean. The "taxes" were collected on produce and goods brought into the area for sale, and were a sort of "sales tax" paid by the seller but obviously passed on to the purchaser in the form of increased prices (L&N 57.183). It was here that Jesus met Levi (also named Matthew [see Matt 9:9]) who was ultimately employed by the Romans, though perhaps more directly responsible to Herod Antipas. It was his job to collect taxes for Rome and he was thus despised by Jews who undoubtedly regarded him as a traitor. ([NET Bible](#))

Mark 2:14 And as He **passed by**, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose and followed Him.

NET Bible note: There was a tax booth in Capernaum, which was on the trade route from Damascus to Galilee and the Mediterranean. The "taxes" were collected on produce and goods brought into the area for sale, and were a sort of "sales tax" paid by the seller but obviously passed on to the purchaser in the form of increased prices (L&N 57.183). It was here that Jesus met Levi (also named Matthew [see Mt 9:9]) who was ultimately employed by the Romans, though perhaps more directly responsible to Herod Antipas. It was his job to collect taxes for Rome and he was thus despised by Jews who undoubtedly regarded him as a traitor. ([NET Bible](#))

Mark 15:21 And they pressed into service (conscripted) a **passer-by** coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

NET Bible note: Jesus was beaten severely with a whip before this (the prelude to crucifixion, known to the Romans as *verberatio*, mentioned in Mt 27:26, Mk 15:15, Jn 19:1), so he would have been weak from trauma and loss of blood. Apparently He was unable to bear the cross Himself, so Simon was conscripted to help (in all probability this was only the crossbeam, called in Latin the *patibulum*, since the upright beam usually remained in the ground at the place of execution). Cyrene was located in North Africa where Tripoli is today. Nothing more is known about this Simon. ([NET Bible](#))

John 9:1 And as He **passed by**, He saw a man blind from birth.

NET Bible note: Since there is no break with John 8, Jesus is presumably still in Jerusalem, and presumably not still in the temple area. The events of John 9 fall somewhere between the feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2) and the feast of the Dedication (John 10:22). But in the author's narrative the connection exists - the incident recorded in chap. 9 (along with the ensuing debates with the Pharisees) serves as a real-life illustration of the claim Jesus made in 8:12, I am the light of the world. This is in fact the probable theological motivation behind the juxtaposition of these two incidents in the narrative. The second serves as an illustration of the first, and as a concrete example of the victory of light over darkness. One other thing which should be pointed out about the miracle recorded in John 9 is its messianic significance. In the OT it is God himself who is associated with the giving of sight to the blind (Ex4:11, Ps 146:8). In a number of passages in Isa 29:18, 35:5, 42:7 it is considered to be a messianic activity. ([NET Bible](#))

1 Corinthians 7:31 and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is **passing away**.

1 John 2:8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him (Jesus Christ) and in you, because the darkness is **passing away**, and the true light is already shining.

NET Bible note: The reference to the darkness...**passing away** and the true light...already shining is an allusion to John 1:5, 1:9, and 8:12. Because the author sees the victory of light over darkness as something already begun, he is writing Jesus' commandment to love one another to the readers as a reminder to (1) hold fast to what they have already heard (see 1Jn 2:7) and (2) not be influenced by the teaching of the opponents. ([NET Bible](#))

1 John 2:17 And the world is **passing away**, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Parago - 9 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) - 1Sa 16:9, 10; 20:36; 2Sa 15:18; Ezra 9:2; Neh 2:7; Ps 129:8; 144:4; Eccl 11:10. There is one use of **parago** that is similar to John's use in 1Jn 2:17...

Psalm 144:4 Man is like a mere breath. His days are like a **passing** (Lxx = parago) shadow. (**NET Bible note:** Hebrew = "his days [are] like a shadow that passes away," that is, like a late afternoon shadow made by the descending sun that will soon be swallowed up by complete darkness. Cp Ps 102:11-[Spurgeon's note](#))

Spurgeon comments: He is nothing, he pretends to be something, he is soon gone, he ends in nothing as to this life; yet there is a light somewhere.

