

# 1<sup>st</sup> JOHN BIBLE STUDY

1 John 2:15-17

Lesson #7

## Introduction

As you know, we're in our 1<sup>st</sup> John Bible study. Last week we finished our examination of chapter 2, verses 7-14, so this week we'll resume at verse 15, and try to include 16 and 17 as well. The title of this lesson is:

### Do Not Love the World

*15 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. 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. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

1 John 2:15-17 (NASB)

#### Verse 15(a):

*Do not love the world nor the things in the world.*

This is a very simple statement that everybody should understand. John establishes that he's speaking not about the planet and the natural resources of it, but about the attitude of the people that occupy it, and the common practices and values they've adopted. In the English language we use this word "world" for multiple purposes and applications, and the context provides the proper intent. For instance, if I were to ask you what you think about the world, you'd have to ask me to clarify whether I meant the planet itself, or the people who occupy it, before you could respond to the question. Let me give a Biblical example taken from the Apostle John's own pen. In his gospel, John wrote these very famous verses:

*16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*

John 3:16-17 (NASB)

At this point the young and the unlearned might throw up their hands and say "John, make up your mind," does God love the world and want to save it, or has He destined to destroy it, as you're telling us in these verses of your epistle? How can they both be true and yet there not be a contradiction? Just as we've established that there's a difference between the physical planet and the beings that occupy it, there are also very many different "aspects" of humanity that one might be specifically addressing when they say the whole "world." The English word "world" is often used to signify a universal principle, or principles, that applies throughout all the peoples of the earth. And it is in this precise context that John is speaking. He's telling us that we must not love *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life*, which things are the common practices of the whole world in which we live, but are not from God.

We are not to allow ourselves to become involved with the lustful practices of sexual promiscuity, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, and fornication. We are not to allow ourselves to be involved in the lust of the eyes, like coveting that which belongs to others, whether it's their wives or their belongings; and we are not to let ourselves get caught up in the boastful pride of life, whereby we seek position and respect from the secular world. John says these are Not Christian virtues born of the Spirit, but are the workings of the fallen flesh; and if these are the true desires of our heart, then the love of God our Father is Not really in us. Now, I know we can get caught up in these things on occasion, and that's why John is warning us not to let ourselves develop a love for these things, because they are not of the Father but of the world, meaning the Satanic sin damaged world of unbelievers. These things call out to us to steal our rightful affection for Christ, but we must not yield to them, and we will not **continually** practice them if the love of the Father is truly in us. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments to abstain from these things:

*15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

(Jn 14:15)

*23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

(Jn 14:23-24)

*10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*

(Jn 15:10)

John's reference to the "world" and the "things in the world" are specifically spelled out in this verse. So there's no reason for confusion or speculation. And his statement that our love is an indicator of our spiritual condition is unmistakable. If we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then we are a new creature that has been freed from our slavery to the love of sin, and we are now, through the act of regeneration, slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:17-18) This isn't simply a decision that we've made to clean up our life, it's an effectual act of God, performed upon us by His Holy Spirit. (1Pet 1:2) It's not just an attitude, it's an effect of regeneration, and it's called a fruit of the Spirit.

Sin wants our affection, and our own flesh desires to submit to it, but, if we've been born again of the Spirit of God, then we will not wish, in our heart, to accommodate those desires, and we'll resist for the sake of pleasing the One who loves us and gave Himself for us, to redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify us for His own possession. (Tit 2:14) Love is something that resides somewhere within the hidden recesses of our mind and will. We don't really choose what we love and what we don't in our heart. We choose what we do, and we choose what we say, but we don't really choose what our heart loves, that's outside of our direct control. Although it's not beyond our ability to influence.

So why does John tell us not to love the world? Because what we practice, and handle everyday, has a profound influence on what our heart desires. We avoid loving the world, and the things in the world, by volitionally abstaining from participating in them. We choose to obey God, and to keep His commandments, because those are the things that we want to dominate our lives and our affections. And we abstain from practicing those things of the world so that they will not capture our hearts and minds. How do we *not* love the world? By not joining in with it in its lustful, boastful, and prideful practices. Not rocket science saints! Stay away from it, and you won't develop a love for it, says the Apostle John.

