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1 John 2:15-17 – A Righteousness Not of This World

1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves 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 boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

1 John is truly helping us to get real with our faith, isn't he? Oftentimes, people will tell me, “I'm a Christian.” I say, “How do you know?” “Well, I went and walked down the aisle,” or “I prayed a prayer.” People know John 3:16. I mean, you even see them in football games. We know that God so loved the world that He gave His son and whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have, not might, will have everlasting life. We'll quote verses such as this, and we say, “We know, we know what it says.” In fact, Romans will actually say that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable; can't turn it around. We have everlasting life, but not necessarily because you prayed the prayer, not necessarily because you walked down the aisle or not necessarily because you know the verses. I think one of the great purposes of the epistle of John, 1 John in particular, is that we might know that what we have is real. We deceive ourselves in many ways. Galatians 6 reminds us of that, and it's easy to do the ritual, do what is expected and please men, and let men see us do something and maybe even in some way convince ourselves that something has actually happened. But unfortunately, what reveals the truth is the reality of our life. So, John will write this epistle and he says, so, you say you're Christian. Let's find out. So, through the pages of 1 John, we begin to find out whether or not we've made a genuine decision; because we know that it's not really within our power to change our lives. Unfortunately, I think even those people that oftentimes call themselves Christian still are kind of thinking, “Well, I'm a pretty good person. I'm kind of a loyal person. I kind of do these things.” And the Bible says, “Not by any works of righteousness which you have done.” It really is an insult to God to say, “I'm a pretty good person and that's how I'm getting heaven.” Because if you were to say that what you're really doing is spitting on the cross of Christ. You're basically saying, “Well, there's really no need for Him to do that, because I'm good enough.” And you're not anywhere close.

So, as we come to the Epistle of John, he goes, the first thing you have to do in order to have a relationship with God is you've got to get real about this; and it's wonderful the way he introduces it, because we begin to realize that this is not just an ethereal, spiritual moment in our lives, but it transforms everything that we do. It permeates every part of our life. So, it goes into the physical realm as well as the spiritual. Our lives change. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). So, there's a transformation that takes place, and the things that I used to do I don't do anymore. Now, people can say, “Well, I prayed the prayer, I'm saved, and now I can go do

whatever I want to." Well, it doesn't sound like you were saved. Once again, you can say these things, but what's the reality of it?

So, John starts off in this epistle and he begins to talk about the reality of the relationship. When you walk into the church, we say we're a church, you should feel a hug; you should sense that somebody cares for you. If there's no reality of the relationship, then we're just blowing smoke. There's nothing real about what we're saying. So, he starts off with things that we've handled, the things that we've heard and seen, we declare to you. He talks about it in those real words. He'll say later on down the road, if you know your brother is hurting, you need to help him. You can't ignore him, you can't close your heart and not do anything about it. Once again, there's a lot of rhetoric that's going around about being a Christian, but we're not talking rhetoric, we're talking real. He then goes into this reality check in which all of us "good" people come before the throne, and He goes, "So, you say you're "good"? And if you go, "yes," then you failed the first test. See, because you're lying. In me dwells no good thing, all of our righteousness is filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). So, the best that I can do is treachery at best. So, the fundamental point of it is you've got to come clean, you need to be transparent. God is Light, He says that at the end of 1 John 1.

1 John 1:5. "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

There's no darkness, there's no shadows. We're not playing here. God knows everything. The wonderful thing is that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Hebrews declares, all things are laid open and bare before Him. (Hebrews 4:13) He knows all things. So, just admit it. You want to have a relationship with God? You want to begin a relationship with God? Admit that your sinner, confess your sins, and if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins. He'll cleanse you. You won't cleanse yourself. He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness. There's a transformation that takes place that's inexplicable. It's not something that I can do myself. It's not something you can do yourself, but it's in surrendering to Him that we find He changes us; and it really is the love of God that constrains us. It's one of things we're going to be talking about because as you come into 1 John 2, He begins to reveal the fact that Jesus Christ is the righteous one. If we at all come into this relationship saying, "I've got something to offer God," then you've missed the point. It's Jesus Christ, He is the righteous one.

