

The Epistles of John

Week 29: 1 John 2:15-17

In 1 John 2:15-17 once again belief and behavior are linked together in John's assurances and exhortations.

1 John 2:15-17

Imagine what our lives would be like if our beliefs never translated into appropriate behaviors.

- Auto body repair shops would be busy if people believed they were to stop at red traffic lights, but never actually “acted” upon that belief.
- How long would one remain a college student if he said he believed he should study, but he never actually studied?

1 John 2:15-17

In John's thinking, the Christian life links correct doctrine to correct living. The daily life of those who truly "know" God will reflect this—not only by what they do, but also by what they do not do.

1 John 2:15-17

1 John 2:15–17 (ESV)

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:15-17

What do we do with this instruction to not love the world?

How does this command relate to God's love for the world?

1 John 2:15-17

What is not nearly as well known is the fact that agapaō (to love) has another nuance in addition to being spontaneous and unmerited. In classical Greek the verb agapaō carried with it a sense of “prefer” or “be content with”

When John tells his readers, Do not love the world, he may be saying “do not emotionally prefer the world.” This nuanced meaning for love makes perfect sense in this context.

1 John 2:15-17

So powerful is the portrayal of divine love for the world in Scripture—epitomized by John 3:16, in which God is said to “love the world,” that is, people in the world (cf. Pss. 33:5; 57:10)—that we can withdraw human beings from the set of objects John has directly in mind when he warns against undue world-love in 1 John 2:15

1 John 2:15-17

In v16, John more specifically defines what he means by loving the world. There are three types of temptation that he delineates: “lust of the flesh,” or “the cravings of sinful man,” “the lust of his eyes,” and “the pride of life,” or “the boasting of what he has and does.”

1 John 2:15-17

In Greek thought the phrase the desire of the flesh is frequently associated with gluttony, drunkenness, and wanton sexuality. This phrase should not be taken narrowly to focus only on these three or on sexuality alone, as often occurs. Rensberger is correct to suggest that the real concern here is the human tendency toward “self-centeredness.” This egoism can be seen as the foundation for many of “the desires of the flesh” that Paul identifies in Galatians 5:16–21, including idolatry, strife, jealousy, and quarrels.

1 John 2:15-17

The third element is his pride in possessions (lit. 'pride of life', *alazoneia tou biou*). The word *bios* has a range of meanings, including 'life', 'livelihood', 'living', 'property', and 'possessions'. It is used in 3:17 clearly with the sense of property or possessions, and this is the predominant use of the word in the NT

1 John 2:15-17

Exhortation

- Do not love the world or the things in the world.
- for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in possessions—
- And the world and its desire are passing away,

Reason

- The love of the Father is not in those who love the world;
- comes not from the Father but from the world.
- but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:15-17

The World

- v15: Love of the World
- v16: Comes from the World
- v17: The World passes away

The Father

- Love of the Father
- Comes from the Father
- The one who obeys remains forever

1 John 2:15-17

Because the Father's kingdom is at war with the kingdom of this world, the two will never coexist peacefully. To pledge allegiance to one side is to declare opposition to the other.

Pride, prestige, power, possessions and position count for nothing in the kingdom of God. The value system of this world is turned on its head when God provides the evaluation.

1 John 2:15-17

1 Peter 2:11 ESV

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

1 John 2:15-17

John is encouraging his readers to turn away from the shallow, material-bound selfishness and ultimately destructive orientation of the world.

1 John 2:15-17

In vs 17, using a present tense form of the verb 'to pass away' (paragetai), the author depicts the world's passing as an ongoing process

Application for This Week

We are commanded to prefer God's kingdom above the things of the world

The things we are told to place in lesser affection are: fleshly desires, coveting things, arrogance and pride for things we have and things we have done

Everything in this world is right now passing away, and Jesus will be coming with a new heaven and a new earth to set up his eternal kingdom. That is where our allegiance and our hope lies.

Homework

My blog with past lessons is:

www.UnapologeticallyJohn.com

Thank you for coming!

See you back next week