

# Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 9

CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10

Title: “Competing Loves”

1 John 2:15-17 ~ May 9, 2010 – Mother’s Day

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**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage believers to love Christ – not the world.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Mother’s Day gift...Michelle Racioppo to ann. – Women of Faith Conf. – tickets available in courtyard

## Opening Prayer

### Read 1 John 2:15-17

Command: “Do not love the world or anything in the world.”

This command is the only command in our verses this morning, and so it is the primary thing we are to know and understand.

Let’s first define what “world” means.

In Scripture, we see “world” used in a variety of contexts – and it has a variety of meanings.

*First*, it is used when speaking of the created world.

In this sense, the believer should be thankful to God of the beauty, majesty, and power of God’s creation, for it communicates wonderful truths about God Himself.

Gen. 1:31

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Psalms 19:1

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

The created world is God’s gift to us.

**Second**, ‘world’ is used in Scripture when referring to humanity. When speaking of all people on the earth, the word “world” is used.

John 3:16

“For 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.”

2 Cor. 5:19

“...God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ...”

**Third**, it refers to values that are opposed to God.

“World” is used when referring to a set of values and philosophies that are opposed to God. As in our passage today, “world” is used to refer to a system that is actually Satanic in origin, a system that honors things that dishonor God and discredit His truth.

Ephesians 2:2

“...in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

John 15:18-19

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

So, in our passage (*this is John’s most common use of the term*), when John uses the term “world”, he is referring to the world’s system – the world’s way of thinking and living that are opposed to God – that work against God’s plan and His will for our life.

Loving the world would include sharing political, social or economic views which are inconsistent with the God’s love and truth. ‘Loving the world’ is not a prohibition against having things, it’s a prohibition against concentrating on things and having

a love for things. The focus here is not primarily in the things we do or the places we go, but the affections and attitudes in our heart.

He begins this section by giving us the command “Do not love the world or anything in the world.” After giving the command, he then has the grace and mercy to explain why this command is important for us – why this is God’s command for His children. If you’re like me – when I’m told that I need to do something, I often want to know “why” – “Why is this important?”

Two Reasons why believers should not love the world:

### Love for God

“Cravings of sinful man...” / “lust of the flesh” KJV, NASB

This phrase seems to be directed toward the physical things of life – the fleshly desires

William Barclay writes:

*“It is to live a life which is dominated by the senses. It is to be gluttonous in food; effeminate in luxury; slavish in pleasure; lustful and lax in morals; selfish in the use of possessions; regardless of all the spiritual values; extravagant in the gratification of worldly, earthly and material desires. The flesh’s desire is forgetful of, blind to, or regardless of the commandments of God.”* (Barclay

quoted in The Epistles of John, by James Montgomery Boice, p. 64)

This ‘craving’ or ‘lust’ is more than sensual or sexual things, but includes all things related to the physical appetites and desires of life.

John is not referring to normal, appropriate desires we have that are a normal part of our humanity. Food is a blessing from God, and when I’m hungry, God approves of my taste buds enjoying the meal. When

I'm tired, God approves of my sleep at night. However, if I'm gluttonous – eating for the glory of eating, or if I'm lazy or slothful and sleeping or napping when I should be working or attending to other commitments, then these things would be the “cravings” or “lust of the flesh”.

“lust of his eyes...”

This lust has more to do with prestige or position than the physical appetites. You could think of these as the emotional appetites or the appetite for popularity. The Apostle John knew our sinful nature well, and that our only temptation is not physical, but also emotional.

One preacher described it this way:

There is lust in the gutter – and lust of the gourmet.

One can have lust of Playboy or lust of Picasso, lust for the lights and screams of rock and roll or the applause at the symphony. One can lust for a night at the Gaslight – or a night on Broadway.

“lust of the eyes” is a lust for prestige – to be noticed – to be acknowledged by others as important, powerful, or talented.

“boasting of what he has and does...” / “pride of life” KJV or “pride in possessions” ESV

The NIV has a good translation here – it's pride in what you have accomplished. It's pride in your home, car, career, spouse, family, or ministry.

The Apostle Paul had something to say about the “pride of life”...

1 Cor. 4:7; 1:31

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”

Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Knowing these things helps us make sense of the three divisions John gives us here. The first two are areas of lust – are what we feel when we don’t have something. We crave and lust what we don’t yet have – but we want with great intensity. The third area is what we feel when we get it! Pride and covetousness – the whole world is driven by these two engines inside of sinful man. These two things – pride and covetousness are enemies of God. In fact, God explicitly states that He hates pride (Prov. 6:16-17).

This is why love for these things is incompatible with love for God. Jesus taught:

John 14:15

“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”

You cannot love God – and love the way of the world. You cannot love the things which are in opposition to God – which work against His commands and His purpose.

**Illus.** something I have done that does not demonstrate my love for Kim.

### The World’s demise

I have some Enron stock I’ve been holding onto for awhile...anybody interested?

Who wants to buy my Lehman Brothers stock?

Who wants to buy my British Petroleum stock?

Nobody? Why not?

Because you all know that there are major problems with these companies. Two of them no longer exist, and one of them has an uncertain future.

“is passing away” – is a verb – present tense, passive voice (*paragō*) – meaning that the world is already passing away – and the passive voice means that an outward force (God) is causing it to pass away.

1 Cor. 7:31

“...For this world in its present form is passing away.”

**Vs. 17b**

“...but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

The “world” – the Satanic based system that is opposed to God and the things of God – is passing away – but the will of God – the things of God will exist forever. John tells us that the man who does the will of God lives forever – because that man is a follower of Christ – that man is a believer and a child of God.

Once again, we see the inherent connection between a person’s faith – and their actions. As John has been stating all along – faith is not separate from life...it’s not separate from our daily decisions.

As we speak of love...is there any greater love than the love of your mother? I know that most of you here this morning have been blessed by God with a loving mom who committed her life to loving you. She no doubt told you often that she loved you – but she did much more than that. She loved you with her life. She didn’t tell you that she loves you, and then do things that opposed you. If that was the case, you would wonder if she really loved you!

Generally speaking, when a woman becomes a mom, their whole life changes. Normally, a mother doesn't have 'competing loves' – her love is devoted and focused on her family. She doesn't say she loves her family and then embrace things that work against them. She serves her family – her love motivates her actions – and she loves them in both word and deed. Her love is not only emotional, but a physical reality. She serves her children so they can grow and mature into adults.

## **Application**

Love God with your life.

Your love for God is seen in how you live your life. Are you living for yourself...are you living according to the world's standards...or are you living according to God's Word?

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15).

Loving God means that you live for Him.

Give thanks for earthly blessings.

Giving God thanks for your earthly blessings will help keep things in proper perspective. Instead of being prideful and boasting of your accomplishments, giving God His due credit and praise for them will work against pride and boasting.

Invest in eternal things.

This world is "passing away" – don't love and devote your life to a world that is already condemned. Love the Lord and devote yourself to His will – and enjoy His presence forever!

Close in prayer