

# Worldliness

01 February 2004

## Introduction:

When Paul addressed the church in Corinth, he said, “*unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours.*” (I Cor. 1:2). To be sanctified is to be “separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate and so render inviolable... Since only what is pure and without blemish can be devoted and offered to God (Lev. 22:20; Deut. 15:21; 17:1) sanctified signifies to purify and to cleanse externally, to purify by expiation, free from guilt of sin: I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12... to purify internally by reformation of soul” (Thayer 6).

When one is baptized into Christ he or she is sanctified (cf. I Cor. 6:11). Sins are remitted and washed away (Acts 2:38). This cleansing of sins is made possible through Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21; 26:28). Sanctification is not a moral action it is a state of being. Since God is light and in Him is no darkness, those who would be in fellowship with him must of necessity be separated from all moral defilements (Isa. 59:1; I Jn. 1:5ff; II Cor. 7:1). This occurs at baptism (Acts 22:16) and is maintained by humble, contrite hearts seeking forgiveness when sin occurs (Ps. 51:1-17; Isa. 57:15; Acts 8:22f; II Cor. 7:10ff; I Jn. 1:9; 3:3).

One who is not sanctified through baptism, humble, and contrite living is identified as being in the world. This lesson shall examine the identity of worldliness that the child of God may be approved of God.

## I. The World:

A. “*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*” (I Jn. 2:15).

1. Christians find themselves living in the world; however, they are not to be of the world.
2. Interestingly Jesus said, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life*” (Jn. 3:16). Why would John tell all Christians to love not the world when Jesus said that God loved the world?

a. The word “*world*” (*kosmos*) is used in a variety of forms in the NT.

1a. The physical universe (Jn. 17:5), “the habitation of mankind” (AG 446).

2a. The world of humans “above the animals” (AG 446) (cf. Jn. 3:16 / I Cor. 5:9-11).

3a. The world in relation to the state of spiritual condition. Figuratively, *kosmos* is used as the realm of the spiritually dead. “everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e., lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved (I Jn. 5:19)” (AG 446) (cf. I Jn. 2:15).

b. This realm (world) of the spiritually dead is ruled by Satan:

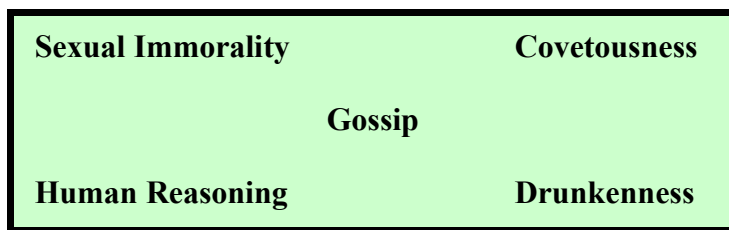
1b. The god of this world (II Cor. 4:4).

2b. The prince of the world (Jn. 12:31; 16:11).

- 3b. The devil has supreme power in this world (I Jn. 5:19).
- 4b. The deceiver of the world (Rev. 12:9).
- 5b. The ruler of the world (Eph. 6:12).
- c. Clearly, Jesus spoke of the mass of humanity in John 3:16 and John spoke of the realm of the devil and his power in I John 2:15.

**II. Characteristics of the world:**

- A. A different doctrine is preached and accepted (I Cor. 1:20-21; 2:6; Col. 2:8).
- B. Wickedness (I Jn. 5:19).
- C. Realm of the polluted (II Pet. 2:20).
- D. Realm of the corrupt (II Pet. 1:4).
- E. A kingdom characterized by those who hate Jesus, His word, and his followers (Jn. 7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14; I Jn. 3:13).
- F. A world or kingdom characterized by fleshly interest (Rom. 1:24-32; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; I Tim. 6:3-10; I Jn. 2:16).
- G. These fleshly desires are summed up as follows:



**III. Worldliness: A State of Mind!**

- A. Paul said, *“For they that are after the flesh **mind** the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.”* (Romans 8:5-6).
- B. John 4:23; I Cor. 5:3; 6:17 / Col. 1:27; I Jn. 4:1, 6
- C. The mind of the world is enmity with God. Again, Paul said, *“because the **mind** of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.”* (Romans 8:7).

**IV. The Christian lives in the world but is not to be of the world:**

- A. The Christian is one who is called out of the world of sin (II Cor. 6:17 – 7:1; I Pet. 2:9).
- B. The Christian is sanctified (separated) from the world by reason of remission of sins (I Cor. 1:2; James 1:27).
- C. The Christian is to be as God in this world of humanity (I Jn. 4:17).
- D. The Christian is to be a light in a world of darkness and sin (Phil. 2:15).
- E. The Christian is to overcome the world of sin (I Jn. 5:4-5).

**V. Who will you and I serve?**

- A. Some serve the world and its lust.
  1. *“For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and loose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36).
  2. *“Demas forsook me, having loved this present world”* (II Tim. 4:10).

- B. Others choose to serve God.**
3. Joshua said, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).
  4. The author of Hebrews said, “*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment whith the peple of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*” (Heb. 11:24-25).
- C. One who would claim to love God who dwells in light and in Him is no darkness (I Tim. 6:16; I Jn. 1:5) can in no way say that they love the world of the evil one. The two, God and the devil, are on sides (dark and light).**
1. We cannot serve both the Lord and the devil (Matt. 6:24; James 4:4; I Jn. 1:5).
  2. The Christian cannot have fellowship (share) in the world of sin and with God and salvation at the same time (cf. II Cor. 6:17-18).
  3. As Elijah called upon Israel to make a choice as who they would serve so the Lord demands that we do the same. We cannot go limping between the two sides of right and wrong (I Kg. 18:21).

### **Conclusion:**

The call of the gospel is that men and women would come out of the world of ungodliness and corrupt thinking and be clean (II Cor. 6:17 – 7:1). James said, “*Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God*” (James 4:4). Worldliness is a state of mind that is dictated by the devil. No person will have fellowship with God while practicing worldliness (i.e., sin) (I Jn. 1:5-7).