Adam is like to **Abel** (Hebrew means a breath, vanity, vapor, transitoriness, fading away, withering). He is like that which is nothing at all. He is actually vain, and he resembles that unsubstantial empty thing which is nothing but a blown up nothing, -- a puff, a bubble. Yet he is not vanity, but only like it. He is not so substantial as that unreal thing; he is only the likeness of it. Lord, what is a man? (Ps 8:4-[Spurgeon's note](#)) It is wonderful that God should think of such a pretentious insignificance.

He is so short lived that he scarcely attains to years, but exists by the day, like the **ephemera** (Spurgeon undoubtedly is referring to the **Day-fly**, a fly that lives one day only, but the word is applied also to insects that are very short-lived, whether they live several days or an hour only. The ultimate picture is something of no lasting significance), whose birth and death are both seen by the self same sun. His life is only like to a shadow, which is in itself a vague resemblance, an absence of something rather than in itself an existence. Observe that human life is not only as a shade, but as a shade which is about to depart. It is a mere mirage, the image of a thing which is not, a phantasm which melts back into nothing. How is it that the Eternal should make so much of mortal man, who begins to die as soon as he begins to live?

The connection of the two verses before us with the rest of the psalm is not far to seek: David trusts in God and finds him everything; he looks to man and sees him to be nothing; and then he wonders how it is that the great Lord can condescend to take notice of such a piece of folly and deceit as man.

Bellarmino -- The shadows of the mountains are constantly shifting their position during the day, and ultimately disappear altogether on the approach of night: so is it with man who is every day advancing to the moment of his final departure from this world.

George Swinnoek -- As he that goes to a fair, with a purse full of money, is devising and debating with himself how to lay it out -- possibly thinking that such and such commodities will be most profitable, and bring him in the greatest gain -- when on a sudden a cut purse comes and eases him both of his money and care how to dispose of it.

Surely you might have taken notice how some of thy neighbors or countrymen, when they have been busy in their contrivances, and big with many plots and projects how to raise their estate and names and families, were arrested by death in a moment, returned to their earth, and in that day all their gaiety, their great thoughts perished, and came to nothing.

The heathen historian could not but observe how **Alexander the Great**, when he had to carry on his great designs, **summoned a parliament before him of the whole world, he was himself summoned by death to appear in the other world.**

The Dutch, therefore, very wittily to express the world's vanity, picture at Amsterdam a man with a full blown bladder on his shoulders, and another standing by pricking the bladder with a pin, with this motto, **quam subito, How soon is all blown down!**

Joseph Caryl -- When Cain was born, there was much ado about his birth; "I have gotten a man child from God", saith his mother: she looked upon him as a great possession, and therefore called his name Cain, which signifies "a possession." But the second man that was born unto the world bare the title of the world, "vanity"; his name was Abel, that is, "vanity." A premonition was given in the name of the second man what would or should be the condition of all men. In Psalms 144:4 there is an allusion unto those two names. We translate it, "Man is like to vanity"; the Hebrew is, "Adam is as Abel"; Adam, you know, was the name of the first man, the name of Abel's father; but as Adam was the proper name of the first, so it is an appellative, or common to all men: now Adam, that is, man of all men, are Abel, vain, and walking in a vain show.

Thomas Raffles (1788-1863) -- **With what idle dreams, what foolish plans, what vain pursuits, are men for the most part occupied!** They undertake dangerous expeditions and difficult enterprises in foreign countries, and they acquire fame; but what is it? -- **Vanity!** They pursue deep and abstruse speculations, and give themselves to that "much study which is a weariness to the flesh", and they attain to literary renown, and survive in their writings; but what is it? -- **Vanity!** They rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of anxiety and care, and thus they amass wealth; but what is it? -- **Vanity!** They frame and execute plans and schemes of ambition -- they are loaded with honours and adorned with titles -- they afford employment for the herald, and form a subject for the historian; but what is it? -- **Vanity!**

In fact, all occupations and pursuits are worthy of no other epithet, if they are not preceded by, and connected with, a deep and paramount regard to the salvation of the soul, the honour of God, and the interests of eternity ... Oh, then, what phantoms, what airy nothings are those things that wholly absorb the powers and occupy the days of the great mass of mankind around us! Their most substantial good perishes in the using, and their most enduring realities are but **"the fashion of this world that passeth away."**

