

***Resist the World!***  
**1 John 2:12-17**

***Do not love the world or the things of the world (1 John 2:12).***

As a father protecting his little children, John warns his friends that the false teachers who have left their assemblies will steal the greatest joy any believer will ever know—the joy of life in the family of God. The theme of First John is *fellowship*—that experience of intimacy with Christ and His people only available to those who belong to Him. The passion of John is, “don’t lose it by listening to these lying teachers. True joy is based on apostolic truth and is only possible in fellowship with God” (1:1-4).

In the preamble to his book, 1:5-2:11, the Apostle discusses the nature of this fellowship he desires for his readers. True fellowship is for those who walk in the light—sin (darkness) will always break fellowship with a holy (all light) God. As we walk in the light, a growing desire to obey Him and love His people allows His love to have its way with us—and we come to really know the God of light.

All of these spiritual truths are designed by God to be lived in real life—on this planet...in this world! Fellowship with God is not for those who live in caves and run from reality. Fellowship with God is for His children who know Him well and are mighty in their victories over Satan. To these Christians, the evil and transient allure of the world will have no appeal. In fact, this is exactly what John recommends to his flock as they face the pagan world they lived in:

**\_\_\_\_\_ your resources in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ this evil and transitory world!**

**1 John: Life in the Family**

**Prologue—call to fellowship:** John will be presenting the reality of life in Christ so that his readers may share the joy of apostolic fellowship with Christ and one another (1:1-4).

**Preamble—living in fellowship with God** (1:5-3:10).

**Walking in God’s Light—stay on the path of holiness** (1:5-2:2)

**Knowing the God of Light—follow Christ and love His people** (2:3-11)

**Body—the confidence of fellowship** (2:12-4:17-19)

**Reassurance—spiritual assets to resist the world** (2:12-17)

Before exposing the lies behind the allure of everything this world has to offer, John reminds his readers of their spiritual assets...twice! The point is clear—when you are in fellowship with Christ you will overcome the world!

- I. Resisting the world begins by living in victorious fellowship with Christ (2:12-14; John 16:33).
  - A. John emphatically asserts the spiritual competence of his readers (12-14).
    1. Structure: These verses repeat a pattern of *children*, *fathers*, and *young men* (12-13a, 13b-14). It seems that the children refers to all of his readers whom he considered to be believers. And then the two subsets are the leaders and spiritually mature among them—*father* emphasizing their spiritual maturity, *young men* emphasizing their spiritual strength.
    2. These three categories are repeated twice for two reasons: (1) the epistle was being read out loud—for emphasis; (2) there is a progression of what he is asserting about each group (*I write, am writing*, change in verb tense for more emphasis).
      - Children:** Every reader who is a child of God is not only forgiven of their sins (13a), but also has come to know God in the way John was talking about in v 8 (13c). These are maturing flocks that should be overcoming the world.
      - Fathers:** The leaders of the churches are very mature—they have come to know God well in intimate fellowship (12b, 14b).
      - Young Men:** The maturing disciples have had victories over Satan (13b, this may be a synonym for the victory of salvation) and have grown strong by abiding so that their victories are renowned (14b).

- B. The best defense is a good offense: Those who are strong in Christ will resist the world well.
1. If you are going to resist the world (see below), you must have assurance of salvation as a child of God (John 1:12; 16:33).
  2. If you are going to resist the world (see below), you must have an intimate and victorious walk with Christ (John 14:1; 15:7-8; 18-25; 16:1, 33).

II. Resisting the world demands a biblical estimation of all this world has to offer—it is evil and transitory (1 John 2:15-17).

- A. The world is that system organized by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4), headed by Satan (John 12:31), and run by Satan, which leaves God out and is a rival to Him (James 1:27; 4:4). Three verses, three principles of exposure:
1. It is impossible to love the world and love God at the same time (2:15; 4:4-5; Luke 16:13).
  2. Why? Everything the world has to offer is evil because it does not originate with God, but with Satan (2:16; John 16:18-25; 12:31). John breaks organizes this evil into three categories:
    - a. The lust of the flesh—the flesh is that part of us that wants to leave God out of life and still make it work (Romans 7:5; Colossians 2:11). Our “human” or fleshly desires will want to cling to the world for meaning and hope. This includes immorality, but also noble human causes—career, success, good works).
    - b. The lust of the eyes—all the world has to offer that is physically appealing. This of course includes all the world tries to tell us we need to get by—both immoral and moral.
    - c. The pride of life—all that the world says we should be proud of and find security in.
  3. Why? Everything the world has to offer is now in the process of passing away, but everything the Lord has to offer is now in the process of bringing eternal meaning and significance to our lives (17; 2:8; John 1:5, 9).
- B. So, what is it for you? Are you following the world and investing in what is only evil and will not last, or are you following Christ and investing in what is only good and will not be destroyed?
1. Do you really consider the world evil and transitory? Take the time, treasure and talent test!
  2. Which of the three categories of worldly allure do you struggle with the most, and what are you going to do about it?
    - a. The lust of the flesh? Are you leaving the Lord out of the security your flesh demands for in your finances, relationships, schedule, priorities?
    - b. The lust of the eyes? Are you preoccupied with what you should not have (immorality) or do not have (materialism, fantasy life)?
    - c. The pride of life? Are you living your life so that you have something to boast about to men rather than God?