If you've been a Christian for very long, then you've probably had certain sins that have been difficult to master. You learn to suppress the desires for awhile, but then it seems to pop up again without warning. If you succumb to those desires you find yourself drawn back into them, and the more you succumb, the easier it becomes to continue. So, you have found out by experience that there's only one solution, to stop doing it, period. It's difficult at first, but the longer you abstain, the easier it becomes to refrain from that temptation. This is one practical application of John's teaching. If we actively choose to refrain from yielding to the temptations to join the world in its common practices, then we will not be so readily lured into a love for those sinful things that our Savior has forbidden.

But, this will not ingratiate us with our fellow citizens of the world. So we have the other side of the same coin. By which I mean, not only are we not to love the world and the things of the world, but along with that, we need to also thoroughly understand that we should never expect the world to love us either. If we abstain from those things of the world, and more importantly, expose them as sins, then our acceptability with the world will surely suffer for it. James wrote in his epistle that whomever wishes to be a friend to the world, meaning the world's value system, by doing so makes himself an enemy of God. (Jas 4:4) If you support Satan's worldview, then you are God's enemy, because these two are mutually exclusive. A friendship with both will be tolerated by neither. This is crystal clear in the scriptures, and it's common sense as well.

But, isn't it downright amazing how popular this thinking is that supposes that we can win the world to Jesus if we can just become good enough friends with it? If we can make the world love us, then we might make it love Jesus too. But what did Jesus say about this approach?

*18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.*

John 15:18-19 (NASB)

*13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.*

1 John 3:13 (NASB)

Jesus didn't even come close to making the world love Him, so how are we going to do what He neither could, nor wanted to do Himself? Like John the Baptist, He came to tell sinners to repent of their sins, and, that He was the offering by which they could be forgiven, if they would repent and believe. But they loved their sins, and they didn't want to repent, so they wouldn't believe. This popular present day Semi-Pelagian Arminianism has managed to redefine the whole concept of the Lord's gospel presentation. The church of Jesus Christ isn't intended to be the world's friend. That's not how Jesus made disciples. Quite the opposite, listen to what He told them: (evangelism according to Jesus)

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"* Matt 16:24-26 (NASB)

26 *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.* Luke 14:26-27 (NASB)

33 *"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.* Luke 14:26-33 (NASB)

This message that Jesus presented wasn't designed to be world friendly. In fact it got Him brutally murdered for nothing whatsoever but telling the world the truth about their behaviors and practices. But it's amazing that nearly every church that we visit seems to think that we're supposed to make visitors comfortable, and make them feel good about themselves. The present trend is to make our churches look and feel as much like the world as possible, so that the unbelievers will join with us in our worship. But unbelievers aren't capable of worship, and even if they were, God wouldn't accept it anyway. Remember what Jesus told the Samaritan woman about acceptable worship to God?

22 *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

John 4:22-24 (NASB)

Worship is predicated on the truth of who God is and who His Son is, and can only be offered acceptably when presented in spirit and in **truth**. Where do we get the idea that unbelievers can join us in worship? They can observe us worship, but they can't join us in worship, at least not if what Jesus said is true. We need to understand that as Christians, and as Christian churches, our duty isn't to the world but to our God, and His beloved Son our Savior. And friendship with one is enmity with the other. If you wish to be "seeker friendly" by the contemporary definition, then you must become an enemy of God to do so. (Jas 4:4)

It is an unavoidable fact of life that Christians cannot be good friends with the world. To do so requires our abandonment of those things that God commands, and a silence on the critical issues of sin, as defined by God in His holy scriptures. We are to maintain a good conscience by a lifestyle that mimics our Lord's lifestyle, and this will, to some degree, afford us some respectability within society, but eventually our persistent positions on sin and morality will put us at odds with those who are of the world. And just as it did with our blessed Savior, the world will come to hate us because we cannot help but continue to tell the truth about sin and righteousness. The simple truth is, that if your church is filled with unbeliever's, whom you've labeled "seekers" who are perfectly comfortable sitting there week after week, then your church can't possibly be living up to the mandates of scriptures in its preaching and practices. These churches call themselves "loving", but Jesus calls them "dead." (Rev 3:1-2)

I have visited countless churches, and received many advertisements in the mail from churches that described themselves as "loving," but I can't remember if I've ever visited a church that introduced itself as "obedient" to the word of God. Why is that? Why is "obedient" even considered by some as unloving, or legalistic?