Warren Wiersbe - What are we that God should pay any attention to us? Are we smart? I don't think so. Are we strong? Some animals are much stronger than we are. Are we righteous? No, we have sinned against God. Are we faithful? Too often we disobey Him. From the human point of view, there is no reason why God should pay any attention to us. "Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow" (Psalm 144:4). **Compared to eternity, our lives are just a puff of smoke. They appear, and then they are gone.**

David's position and reputation did not go to his head, for he asked, "Who am I that God should

do this for me?" The statements in Ps 144:3,4 remind us of Ps 8:4, and this is a reminder that we need, especially when we think we can handle life without trusting God. The Hebrew word translated "breath" is habel, the name of one of Adam's sons (Abel), and the word translated "vanity" thirty-eight times in Ecclesiastes. (See also Ps 39:4, 5, 6, 13; Ps 62:9; Ps 78:33; Ps 94:11.) The "shadow" image is found in Ps 102:11, 109:23, Job 8:9 and Job 14:2, and Ecclesiastes 6:12 and Eccl 8:13. **How helpless we are without the Lord!** (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Exultant. Page 208. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries) (Bolding and color added)

The brevity of our earthly life...

A profitable subject for meditation.

A rebuke to those who provide for this life alone.

A trumpet call to prepare for eternity.

An incentive to the Christian to make the best of this life for the glory of God. --

J.F.

Spurgeon - Passing away - It is only a puff, a phantom, a bubble, a mirage which will melt away as you try to approach it; there is nothing substantial in it. **Does the will of God abide for ever.** Not, "he that doeth some great thing to be seen of men," not, "he that builds a row of almshouses, or leaves a great mass of money to charity when he dies, because he could not possibly carry it away with him," not, "he that sounds a trumpet before him to let everybody know what a good man he is;" not, "he that must needs outdistance everybody else;" but, "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Obedience to the will of God is the pathway to perpetual honour and everlasting joy.

A T Robertson = There is consolation in this view of the transitoriness of the conflict with the world. Even the lust which belongs to the world passes also. The one who keeps on doing ([poiōn] present active participle of [poieō]) the will of God "abides for ever" ([menei eis ton aiōna]) "amid the flux of transitory things" (D. Smith). ([Word Pictures in the New Testament](#))

Kenneth Wuest - The verb (parago) is in the **passive voice**. The world is **being** caused to pass by. That is, God is causing the world to come to its end. It is being caused to pass by in a vain (futile) show, this parade of the world. But, John says, "The one who keeps on **habitually** doing the will of God abides forever." ([see amplification of this idea below](#)) ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#)) (Bolding and italics added)

Adam Clarke writes that **also its lusts** includes...

their vain pursuits, and delusive pleasures, are passing away in their successive generations, and their very memory perishes

Lust ([1939](#)) (**epithumia** from **epi** = at, toward {the preposition "epi-" in the compound is directive conveying the picture of "having one's passion toward"} + **thumos** = passion. Related verb **epithumeo** = set heart upon) is a neutral term denoting the presence of strong desires or impulses, longings or passionate cravings (good or evil as determined by the **context**) directed toward an object. The three uses of **epithumia** in 1John 2:16, 17 obviously refer to those strong inner longings for that which is evil, those passionate cravings one has for the things which are forbidden by the word of God. These evil desires, impulses and passions are constantly arising from the evil nature, the **flesh**, (cp Jas 1:14-note) even as smoke rises from a chimney because there is a fire in fireplace. The evil **flesh** nature (the "fire in the fireplace") is not eradicated even in believers although its power over the believer is broken (Ro 6:6-note), and the believer no longer is obligated to obey the evil **lusts**. The wise believer would do well to remember that the **lusts of the flesh** are constantly attempting to control the believer's heart and mind, as it did before salvation wrought its work in his being. John gives us the great "prophetic promise" that these lusts are passing away some day in the future.

W. E. Vine comments that **epithumia** - describes the inner motions of the soul, the natural tendency of men in their fallen estate toward things evil and toward things forbidden. ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

But the one who does the will of God lives forever: o de poiōn (PAPMSN) to thelema tou theou menei

(3SPAI) eis ton aiona:

- Ps 143:10; Matthew 7:21; Mt 21:31; Mark 3:35; John 7:17; Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:9; 4:12; 1Thes 4:3; 1Thes 5:18; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 4:2
- Lives - Psalms 125:1,2; Proverbs 10:25; John 4:14; 6:58; 10:28, 29, 30; 1Peter 1:5,25
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But - Introduces a marked **contrast**. Contrast words like **but** usually indicate a "change in direction" and in this case John presents even a change in **destiny**, in this case eternal life (which by "default" contrasts with eternal death).