1 John 2:1. "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

There's only one righteous. We're not. He's the atoning victim.

1 John 2:2. "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

He's the one that died for you. Was He deserving of it? No, He's completely righteous, but He took upon Himself our sins; and it is that love that He displayed upon us that moves us to that sense of "I'm going to follow Him. I love Him. He's somebody that loves me this much." And we're drawn. The Spirit of God's Son then comes within us at this moment. But as many as received him, that then He gave the power to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name; the Spirit of God comes and you're breathing. What are you breathing? You're breathing the Spirit of Jesus. What is the Spirit of Jesus saying? I want to do whatever Dad tells me to do. That's that wonderful text in Galatians 4 that we have the Spirit now of Jesus Christ that cries out "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6) There's a close relationship that begins to happen.

As he'll go on to say in 1 John 5, we don't do what we do because we have to, His commandments are not burdensome to us. We want to do these things. So, that transformation takes place. The point is, if you look in 1 John 2 here, the reason we do what He tells us to do is because we know Him. It's because of the relationship.

1 John 2:5. "but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:"

Well, what's made me want to do what He tells me to do? It's because the love of God is in me.

Ok, so you can talk about it all day long, but do you want to do whatever God says? Or do you like to twist and turn it, and manipulate it, and make it say whatever you want it to say, and then you do it? Where's your heart? The Scripture says if you have the love of God in you, then you want to do the things that He tells you because you love Him. Your whole motivation is moved because of this. So, there's a righteousness that's revealed because of the shining of Christ within us, and He moves us, and He motivates us to do those things; and you begin to love the brethren. Not necessarily because all the brethren are lovable, but because you love God, and the love of God constrains you. There's an interesting passage in 1 John 5, If you look with me at the very beginning of this chapter.

1 John 5:1. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

1 John 5:2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

Of course, one of His first commandments is "love one another." Why do you love the brethren? People come to church, inevitably you're going to find something about me, about somebody else that's going to irritate you. Me first and then the other people, but nevertheless, I hate to put this burden on you, but you have to love me. You don't even have a choice in that because you love God. One of the statements that he makes is: How can you say you love God, who you don't see if you don't love the person that you do see? The very evidence that the love of God is within you is that there's this constraining power that you just

cannot not love. And you put aside all the things of your own flesh and you go, "You know what? It's the Spirit of God that's moving me now. It's not 'what I want' anymore." So, that Spirit of Christ that says, "Your will be done, not mine."

As we go through 1 John 2, what is clear is that there's a growth and development in this, and he begins to write about that in 1 John 2:12-14. In which we begin to realize as a maturing in this process, but it is a growth in the nurture and admonition of our Lord and Savior; and we do grow in the love and the grace of our Lord and Savior.

As we come now to 1 John 2:15, he begins to reveal to us that the righteousness that is within us doesn't look anything like the world, and quite frankly, everything that we love is different than the world. The world has its list of things that it loves. I was just thinking about the fact that the world loves darkness. John 3, they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. (John 3:19) Why would somebody love darkness? Because you can hide. You can live in obscurity, and you can live in lies, and you can live in deception. So, the world loves darkness, but we love light. The world loves deception, but we love truth, the world loves death. It's bizarre, you look at some of the holidays, people will really celebrate death. It's amazing how much they love it, but we celebrate life. We actually love life more. They love greed. We actually love giving. They love hypocrisy. We love sincerity. They love tearing people down. It's amazing, you look at the newspaper, they love just tearing people down, but we love building people up. They love wickedness and we love righteousness. You see, that's the reason why this is not our home. Jesus makes it clear in John 18:36, as He comes before Pilate and He goes, "This world is not My Kingdom." It's an interesting statement.