The short answer to that question is that most churches are comprised of people who joined for reasons other than that of having been born again of the Spirit of God. Most churches aren't primarily comprised of real Christians, so the practices are some nebulous concoction of scriptures and worldliness all blended together to form a suitable compromise for the diverse ideas of the various members. And the teachings of the scriptures are either used, or abused, or ignored as necessary to maintain a friendly community spirit. And they call this Christian unity, which would be hilarious if it weren't so tragic. This is a unity based on the absence of any truth, not a unity of agreement on what is truth.

So let's just recap this verse before we move on. It says that Christians are not to love the world, and, not to expect the world to love them. There's nothing more annoying than a professing Christian who uses the scriptures as a club to beat people on the head. Nobody likes these people and their obnoxious practices, and Jesus didn't use that tactic in His

ministry. There's a distinct difference between *"reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction,"* as Paul told Timothy, (2Tim 4:2) and using the Bible as a club to clobber people into submission. And yet, we mustn't err on the other side either, and fail to do those very things that Paul said, to reprove, to rebuke and to exhort where they're called for, because that's what Paul sent Timothy to do in his ministry to the churches, and our loving responsibility also right now.

Our churches, are for the most part, irretrievably in love with the world, and fully immersed in its practices and its values, and the only thing we can do is to reprove, rebuke and exhort them to get their minds straightened out and stop sinning, and that won't make us popular with the world, or sadly with our own worldly churches either. But that's what all true God fearing, and God loving Christians **will do**, regardless of the consequences, and there will be consequences, just ask Jesus and His Apostles. If we love Him, we won't love the world, or, seek for it to love us. My advice to those "seeker friendly" churches is to forget that nonsense and strive to be "God friendly" by keeping His commandments, at the expense of the affections of the world. Declare your faith, obedience, and loyalty to Jesus Christ publically. (Mat 10:32; Lk 12:8)

### **Verse 15(b):**

*If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

We've touched on this a little already but lets look at it again more thoroughly. We used the verses from Romans 6 about being freed from our bondage to sin and being made slaves of righteousness. Slaves to righteousness in what manner? Are we threatened with immediate punishment if we stray from righteousness? No, but that doesn't mean that discipline isn't an option if called for. But the essence of this slavery is that of the heart. It's a new mind that's been regenerated, meaning among other things, that its been made to work differently than before. Things that were previously desirable to us are now an embarrassment, and we're ashamed of those old behaviors that we used to love. We truly don't want to do those things anymore, and as such we're a slave to our own renewed mind's and affections, as well as to our Redeemer. This is what is meant by the love of the Father being in us. That which He loves, we also love, and this regulates our behaviors and establishes our priorities and affections probably much better than threats.

If the love that is dispensed from God, through the impartation of His Holy Spirit into the human spirit is present, then that individual will love those things that are of God, and not those things that are of the world. It cannot be otherwise, lest God's Spirit be divided in its affections. You see how many things depend on our right understanding of how salvation works? If we understand that God sovereignly dispenses His gift of saving faith according to His own decree, then we understand that all these things that result from that action are likewise wrought of God, not of man.