Does the will of God - The verb **does** is in the **present tense** which indicates these individuals as a habit of their life pursue **the will of God** (most clearly revealed in the Word of God). While they are not perfect practitioners of the Word and will of God, John's point is that the general direction of their life is "heavenward" (in context as determined by what/Who they **love** - cp 1Jn 2:15-note). Note carefully that one's obedience to **the will of God** does not earn or merit salvation/eternal life (which is a gift by God's grace [Ro 3:24-note] not a result of our works [cp Ro 3:20-note where justified = declared righteous = saved]), but does serve to prove that one has been born again (from above, Jn 3:3) and that he or she does possess a supernatural desire and power (the indwelling Spirit, Ro 8:9-note) to habitually pursue and practice God's will until the end of their life (cp Heb 3:6-note, Heb 3:14-note, cp 1Co 15:2-note). The apostle John declares that eternal **life** is promised to these who are doers of the Word and not merely hearers only, for the latter group (in context those who habitually love the world and do not love God) delude themselves (Jas 1:22, 23, 24-note, contrast Jas 1:25-note). These professors falsely reason that because they have heard the word about Jesus, they are safe from the coming wrath of God (2Th 1:8,9). They are deceived and will be among those to whom Jesus declares...

'I never (Greek literally = never at any time = so He is not saying they were saved and lost their salvation - the fact is that they were never, ever saved!) knew you; **DEPART** (a command) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (**present tense** - habitually, as your lifestyle - the antithesis of **the one who** [habitually] **does the will of God**) LAWLESSNESS (i.e., they practice sin for 1Jn 3:4 says Sin = Lawlessness). '(Mt 7:23-note)

Lives (abides) (3306) (meno) means remains, stays or abides and in this context refers to one who continually remains in a certain realm, specifically the realm of "life" (as contrasted with eternal death, also known as the second death - see Rev 20:11-15-note; see also Tony Garland's discussion of [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)) Note that the verb **meno** is in the **present tense** which speaks of the doers of **the will of God** continually remaining in the realm of life, a point emphasized by the following word, **forever!**

The **NET Bible** translates **meno** as "**remain**" that...

because the context contrasts the transience of the world and its desires with the permanence of the person who does God's will.

Forever (165) (aion) usually refers to some aspect of **time** past, present or future. The Greek text (*eis ton aiona*) literally reads "into the age". This specific Greek phrase, *eis ton aiona*, occurs 27 times in the NT and is usually translated **forever** -Mt. 21:19; Mk. 3:29; 11:14; Lk 1:55; Jn. 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 51, 52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; Jn 14:16; 1Co. 8:13; 2Co 9:9; Heb 1:8; 5:6; 6:20; Heb 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 1Pe 1:25; 1Jn 2:17; 2Jn 1:2.

Adam Clarke writes that **also its lusts** includes...

their vain pursuits, and delusive pleasures, are passing away in their successive generations, and their very memory perishes; but he that doeth the will of God—that seeks the pleasure, profit, and honor that comes from above, shall abide for ever, always happy through time and eternity, because God, the unchangeable source of felicity, is his portion.

H A Ironside writes the following comment regarding **the one who does the will of God..**

In obedience to His will there is lasting joy, there is endless gladness. In the light of that, who would not say,

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All earth's joys are but in name,
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.

Have you made your choice, Christian?

You made your choice once when you turned from sin to Christ.

Have you made the other choice? Have you turned from the world to Christ?

There is many a one who has trusted Jesus as his Saviour from judgment, who has never learned to know Him as the rejected One with whom he is called to walk in hallowed fellowship.

No one can ever put this world beneath his feet until he has found a better world above. When your heart is taken up with that world, it is an easy thing to heed the exhortation, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." ([1 John 2 Commentary](#)) (Bolding and color added)

Pastor Steven Cole asks...

How do we maintain our love for the Father?

To obey the Father with our eyes on eternity is to maintain our love for Him (1Jn 2:17).

