

Warnings Against Worldliness

Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

The word *worldliness* does not appear in the standard versions of the Bible, but the Bible often refers to this trait. Worldliness is the condition of being worldly, like the world, dominated by the world. The “world” God’s Word warns us not to embrace is not merely the material world/earth in which we live, but the moral and spiritual morass that is opposed to and is alienated from God in which most of mankind participates. All of those who love the world and whom the world controls stand opposed to and alienated from God. Consider some of the warnings the Lord gives us against worldliness and the world.

The world must not determine our conduct:

“AND BE NOT FASHIONED ACCORDING TO THIS WORLD: BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, THAT YE MAY PROVE WHAT IS THE GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD.” (**Romans 12:2**)

Worldly people are constantly pressuring us to be like them. They do not want to do right, and they do not want anyone to rebuke them by doing right, much less by preaching to them about what is right and wrong. They harass, ridicule, denounce, curse, sue, and sometimes inflict bodily injury in their attempts to make us conform to their standards. Paul urged us to resist such pressures: “BE NOT FASHIONED.” Why should saints of God let modern pagans determine how we talk, dress, spend our money and time, and what we do for recreation and entertainment? We have a Savior who died and is risen to become our Lord, our Ruler, our Master. If one is a Christian, Christ sets his standards. If the world dictates one’s behavior, he is not a follower of Christ, even if he is an elder or preacher.

The world must not attract us:

“LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM. FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH AND THE LUST OF THE EYES AND THE VAIN GLORY OF LIFE, IS NOT OF THE FATHER, BUT IS OF THE WORLD.” (**1 John 2:15-16**).

John made the issue very clear in this passage. One must choose between loving the world with its treasures, temptations, and trinkets, and loving God. Love for the world excludes love for God (and vice versa) because all that the world stands for is opposed to God and will sooner or later perish.

Warnings Against Worldliness

Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

“But **John 3:15** says that God loved the world so much He sent His Son.” Yes, but world in this passage does not refer to “THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD” that oppose God and righteousness, but to the “WORLD” of mankind lost in sin. In this same sense, we are to “LOVE THE WORLD”---- enough to take the Gospel, in word and deed, to those who are lost.

The world must not stain us:

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (**James 1:27**).

Worldly behavior in a Christian soils and stains the fabric of his life. It prevents the practice of pure and undefiled service unto God. Those who profess to see nothing wrong with such worldly behavior as drinking, dancing, near-nudity in public places, bar-hopping, using filthy language, engaging in dishonest practices, lashing out in hateful vengeance, withholding time, talent, and treasure from the Lord's service, and so forth, merely advertise their love of the world. They also advertise a woefully low and ignorant view of the behavioral standards of the Gospel. They want to behave in the ways of the world while maintaining “respectability” in the church; as with all sinners, they desire to “have it both ways.” It cannot be so. Like it or not, one cannot run with the goats without smelling like them. To practice pure, undefiled religion one must “ABSTAIN FROM EVERY FORM [KJV] OF EVIL” (**1 Thessalonians 5:22**).

The worldly church member not only invites the charge of “hypocrite” for himself, but for the whole church.