This verse probably can't be rightly understood from a perspective that doesn't acknowledge God's sovereign working in the heart and mind of His beloved elect, whom He has predetermined to conform to the image of His dear Son. (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:13; Phi 3:21) This verse says that God's love being resident in the believer will make a love of the world an impossibility. They are mutually exclusive says John. If a love of the world is still there, then God has not dispensed His Spirit into that individual. Now I can almost hear the questions - so why then do we still continually fall victim to the desires of the flesh? Listen to the Apostle Paul in his explanation to the Romans:

*14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

*21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself, with my mind, am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

Romans 7:14-25 (NASB)

So, what does Paul say? The very same thing John is telling us here in this epistle, which is:

*16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit [sets its desire] against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. [wish]* Gal 5:16-17 (NASB)

The scriptures never tell us that the flesh will ever be converted, nor that we will be freed from its corruptions and temptations, at least not until the redemption of our bodies with new incorruptible bodies that are imperishable and undefiled. These present mortal, and sin damaged bodies, cannot ever inherit the kingdom of God. (1Cor 15:50-53) Although our spirit has been renewed, our flesh bodies are still decaying away day by day, and this is the condition of every child of God who has been born again and eagerly awaits the conclusion of this progressive renewal process. The spirit has been regenerated, but we now wrestle daily against the fallen flesh, until that day when we're called out of this body and into His glorious presence within a brand new spiritual body that is like unto Christ's glorified body. (Phi 3:21; 1Jn 3:2)

When we understand all these things, we can see why John can speak in such black and white terms as he's doing in this epistle. And he continues to describe those worldly characteristics, and their source, in the next verse:

**Verse 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.*

Again, we've touched on this verse a little already, but now we're ready to look at it in depth. John speaks of those things that characterize humanity in general. He says *the lust of the flesh*, which is for the most part sexual, but does extend beyond that to everything that entices humanity on a tangible level. Of all the desires that mankind experiences, those of the sexual nature are without a doubt the most pervasive. The things men and women will do in this realm defy explanation or comprehension. The God-given desire for procreation has been so severely perverted and twisted by humanity that now it's not even about procreation anymore, but solely about gratifying the flesh, and we're perfectly willing to kill by abortion any offspring that might inadvertently happen as a consequence. This is not what God designed, this is not from the Father, this is what the world has done to that which God designed to be pure and holy and beautiful. Fallen sinful humanity ruins everything it gets its hands on.

And then John says *the lust of the eyes*, which overlaps the lust of the flesh, but extends the boundaries to those things that we see, and look at, and covet, even if we don't actually practice them. It's very difficult for a Christian to even watch television, or go to a movie today, without having to deal with language and circumstances that are uncomfortable, if not downright unacceptable. I've had to walk out of so many movies that I don't even try to go anymore. But the danger is that it's so pervasive that even a Christian can develop a kind of tolerance if we're not extremely careful. We can't go out of the world, the scriptures acknowledge this, but we don't have to participate in everything that it offers either. There are boundaries and there are limits, and every child of God must learn how to recognize, and live, within those boundaries while here on this earth. Remember our earlier verses about not setting a bad example for others by what we ourselves do and accept?

Finally John uses the term, *the boastful pride of life*. There is something within the psyche of every person that desires to be recognized and appreciated. Most everybody wants to be the king, not one of his subjects. Everyone desires to be their own boss and their own master, this is a universal human characteristic. Pride is among the most dangerous of all human traits according to the scriptures, because it leads both men and women into many foolish endeavors. Pride tells us that we don't need God, and we don't have to live in submission to His commandments. It tells us that we ourselves are gods, and we can decide on our own who and what we want to worship. Pride convinces us that we can prosper without God, and even do better on our own than under His mandates. That we can be happy and fulfilled without Him. How can we think that we know more about the human condition than the One who created humans, and designed the DNA codes, and the brain functions, and the full range of human feelings and emotions? This is illogical thinking, and reflects the danger of pride to pervert our thinking and perspectives.

John says that none of these things are from the Father but are from the world. What does he mean by that? He means that this present world, speaking primarily of the people in it, are influenced by something that wasn't originally designed

by God. Unless we understand the full scope of what happened to the human species in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's direct commandment, then we don't fully understand what John is saying here. The whole world is now suffering the consequences of sin.