To obey the Father is to maintain your love for Him. The opposite of loving the world is not only loving the Father, but also obeying Him—"doing the will of God."

"The will of God" here does not refer to following His direction in your life. It refers to obeying His commandments as revealed in His Word. As Jesus said,

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10).

A key reason to obey God's commandments is the transitory nature of this world and its lusts, as contrasted with the eternal promise of heaven:

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides [lit.] forever" (1Jn 2:17; the original NASB correctly translates "abides," not "lives").

If you love the world or the things in the world, you will lose them all at death. All that the worldly person lives for is gone in an instant and means nothing in light of eternity. Even if you have attained your worldly desires, what good are they at death? But, if you do God's will, you will abide with Him in heaven throughout all eternity!

Conclusion

In 1989, Tom Sine wrote some insightful words that apply just as much now, as then (Christianity Today [3/17/89], p. 52):

Whatever commands our time, energy, and resources commands us. And if we are honest, we will admit that our lives really aren't that different from those of our secular counterparts. I suspect that one of the reasons we are so ineffective in evangelism is that we are so much like the people around us that we have very little to which we can call them. We hang around church buildings a little more. We abstain from a few things. But we simply aren't that different. We don't even do hedonism as well as the folks around us ... but we keep on trying.

As a result of this unfortunate accommodation, Christianity is reduced to little more than a spiritual crutch to help us through the minefields of the upwardly mobile life. God is there to help us get our promotions, our house in the suburbs, and our bills paid. Somehow God has become a co-conspirator in our agendas instead of our becoming a co-conspirator in His. Something is seriously amiss.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself, to evaluate whether you love the world or the Father (adapted from A. W. Pink, Exposition of 1 John [Associated Authors and Publishers], p. 126):

- **Which do you seek with more fervor:** the wealth and honors of the world, or the riches of grace and the approval of God?
- **Which have the greater attraction:** the pleasures of the world, which are only for a season,

or those pleasures at God's right hand, which are for eternity?

- **Wherein lies your confidence:** in the money you have in your bank account or investments, or in the living and faithful God, who has promised to supply all your needs?
- **Which causes the deeper sorrow:** a temporal loss, or a break in your fellowship with God?
- **Upon which do you get more joy:** spending money for personal comforts and luxuries, or spending money to further the gospel?
- **What most dominates your mind:** thoughts and schemes after worldly advancements, or resolutions and efforts to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord?

Some of you need to make the basic choice: Will you love the Father, or will you love the world? Most of us have made that choice, but we need to maintain it. Do not yield to the temptations of the world, but do the will of God. You will abide forever!

Application Questions

1. Why does John not give us the option, which seems possible, to be partially committed both to God and to the world?
2. Does "not loving the world" mean that it is wrong for a Christian to seek to succeed in business or a career? Why/why not?
3. How can we who live in affluence know when enough is enough? How do we choose a permissible level of luxury?
4. Why are asceticism and isolationism not the ways to godliness? What are the dangers of these approaches? ([Choose Your Love: the World or the Father?](#))

HEAVENLY PEOPLE: Read LUKE 24:44-53, 1Jn 2:15-17. If then you were raised with Christ, **seek** (present imperative = passionately and persistently as one's lifestyle, for earth is not our home beloved!) those things which are above (Colossians 3:1-note).

Christians are a "heavenly" people. That's what Paul meant when he told the Ephesians that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6-note). We live on earth, but "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:20-note). We should therefore "seek those things which are above," and store up treasures in heaven.

We see a graphic difference between an earthly minded person and a heavenly minded person when we look at two Middle Eastern tombs. The first is the burial place of King Tut in Egypt. Inside, precious metal and blue porcelain cover the walls. The mummy of the king is enclosed in a beautifully inscribed, gold-covered sarcophagus. Although King Tut apparently believed in an afterlife, he thought of it in terms of this world's possessions, which he wanted to take with him.

The other tomb, in Palestine, is a simple rock-hewn cave believed by many to be Jesus' burial site. Inside, there is no gold, no earthly treasure, and no body. Jesus had no reason to store up this world's treasures. His goal was to fulfill all righteousness by doing His Father's will. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth and love.