As you come to Matthew 6:19, there's this sense of, "My treasures aren't here. I'm working for treasures in heaven. My treasures aren't here." So, ultimately, this is not our home. Hebrews 11, verses 10 and 16 is very clear, as you begin to see Abraham, and he knew that he had a better country. He knew that this was not the place and that's why he was a sojourner, and why God pictures him as this kind of vagabond, because this isn't our home.

One of the great statements made by Peter in 2 Peter 3:13, is that we look for our home in this place where righteousness dwells. Well, all you have to do is look around and it's pretty clear, righteousness doesn't dwell here. But righteousness does dwell there, and it's what allures, what calls us.

Galatians 4:6 is pretty clear, we love the Father.

2 Thessalonians 2:10: We love truth.

1 Peter 3:10: We love life.

1 John 5:1: We love the family of God.

We love things that are different than the world.

So, it starts off at a very unique place in 1 John 2:15. In which he says,

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Do you understand what he's talking about? Clearly, he's not talking about the fact that we shouldn't love people, because Jesus will say in Matthew that you need to love your enemies. (Matthew 5:44) But what he's conveying is the world's system, the way that the world thinks. That's one of the things that He was teaching His disciples. If you look with me in Matthew 20, it gives you an example of this. Of course, there are a lot of examples, but in Matthew 20, He turns to His disciples, and it's at a time where, like any good mother, trying to boost her kids and convey that they're better than anybody else. So, Matthew 20:20-24, the mom is trying to say, “I want one kid to sit on this side, one kid to sit on the other side.” That's the sons of Zebedee, in particular James and John. This makes the other disciples indignant. How do we know that? I think Matthew 20:24.

Matthew 20:24. “And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.”

So, that's how we know that.

Matthew 20:25. “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.”

That's the kingdom of the world. That's the way they operate, a different way to operate.

Matthew 20:26. “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,”

It's a different kingdom, so you can't love the way the world does things.

Matthew 20:27. “and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

Matthew 20:28. just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

It's just a whole different level of standards.

So, when Jesus comes, the Scripture tells us in the Old Testament in the Pentateuch that there was going to be a prophet that was going to come just like Moses. Except when He comes, and He brings law, you need to listen to everything that He says because He's actually going to give law. So, Jesus walks on the scene in Matthew 5, and fulfills the prophecy as He begins to give law. Moses gave the law of the Old Testament, Jesus is now going to give the law of the New Testament. More specifically, Jesus is going to clarify the law of the Old Testament; because you know you're supposed to love your neighbor as yourself, right? The law. But wait a minute. Jesus is going to give a new law. Hold others in higher esteem than yourself. That's a big notch higher. So, everything He begins to say begins to put a depth, greater perspective and a greater reality of the law of the Old Testament.

Matthew 5:3. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Well, that doesn't make any sense.

“I thought we just fight it out. Then, whoever’s on top at the end gets it.” That's not what He's saying.

Matthew 5:4. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:5. ‘Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6. ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.’”

What are you hunger and thirsty for, land, property, money?

Matthew 5:7. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matthew 5:8. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:9. ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.’”

Then He really gets deep here.

Matthew 5:10. “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

It doesn't say, “Blessed are those who have taken a hit and then hit back harder.” It actually says, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:11. “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Matthew 5:12. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Where's my reward here? You probably won't get it here. There's a wonderful comfort in the fact that you've obeyed God. The world's going to hate you, and that's what Jesus says to His disciples, “The world's not going to like you, they didn't like Me.” You can't think for one moment they're going to like you back. You're the light of the world. So, you just keep shining, keep displaying this. That's a whole different level.

Matthew 5:21. “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’

That's the law.

Now this is the new law. The lawgiver is giving a deeper perspective of the law:

Matthew 5:22. “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

Have you ever been angry? This is why you can't go around saying, “I'm pretty good.”

Matthew 5:27. “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’;

“Well, I haven't. I haven't touched the woman.” Ok, so if you looked at her in your heart, you did it.

