

## Something We Must Not Love: The World

Ponder: Doesn't God love the world? Why shouldn't I?

Scripture: "Do not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15a, NKJV).

Who would deny that love is good? Yet God's word teaches that we should not love certain things. Even love can be misdirected.

When John wrote, "Do not love the world," he used the word "cosmos," which has several shades of meaning in the New Testament. Sometimes it refers simply to the universe itself. Paul spoke of "the God who made the world" (Acts 17:24). In other cases, "world" refers to humankind, as in John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ."

Yet the same apostle who wrote those words also wrote, "Do not love the world." John did not contradict himself, because "cosmos" in John 3:16 has a different shade of meaning than in John 1 John 2:15. Its meaning in the latter place is clarified in verse 16: "For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father, but is of the world." In this context, then, "world" refers not to the universe, or even to humankind, but to all that is sinful and opposed to God.

Every temptation to sin falls into at least one of the three categories in 1 John 2:15. The forbidden fruit was "good for food" (lust of the flesh), "pleasant to the eyes" (lust of the eyes), and "desirable to make one wise" (pride of life, Genesis 3:6). Satan tempted the hungry Jesus to "command that these stones become bread" (lust of the flesh, Matthew 4:3). "Cast yourself down" from the pinnacle of the temple (pride of life, Matthew 4:6). Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (lust of the eyes) and offered to give them to him (pride of life, Matthew 6:8, 9).

Love of the sinful things of the world is not from God, but from the world itself, and from Satan who is the ruler of this world (John 12:31). One cannot love the sinful things of the world and love God at the same time (1 John 2:15b).

Love God, not the world!