The treasures we store up on earth will all stay behind when this life ends. But the treasures we store up in heaven we'll have for eternity. When we seek to be Christlike in thought, word, and deed, we will live like "heavenly" people. —P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Wise are those who gear their goals
to heavenly gains.**

WHERE IS YOUR HAPPINESS? IN THINGS OR GOD? - Although the fig tree shall not blossom ... yet I will rejoice in the Lord (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Those who center their lives on spiritual values rather than material things are best equipped to endure the

adversities of life and to profit from them. In fact, they can even rejoice in them.

In 450 Stories for Life, Gust Anderson tells about visiting a church in a farming community of eastern Alberta, Canada, where there had been eight years of drought. The farmers were deep in debt, and their economic situation looked hopeless. In spite of their poverty, however, many of them continued to meet together to worship and praise God. Anderson was especially impressed by the testimony of one of these farmers. Dressed in overalls and an old coat—the best clothes he had—the man stood up and quoted Habakkuk 3:17,18.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Anderson thought, that dear saint has found the secret of real joy.

It isn't wrong to find pleasure in the good things money can buy, but we should never rely on them for happiness. If our fulfillment depends on material possessions, we are crushed when we lose them. But if our joy is found in the Lord, nothing can disrupt it, not even economic distress. Those who know and trust the Lord can rejoice—even in poverty. —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Happiness depends on happenings;
Joy depends on Jesus!**

CASTLES OF SAND - the world passeth away but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. 1 John 2:17

Walking along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico early one morning, I came upon quite an elaborate castle of sand. Evidently some youngster the day before had spent hours scooping out the "moats," heaping up the mounds of earth, forming the castle walls, and placing many beautiful shells on them as an added embellishment. How proud he must have been of his work. I can just imagine hearing him call out, "Mommy, Daddy, look at what I made!" and then how his face must have beamed as he received their enthusiastic praise.

As I came along at sunrise, however, the tide was coming in, and with it the continual action of the breakers. They seemed to move in a little closer with each succeeding crash. As I stopped to examine this child's castle of sand, a huge wave broke at my feet, disintegrating a portion of it. Then came another wave, and yet another, adding to its ruin. Returning some time later I found the castle was completely destroyed. It made me think of the "castles of sand" which men and women erect in real life. They spend not just a few hours, but precious years toiling and laboring, thinking they are really accomplishing something. But then comes the night, and after the "builders" themselves are gone, the tides of time swirl in and soon their cherished "castles" disappear, and they and their works are both forgotten.

There is only one way to build a life that counts, and a "work" that endures. It is to found it upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and to do so with eternity's values in view. To rear and educate your children to succeed in this life is fine, but what are you doing to help them prepare for that which is to come? To be successful in business and receive the plaudits of men may give temporary pleasure and satisfaction, but what are you doing for eternity? What are you building: a "castle of sand," or a work that abides? It was Daniel who said, "... they that turn many to righteousness, [shall shine] as the stars forever and ever" (Da 12:3).

To wealth and fame I would not climb,
But I would know God's peace sublime;
And everywhere, and all the time,
I want my life to tell for Jesus!
— Mrs. F. Breck

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
only what's done for Christ will last!**
(Ed: And only what's done **IN** Christ will last - cp Jn 15:5, 16)

What shall I say of the things of this world, which people appear to think so valuable—money, houses, land, clothes, fine food and drink, learning, honors, titles, pleasures, amusements, and the like? I say that they are all really worthless!

What I mean is this, that if you suppose they are in themselves able to make you really happy—you are woefully deceived! If any person could have just as much as he wished of every earthly good thing—he would still find in a very short time that he was not one whit happier than before!

I dare say you think I am mistaken—but let me tell you that many a rich man has tried the experiment, and can bear witness that the case is so! Many a one could tell you that he seeks out everything which money can purchase, he passes his life in a constant round of amusement and excitement, going from one pleasure to another. And yet he must confess that happiness and peace of mind have been like a shadow—always before his eyes but never within his grasp!

I say that all the things of the world are perishable! Surely, dear friends, this cannot require any evidence. You must have seen with your own eyes that none of the things I have mentioned are sure, lasting, permanent, incorruptible, and to be depended on!

Money and property may be lost! Health may fail! Friends may be deceitful! And unless we can make a covenant with death and hell, we ourselves may suddenly be cut off in the midst of our days—and hurried to our final judgment!