All these things begin to reveal to us, once again, the reality of where the judgment actually is going to be. Man looks at the world's appearance, God looks at the heart and He's going to judge you according to the motivation of your heart. So, how clean do you feel now?

By the time you come to Matthew 6, the reality is that man tries to do everything that he does for show; because hey, he can't be real. So, what do you do? You go for show. If you can't be real, you go for fake. There's a reason why they call them actors, they're just acting.

Matthew 6:1. “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”

Which is really not our righteousness at all, and when He says, “don't love the world,” He's also saying don't love the world's way of thinking what righteousness is. So, He begins to explain what it looks like to be righteous in the world, and the way that you're righteous in the world is you give a lot of money; so that you look very altruistic and kind and benevolent and all these things. So, you give a lot of money, but hey, you want to make sure the cameras are rolling when you do it. When you give, you announce it to everybody and everybody goes, “What a great person that is.” Jesus goes, “I tell you, their reward has been given to them.” The pat on the back, that was it, because God isn't going to reward you for that because you didn't do it from the heart. You didn't do it for God. When you pray, don't go on the streets telling everybody, praying loud, so that everybody hears you on the microphone, making sure that you've read all the right lines. Who are you talking to? Talking to God, it's the same person if you're talking in the closet. So, here again, you have your reward in full. When you fast, don't fast to where people know. This is what I have against declaring a fast. What are you declaring it for? You're not supposed to. The Scripture is very clear about that in Matthew 6. The point is that man, when he realizes he can't do truth, he does fake; and that's where you get hypocrites from. Quite frankly, that's what the world hates about the church because they're not real. John says, don't think like the world. The world has its facsimile of righteousness. The world has its way of doing “good.” They look ok.

1 John 2:15 he says very clearly, you can't love the world. You can't love the way the world thinks. You can't love the standards of the world. You can't love the things that the world loves. That's why it goes on, and says, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world.” Well, that

just covers everything, doesn't it? "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Now he's been saying this all along. Truth isn't in you if you say you don't have any sin. You're not telling the truth. The truth of God is not in you. The light of God is not in you, and he says if you're not keeping His commandments, then you don't know Him. You say you know Him, but you really don't know Him. So, he's helping us come to terms. But when he comes to this point, you begin to realize that what he's calling us on the carpet about is what we love. As we've oftentimes talked about the Gospel of John, one of the fundamental points is you don't believe what you see, you believe what you love. So, what is it you're loving? Because if it's the world that you love and the things of the world that you love, no matter what you're saying, you don't love God and the love of God isn't in you. It was pretty clear. "Oh, I prayed the prayer." Ok, so what do you love? What are you pursuing? Where's your time? Where's your effort? "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

1 John 2:16. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

The word "lust" that he uses within the text is "*epithymia*." It's a word that conveys a longing for, a craving for, or a desiring for. Sometimes it's used in a good sense. Paul writes to Thessalonians, and he says, "I really *epithymia* you." That means, I really long for you, I crave for you. The passage is dealing with the craving of longing for anything. Now, he's going to get specific within the passage, but the bottom line is: What do you crave? What do you long for? Is it God, or is it the things of the world?

He then begins to describe,

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh"

Ok, now we're getting specific. Those are your sensual desires. Senses, flesh, the things that make you feel, the things that make you tingly. The things that somehow satisfy, gratify the flesh. So, almost always that particular phrase is talking about the senses, the sensual world. To give you an example of that, Galatians 5:16 says that if you and I walk in the Spirit, we won't carry out the desires, it uses the word "*epithymia*" within the passage, or the cravings of the flesh.

Galatians 5:17. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

That's very interesting. Actually, one despises the other. You begin to talk to somebody that wants to gratify their flesh, and you say, "Hey, we're having a Bible study on this." "Let me go get a burger." Quite frankly, there's nothing wrong with the burger, but anyway. It goes on and says, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

Galatians 5:18. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

We're going to talk about why he said that in just a second.

Galatians 5:19. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,"

Ok, we're getting a feel of what the flesh is all about. Then you realize that these things that he begins to write actually follow this.

