

Something We Must Not Love: This Present World

Ponder:

Scripture: “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10, NKJV).

A few days ago, the Daily Devotional focused on First John 2:15, “Do not love the world.” Today we deal with Paul’s friend, Demas, who abandoned the apostle just when Paul needed him most. Demas “loved this present world.” Is that the same as what John warned against?

Actually, Paul used a different word for “world” than John did, and it has a different meaning, especially when we look at context. John specifically wrote about the sinful, anti-God aspects of the world. Paul, by contrast, refers simply to everything in the material world as it relates to the present time. Sometimes the word is translated “this present age” rather than world.

We don’t really know what it was about “this present world” that so captivated Demas that he would desert Paul in his hour of tremendous need. But we need not think it was something inherently sinful. Many presume Demas forsook Paul in order to pursue financial wealth. Certainly that is possible. Money is not evil, but the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). [More on this in another devotional.]

This present world offers many other things that are not wrong in and of themselves, but that can trip us up if we’re not careful. Recreation, for example, is not necessarily sinful. While sin is often fun, not all fun is wrong. But even good recreation can become a distraction to us if we fail to practice moderation and self-control. Remember, anything that comes between you and God is an idol!

Our physical lives themselves must never become so precious to us that we would trade life in this world for eternity with God in heaven. The faithful saints in Revelation 12:11 overcame the severe trials heaped upon them because “they did not love their lives, even to the death.” If they didn’t love their lives, we shouldn’t love ours either.

Thank God for the good things you enjoy in this present world. But don’t fall in love with them. They are, at best, temporary. Think long term. Love God, and love one another.