Everything in this present created universe was changed when sin entered into creation. Before sin's entry there was no death and no degradation. The second law of thermodynamics didn't exist. Things didn't age or wear out. People and animals didn't age and degrade, and die. The introduction of sin brought into creation an element that will eventually, though slowly, destroy it entirely. And it's doing that work right now. The earth and the planets are degrading. People, and animals, and vegetation, all get old and get sick and die. This is sin doing its work in God's creation. And these things that John has just mentioned are the direct results of sin acting on human thinking and human behavior. These things are not from the Father but from the sin-infested world, that pollutes and damages God's creation. Like termites eating away at the rafters of a roof, sin eats away at humanity, and will eventually cause its collapse. And these things that John has described are the visible symptoms of that relentless ongoing damage being done to humanity by sin. And it will have its inevitable effect when God has finished with it. Yes, God both knows it and has intentionally allowed it into His creation, because He has a temporary purpose for it in His long-term master plan. Listen to John's next verse:

**Verse 17:**

*The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but **the one who does the will of God lives forever.***

I have a news flash for all those nice green people out there. This world can't be saved. It was made to be used up, thrown away, and then replaced by another. This world is passing away says John, and along with it will go all those things that damage it and pollute it and defile it. And unless God had originally intended it to pass away, it would never do so, because Satan does not have the power to thwart or hinder God's master plan. Even Satan himself was created by God, and He did that because He has a specific use for him as well, in His long-term plan.

John says that things will not go on forever like they are now, and those lusts that infest humanity will be put to an end when God has finished the work that He's intended for them. But more importantly even, he's saying that some will benefit from this passing away and some will not benefit. So who will benefit from this passing away of the lusts of sin? Those who are now desirous and seeking to do the will of God. Because, when these things are gone, they will finally be able to perfectly and fully obey God and abstain from all sin. Temptations of the flesh will be a thing of the past, and only the memory of the exasperating battle will remain, to both teach and remind us of the value of the gift of God's perfect righteousness. Eternal life without perfect righteousness would be only half a victory, only half a treasure.

This present disposable world has been made by God as a training ground for His elect, where they are taught the ravages of sin, and the glorious benefits of righteousness. Where they are tangibly shown the extent of God's love for them by the sacrifice of His beloved Son, solely for their redemption from sin. Yes, this present world is passing away, and those for whom it was created in the first place will benefit greatly from having lived in it. Those who did the will of God, even in a world that made that impossible to achieve, and who hunger and thirst for that perfect righteousness that He will provide at His glorious appearing. Those who agree with God about what is sin, and earnestly attempt to please Him beyond their present capabilities; these will live forever in a whole new creation, where only perfect righteousness dwells. (Rev 21)

But, those who loved this present world, with all of its lusts and sinful practices, they will be sent to a place that's exactly what they deserve, a place for which they have been fitted by their own pride and lustful desires. A place where they can't influence others with their godless desires and practices. They didn't want to recognize God in this present world, so, He won't recognize them in the new one that replaces this one. And please take notice that John says it's the one that **does** the will of God, not just those who know it, or hear about it, or even proclaim it. (Mat 7:21-23) Make no mistake, there's no heaven in the future of those who don't do the will of God while they're here on this earth. If anyone thinks they can ignore God's commandments and still inherit His kingdom, then they're sadly mistaken, because the scriptures everywhere proclaim otherwise. Eternal life is for those who do the will of God right now, says John.

Those who do the will of God will live forever. This is the promise of God to those who love Him and keep His commandments. This is that elusive commodity that the world seeks to find through science and medicine. The secret

to life everlasting. Well, it isn't a secret at all, God has offered it from the beginning. The One who created life is able to sustain that life, for as long as He sees fit. Of course, mankind won't admit that there is a God who created them, because that carries with it the inescapable conclusion that He's thereby sovereign over them as well, and that's more than fallen mankind is willing to admit, even when the logic of it is absolutely undeniable.