"Idolatry" is really about serving that which is your appetite, the things that satisfy you. The way that Paul puts it, in Philippians 3:19, is that they follow the god of their appetite; but that's idolatry.

"Sorcery" which is where we get the word "drugs," "*pharmakeia*." Pharmacy, right.

So, what comes next? Because somewhere along the line, there's not going to be enough buzz for you. If you're following the flesh, it's not going to be enough. So, you're going to have to get more, and you begin to see where it takes you and the digression of it, because now everybody that stands in your way from getting what you want becomes an enemy. So, that's where "enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes" all come from. "Why can't drug dealers just get along?" I don't know.

So, all these "dissensions." Then it goes,

Galatians 5:21. "envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

It's pretty interesting that when you look at this, you begin to realize that it backs up, and one of the statements that he says in 1 John 2:14,

"For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"

Well, all these things are the opposite of love, but it's the way of the world, and it's what they pursue. Because you're not thinking of them, you're thinking of you, and how you can satisfy the flesh. "Don't love the world, nor the things in the world," nor the way the world thinks, nor the things that the world desires. Stop. Well, the question is: What do you love? What do you crave for? What do you long for?

I said I was going to come back to this,

Galatians 5:18. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

He's actually drawing an analogy, or more specifically, a parallel between the law and the flesh. Now, what he's saying is that even when you try to do the right thing, if you're using the flesh to do it, you're not going to make it. The reason why is because the flesh is stronger than the

law. One of the statements that Paul's making in Romans 7 is the things I want to do, I don't do. The things I don't want to do, I do, wretched man that I am. Who will set me free from this?

The point is that you can know all the right things to do, and you think, "I got them logged in here, no problem." Ok, so how did that work for, let's see, let's just arbitrarily take the wisest man in the world, and let's name him Solomon? Let's look at his life. Well, let's see. Here again, to just take an arbitrary passage, 1 Kings 11. How does it start off? Something like, "he loved many foreign women." And wow, when it says many, it actually means many, and it says, "and they turned his heart from God." Now this is the guy that knows. We were talking about this last week. Here's a guy that writes in the book of Proverbs, "Rejoice in the wife of your youth, stay faithful to her," and 500 wives later... It's like the old country song, "I know what I was feeling, but what was I thinking." And you begin to realize that things begin to take over, and why is that true? Because your mind, what you know, is not as strong as your flesh. Your flesh will win every time. So, one of the things about the law is you can walk around going, "I know this. I know, I know, I know." Good for you. Because what you've just done is you've set yourself up to fail. By the knowledge of the law, you're not going to win. There's only one thing that can beat the flesh, and that's the Spirit. The only thing that could beat the flesh because you have to love something different. See, as long as you love the things of the world, it doesn't matter what you know is right. See, the law is about knowing what is right. Love of the Spirit is about loving the right things. That's the difference. It sounds pretty subtle, doesn't it? So, you can know the right thing, but you're not going to make it. But if you love the right things, you win, and that's the fundamental point of the text.

Paul writes this in Romans 8, If you're led by the Spirit, you won't carry out the deeds of the flesh. Why? Because you love the right things. You love righteousness. You love God. You love God's people, and it's the love of God. In fact, the way it's put in Romans 5, I love this text: Being justified by faith through Christ. It's all Christ, right? We exalt in in the hope of the glory of God, and not only this, it's a very interesting tag that he puts on in in Romans 5:3,

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;"

Why would you exult in tribulation? Why is tribulation so wonderful? Well, what he's going to go on and say is that tribulation brings perseverance, perseverance, proven character, proven character, hope. It's one of the things we were talking about earlier this morning. You go, "What does that mean?" And I would say, well, when you've gone through difficult times, you begin to reevaluate your priorities, and you begin to realize what really is important. And you begin to now pursue what is the most important thing to do. Now, that alone won't hold you, but what it goes on and says is, in Christ Jesus, what we find is something the world can't give us, and that's hope, because He gives us a way out of this. You wouldn't naturally seek God if you didn't have tribulation, and that's the point of the text. It's the tribulation that makes you think right, so that now character becomes more of an issue rather than the selfish things of

your heart. Now, what you're longing for is something that will make things right, and that's hope. That's the hope in Christ. So, what transforms us is,

Romans 5:5. "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

The "hope," this hope in Christ is what he's talking about.