"Why waste your money on what really isn't food? Why work hard for something that doesn't satisfy?" Isaiah 55:2 (J. C. Ryle, "[Profit and Loss](#)")

J C Philpot paints a picture of "**passing away**"...

How really empty and worthless are all human cares and anxieties, as well as all human hopes and pleasures—when viewed in the light of a vast and endless eternity!

In twenty years, today's price of oil will probably mean little to you. But it will matter much whether your soul is in heaven or hell.

When the cold winds are whistling over your grave, or the warm sun resting on it—what will it matter whether sheep sold badly or well at the market?

Could we realize eternal things more, we would be less anxious about temporal things. It is only our unbelief and carnality which fetter us down to the poor things of time and sense. ([Letters](#))

Ryle alludes to the world which is **passing away** writing that...

Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. He also flees like a shadow, and doesn't continue." (14:1, 2). There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again—but "man dies and wastes away, yes, man gives up the Spirit, and where is he?" Such is the world! "The world and its evil desires are passing away! But the person who does God's will lives forever!" 1 John 2:17 ([PROFIT AND LOSS](#))

J C Philpot discusses the **fugitive, transitory things** of this **world** which **is passing away**...

There is a reality in true religion, and indeed, rightly viewed, a reality in nothing else. For every other thing passes away like a dream of the night, and comes to an end like a tale that is told. Now you cannot say of a thing that passes away and comes to an end that it is real. It may have the appearance of reality—when in fact it is but a shadow. Money, jewels, pictures, books, furniture, securities—are transitory. Money may be spent, jewels be lost, books be burnt, furniture decay, pictures vanish by time and age, securities be stolen. Nothing is real but that which has an abiding substance. Health decays, strength diminishes, beauty flees the cheek, sight and hearing grow dim, the mind itself gets feeble, riches make to themselves wings and flee away, children die, friends depart, old age creeps on—and life itself comes to a close.

These fugitive, transitory things are then mere shadows. There is no substance, no enduring substance in them. They are for time, and are useful for a time. Like our daily food and clothing, house and home—they support and solace us in our journey through life. But there they stop—when life ends they end with it. But real religion—and by this I understand the work of God upon the soul—abides in death and after death, goes with us through the dark valley, and lands us safe

in a blessed eternity. It is, therefore, the only thing in this world of which we can say that it is real!
([RICHES OF PHILPOT](#))

Philpot - Compared with spiritual and eternal blessings, we see how vain and empty are all earthly things.

What vain toys!

What idle dreams!

What passing shadows!

We wonder at the folly of men in hunting after such vain shows--and spending time, health, money, and life itself, in a pursuit of nothing but misery and destruction!

We care little for the opinion of men as to what is good or great--but much for what God has stamped His own approval upon, such as ...

a tender conscience,
a broken heart,
a contrite spirit,
a humble mind,
a separation from the world,
a submission to His holy will,
a meek endurance of the cross,
a conformity to Christ's suffering image,
and a living to God's glory. ([Ref](#))

C H Spurgeon exhorts us to...

Hate the world, value its treasure at a cheap price, estimate its gems as nothing but fakes, and its strength as nothing but dreams. Do not think that you will lose any pleasure, but rather remember the saying of that early Church leader Chrysostom...

Despise riches, and you will be rich;

despise glory, and you will be glorious;

despise injuries, and you will be a conqueror;

despise rest, and you will gain rest;

despise the earth, and you will gain heaven! ([Ref](#))

See - [How, then, shall I spend this short life](#)

J C Ryle reminds us in view of (2Co 4:18, 1Co 7:31, 1Jn 2:17) that...

We live in a **world** where all things are temporary and **passing away**. We are all "going, going, going," whether high or low, rich or poor, old or young. We are all going—and shall soon be gone! What is our life? It is a vapor! (Jas 4:14, 1:10-note, Job 7:6,7 9:25,26; 14:1,2 Ps 39:5-[note](#), Ps 89:47-[note](#), Ps 90:5, 6, 7-[note](#); Isa 38:12; 1Pe 1:24-note) So soon passes it away, and we are gone!