Life eternal, and not just any life, but the highest imaginable quality of life, is the promised reward for a dedicated life of faith and loving obedience to the God who stretched forth the heavens (universe), laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the living spirit of mankind within them. (Zec 12:1) Most will fail to receive this greatest of all possible rewards, because, although many are called to hear about it, only a very few are chosen to receive it by repentance and faith in the words of the living God, through His only beloved Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. This present world, with all of its lusts, is passing away, **but the one who does the will of God lives forever**. This is God's word to those who have an ear to hear it, and it's through the gift of saving faith, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, that those few will persevere to the end, and receive this indescribable gift of God. (1Pet 1:5) If we love Him we will keep His commandments, if we aren't willing to do that, then we don't really love Him, it's as simple as that. This is the thrust of John's epistle.

### **Conclusion:**

I know that there are many of you out there who are in places where the churches in your area are not following the word of God, and are disobeying some, or even many, of His commandments. I wish I had a simple solution to give you, or that I could tell you that there really is a good God fearing church somewhere in your area, and if you just keep looking you'll find it, but that would be a false statement for most of you. It has long been recognized by our preceding brethren that there's the church visible, that caters to the world, and then, sometimes within that broader group, and sometimes completely outside of it, there's the true church, usually small and unrecognized, and almost always marginalized and unappreciated. But it is precisely this situation, and these insignificant little ones, that the Lord has decreed to be His worshipers, and His representatives on this earth, until His glorious return.

We cannot, and we will not, be able to change this situation, because God planned it to be like this, and this is the playing field that He's deliberately placed us on to accomplish His work, and complete our maturity. To practically work out our salvation. (Phi 2:12)

We will not win the battle of trying to get our godless secular communities, or even our godless worldly churches, to obey the commandments of God, (2Tim 4:3) but neither are we allowed to quit **trying to do so**, and surrender our flag to the enemy, because reinforcements are coming. Our job is to hold the fort until He arrives, and He'll complete what we couldn't do on our own. I'm speaking metaphorically of our assigned task of walking in the Light, as He is in the Light, meaning our continuing to unwaveringly obey His commandments, in the midst of a world, and even a church community, that is increasingly hostile to those principles. And paying whatever price that may cost us. And make no mistake, there will be costs, just as Jesus told His beloved disciples. (Jn 15:18-19; 1Jn 3:13) And the Apostle Paul, who was personally very familiar with those costs himself, told us:

*18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

Romans 8:18 (NASB)

Because He has placed us in a temporarily impossible position, He has told us in advance that our ineffectual efforts to entice our communities, and our churches, to obey the commandments of God, will not go unrewarded in the long run. Even though they seem to have failed in the short term. There's no doubt whatsoever that the secular community of Christ's time shook their heads after His crucifixion and said, so much for this guy and His grand preaching, now He's just a memory. To them He was a total failure, and everything He preached and promised was a deception, as His crucifixion seemed to prove conclusively. They were blind to what had happened right before their own eyes. They saw failure where the greatest victory of all time and creation had just been accomplished. Only a very few realized the significance and magnitude what had really happened. And likewise, If we are faithful in our efforts, even when they seem to be useless, then we are learning what we were put here to learn, and being made ready for that gift of eternal life; and at the very same time, those who disobey God are daily being fitted for that inescapable destruction that has been warned from the beginning. (Rom 9:14-24)

Saints, we must not lose heart, nor be discouraged by the world that we see around us, nor the pathetic condition of the majority of the churches, nor by those detestable lusts of the flesh that temporarily assault us every day. Again, the words of the Apostle Paul give us much encouragement:

*7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.* Gal 6:7-10 (NASB)

Make absolutely no mistake, God's predestined plan is working perfectly, and all things are doing exactly what they were intended to do from before creation. Saints, trust God's judgement, and His sovereignty, love Him with all your heart's, and demonstrate that by earnestly seeking to obey His commandments, every single one of them without exception, and, as the Apostle Peter told us:

*10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.* 2 Peter 1:10-11 (NASB)

To Him be the glory. Amen.

Narrow Gate Baptist Church, Miami  
Robert Andrews, Pastor  
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