

INTRO

- What is something you love to do or are passionate about?

READ

1 John 2:15-17 **(for your convenience, all scriptures referenced in this guide are in full on the next page with added resources)*

REFLECT & RESPOND

“Do not love the world” can be a confusing instruction that leads to misapplication. What “world” is John talking about: Creation? Humanity? Culture? Yet, we know God’s love is set on redeeming and restoring creation, culture and us through Jesus (e.g., John 3:16).

John is referring to a world *system of fallen humanity under the power of Satan that persistently ignores, rejects or opposes God*. It is a self-centred way of viewing and living life that is incompatible with love for God.

Qu: why is it vital we understand what “world” John is referring to? What’s at stake if we get it wrong?

DESIRE & IDOLATRY

John further clarifies the problem of this “world” in v16: sinful desire and pride. Desire becomes sinful when either the object of our desire is sinful or, more subtly, what we desire becomes too important, too central to our happiness, security or identity. The Bible describes this as idolatry: anything that rivals the rightful place of God in our lives. We can even turn good gifts like food, pleasure or possessions into enslaving vices like gluttony, hedonism or materialism through over-desire.

Qu: what do you have a tendency to over-desire and make too important to your happiness, security or identity?

DISORDERED LOVE

St Augustine famously said, “The essence of sin is disordered love.” Jesus described ordered love as first loving God with everything (Mt 22:37-40). But many things, over-desires and idols misdirect our love and allegiance away from God. Our love is disordered and therefore we are out of order. The way back is to have our love reordered.

REORDERED LOVE: A new & guarded heart

Scripture constantly portrays the centre of the human person, the core of who you are, as the heart. Our heart has been diagnosed as deceptive (Jer 17:9), in need of replacing (Ez 36:26-27), and to be guarded fiercely (Pr 4:23).

Love for the world, idols, over-desires etc. is displaced with a greater love and desire: love from God and love for God. Thomas Chalmers described this as the expulsive power of a new affection: “The heart is so constituted that the only way to dispossess it of an old affection is through the expulsive power of a new one.” In other words, the desires of our hearts are stronger than the power of our wills.

Guarding our rightly ordered love for God means to walk on the right desire paths he has for our lives: “Keep yourselves from idols.” 1 Jn 5:21

Qu: Is your love for, trust in, and obedience to Jesus growing stronger or weaker? Why?

PRAY

- If possible, break into 2-3s and pray through areas God may be convicting you in.
- Pray our desires would be rightly ordered so that we can be rightly ordered.

AUTHENTIC

SCRIPTURES:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” — Matt 22:37-40

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
— Jeremiah 17:9

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. — Ezekiel 36:26-27

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. — Proverbs 4:23

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
— 1 John 5:21

RESOURCES:

Full sermon here:

[The Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#) — Thomas Chalmers

Book:

[You Are What You Love](#) — James K.A. Smith

“Jesus is a teacher who doesn’t just inform our intellect but forms our very loves. He isn’t content to simply deposit new ideas into your mind; he is after nothing less than your wants, your loves, your longings.”