Humbling and painful as these truths may sound, it is good for us to realize them and lay them to heart. The houses we live in, the homes we love, the riches we accumulate, the professions we follow, the plans we form, the relations we enter into, they are only for a time. The things you live for now are all temporary and passing away. The pleasures, the amusements, the recreations, the merry-makings, the profits, the earthly callings, which now absorb all your heart, and drink up all your mind, will soon be over. They are poor ephemeral things which cannot last.

**Oh, do not love them not too much!
Do not grasp them too tightly!**

Do not make them your idols!
You cannot keep them, and you must leave them!

William Tiptaft (1803-1864) rightly asks...

What is this **world**, and all things in it, if a man does not have God for his friend? All things around us remind us that we are nothing better than grass, and are like a fleeting shadow. And if we are void of saving grace, awful is our state, whether we feel it so or not. But we find that the Lord must make us view things in their true colors. And if He favors us with a few breathings after the 'heavenly manna', it will stop us from so earnestly seeking that 'bread which perishes'.

The **world** is a great enemy! It contains so many snares and baits so suitable to our carnal appetite! We are surrounded with everything that is trying to fasten our hearts to earthly things. And if we were to have no crosses, and no enjoyment and comfort in spiritual things, we would be endeavoring, still more than we are, to find our happiness in earthly things.

Matthew Meade (The Almost Christian) observes...

What pains do children take to scrape and roll the snow together to make a snowman. But soon after it is done, the heat of the sun dissolves it, and it comes to nothing. The greatest treasures of worldly people are but snowmen! When death and judgment come, they melt away, and come to nothing!

Richard Baxter has the following word regarding the "World" in his chapter entitled [The Suburbs of Heaven](#)

If there is such a wonderful rest remaining for us, why don't we think about it more? Has the eternal God provided us such a hope, and promised to take us up to dwell with Himself; and is it not worth thinking about? Do we believe this, and yet forget it and neglect it? Why does God condemn earthly-mindedness and command, "Set your affection on things above"? (Col. 3:2). If God says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1John 2:15), why then do we make earth our principal concern? Where is the Christian whose concentration is really on his rest? What is the matter—are we so full of joy that we need no more? I urge you, reader, to bend your soul to study eternity. Busy it about the life to come. Make such meditation your habit. Bathe your soul in heaven's delights; and if your backward soul begins to drag its feet and your thoughts wander, call them back. Hold them to their work. Don't put up with their laziness. When you have, in obedience to God, tried this work, and kept a guard on your thoughts until they are accustomed to obey; then you will find yourself in the suburbs of heaven. Then the life of Christianity will be a life of joy. (From the 191 page book [The Saints Everlasting Rest](#))

Illustration of 1Jn 2:15-17 - Today in the Word - When rescuers were finally able to pull a middle-aged man from the wreckage of a horrible car accident, he was taken to a nearby hospital. But it soon became apparent that he would die. As the chaplain comforted him, the man, who was a Christian, exclaimed, "As I look squarely at eternity, I realize now just how much I wasted my life on things that don't matter."

What a sad revelation! Today's passage offers a strong challenge to those who "waste their lives on things that don't matter." John opens this passage with uncompromising words: "Do not love the world or anything in the world." At first glance, verse 15 may seem at odds with John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." Most likely, John is using the word world differently in these two texts. In John 3:16, world refers to the lost people of the world, whereas in 1 John 2:15, world refers to an entire system of beliefs and values—what we might call a "worldview." This worldview is completely opposed to God and His ways.

To clarify what he means, John lists three elements of this worldview in verse 16. First, he warns against "cravings." These are misplaced appetites for some of our most powerful drives such as for food, for intimacy, and for recognition.

Next, John talks about the "lust of the eyes." This includes both what we can see and what we can imagine. This can best be summarized as our tendency to look at the external qualities without really inquiring about what's inside. For example, many people are tempted by the pursuit of wealth because of all they imagine it will enable them to possess.

Finally, John addresses pride, or that self-sufficiency that attempts to manufacture what God has promised—or what He has forbidden—rather than humbly allowing Him to give what we need.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY- Today's passage doesn't condemn everything material as evil. Instead, it focuses on the affection that we have for the "stuff" around us. In others words, it's not so much about what kind of car we drive, but rather the reasons we might have for wanting it or the intensity of our desire for it. What John is saying, however, is that we can't ever let these things distract us from the eternal: God Himself. All these things will eventually be gone, but God is everlasting. That's a reminder we all need to hear again.