When you receive, if you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, if you were genuine, the Holy Spirit was poured in your hearts; and there's something you know stronger, better than anybody else, God loves me. Nobody can take that away. Nobody can take that away from you. Now, everything that you do is out of a love for Him. So, why do I go to church? Why do I read the Bible? Why do I want to be around God's people? It's not because they're perfect. It's not because reading is easy. It's because I long for these things. I mean, think of a drug addict that longs for drugs. Think of the things that he'll do to get those drugs. He'll steal, he'll hurt people, it doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is getting what he desires. Then if you say you're a believer, "I didn't have time," "it was too hard." I don't know. Where's the love of God that was poured out in your heart? John is saying you don't love the world. You don't love the things in the world. The desire, the cravings of the flesh are not there. The cravings of the eye, the lust of the eye is the next one that he mentions; and almost every time that word is used, it's directly connected with envy, it's connected with greed.

In fact, the statement that's made in Matthew 6, if you look here with me, and I'm going to have you jump around.

Matthew 6:19. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matthew 6:20. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

Matthew 6:21. for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Watch what he says in verse 22:

Matthew 6:22. "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light."

Ok, that's the place where light comes from, or darkness if it doesn't work, if it's a bad eye.

Now, in order to understand what he's talking about, you actually have to read all of Matthew 6, but I'll just kind of sum it up for you. The emphasis of this is a clear eye is a sincere eye, one that is not hypocritical, because really what he's talking about in Matthew 6 is you're living a lie. You're hypocritical. Once again, you're praying so men will see you, you're giving to alms so everybody will see you. You don't really love God, but if in fact you trust God for everything, you don't have to bolster yourself up. You know how, if you're a greedy person, you're always

looking at people to use them and to manipulate? That's what James says, you say to the rich person, "Sit here, you can benefit me," then say to the poor person, "Sit back there." So, the point of the passage is that a person who is seeing clearly is not hampered by ulterior motives. Everything he sees, he sees for benefit and helping.

Matthew 6:23. "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Now, the word that is used actually is oftentimes translated "greedy."

"If your eye is greedy, your whole body will be full of darkness."

I think it could be put another way because one of the things that he states is that we're lights on a hill. I think his point is that if you're greedy, you're not going to help anybody. You're not a light to anybody. You're not a hope to anybody. You're not a benefit to anybody.

Matthew 6:24. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

The reason we know he's talking about greed, if you look in the passage, he talks about, you can't serve God or mammon ("wealth"), right? So, what's interesting is as it ends this particular chapter, what he literally is saying is that God is saving us from anger and anxiety; because when greed is the way that you see everything, then you're always angry and you're always anxious about things. But if there's a sincerity in the relationship with God and a genuineness, you're free from these things. Let's see how many times they say to not be anxious.

Matthew 6:25. "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

"For this reason," kind of conclusive.

Matthew 6:27. "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"

Matthew 6:28. "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,"

Matthew 6:31. "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"

Matthew 6:34. "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

What does he say? Do not be anxious. What causes anxiety? The greedy eye. "Oh, they have something I don't have." Envious, you read that in James, "What is the source of quarrels...?" You envy and you don't have. Well, that's the focus of the eye. The craving of the eye, wanting things, seeing things that you desire and how powerful that craving is. He says, don't love the

world, don't love the things in the world, don't crave what the world does for your flesh. Don't crave through the envy and jealousy of your eye. What's the last one that he uses? Boastful pride of life. The word itself actually comes from the Greek word, which means "pretender." What it's talking about is, obviously, if we go around declaring that "we've got this," "we could handle it," "we can do this," "it's all us," we're obviously lying to ourselves. That "boastful pride of life," you can see specifically in the book of James, where the guy says, "I'm going to go to such and such a city. I'm going to do this business. I'm going to do that." He says that's boasting. You don't control anything, and a believer believes that God is sovereign. He puts all his trust in Him and doesn't take glory to himself at all, ever. If you're boasting in yourself, you're boasting in your power, you're boasting in what you've accomplished then you don't have the love of God in you; because everything that Jesus did, He did to honor the Father, "not even My will, but Yours be done."

I'm going to close with this passage since we're running out of time, Romans 15. To me, it clarifies the fact that the world is telling you that you need to please yourself, but everything that God is telling you, and the Spirit of God, if the Spirit of God is within you, He's saying, "Don't please yourself, please the Father. Everything you do, please the Father."

Romans 15:1. "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves."

Romans 15:2. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

Romans 15:3. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

When it talks about "lovers of pleasure," if you'll look with me in 2 Timothy 3, where it says, "lovers of pleasure." That's actually where we get the word "hedonistic." "*Philo*" is loving, being fond of, "pleasure" is "*Hedone*." So, the word "hedonistic" is a person who's a "lover of pleasure," pleases himself, "What about me?" So, looking at 2 Timothy 3, you begin to realize just how you know the world is going to hell in a handbasket, in the sense that this is literally descriptive of our society today.

(2 Timothy 3:2) "Men will be lovers of self," yeah, there's just been more narcissism than we've ever seen. "Lovers of money," "*philargyros*," wow, do men really love money. It's amazing to me how much people love money. You love that stuff? Just think about what people will do for money. It's like I'm watching some show, I'm going, why would you make yourself an idiot? "Well, we're getting paid, you know." I guess that's the benefit. "Boastful," there's that "boastful" within the passage, "arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful and unholy, (2 Timothy 3:3) unloving, irreconcilable,"

You know "irreconcilable," you might want to underline that. Let me put it another way, they can't keep a promise is actually what it means in the Greek. Doesn't that describe our society? "I'll be there," then they're not there.

"Malicious gossips," that word is "*diabolos*," the devil. "A gossip's not that bad." I don't know, It's the devil's name.

"Without self-control, brutal haters of good," they actually cannot stand good.

Why would people be mad at people marching for life? Why would you be mad about that? Somebody hates good but look where it goes:

(2 Timothy 3:4) "Treacherous, reckless," impetuous, "conceited, lovers of pleasure," "*philohedone*," "hedonistic," "rather than lovers of God."

The love of God is not in you. The evidence of your faith is really being defined within these passages and look at what it says, because this is what we're seeing really defining our world.

(2 Timothy 3:5) "holding to a form of godliness," You see that? By the term that is used, "*eusebeia*" it's actually a word that is referring to *looking like a good person, dutiful, kind, generous.* "Although they have denied its power," they've denied the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the only righteous One. Don't love the world. Don't think like the world. Don't crave the things that the world craves because if you do, the love of the Father is not in you. You're lying to yourself, the love of the Father is not in you.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we just ask You to search our hearts. Your Word is telling us what the truth is. The world is telling us one thing and we're swallowing it. Our thought is that superficiality is going to get us into heaven, but it's not true. It's not true. There has to be a transformation. There has to be a change. Your Spirit has to come within us. We have to be transformed. You are moving us into the image of Christ. If that's not true, we're not saved.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what John is allowing you to do is examine your life. And dearly beloved, by all the effort and by all the work, you could never make yourself better. This transformation comes only by you humbling yourself, being transparent with God, admitting that you're a sinner, admitting that He's the only one that is righteous, and receiving the gift of His Son. This only comes about when you're real about that, and when that happens, the Spirit of Christ comes within you and you can't explain it, but you just don't love the things that you used to anymore. There's been a change in your cravings. If that's not true, somebody's lying.