

What is Worldliness?

Short item

1 John 2.15,16 *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love 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 pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*

- To be Worldly, Earthy, Fleshly.
 - What is meant by this?
- Well, it's a wide ranging thing
 - It is all that seeks to make this physical life an end in itself, for its own sake, separate from, and even opposed to, God.
- All that is praised and lifted up in the world separate and in place of God.
- All that seeks to praise and glory Mankind rather than God.
- It is an emphasis upon the physical not the spiritual, the outward not the inward aspect of people.
 - That's why the term 'fleshly' is used.
- Let's consider some big industries

Fashion

Sport

Music

Movies

Financial

Advertising

Entertainment etc

- All these in their worst forms are 'worldly'.

A worldly attitude is:-

- All that puffs up pride,
- puts you in a spin of emotion and lust for pleasure for pleasure's sake.
- All that is a vain show.
- All that seeks to say this life, this world, is all you should live for.

- "Live fast, die young,
- be selfish,
- live for the here and now,
- experience is everything!"

- Worldliness says "look at me, praise me, praise men, live for all that this world can give you and forget about God.
Do great things, get great possessions, live impressive lives of excess".

- Worldlings are all about the pride and pleasures of life and Mankind for its own sake.
- No glory to God, or thought of heaven- only human, earthly things.
- It is the philosophy of Hedonism, Epicureanism and Existentialism

- There are always 2 kingdoms in the Bible
 - The Kingdom of God,
 - and the kingdom of this world

- It started with Cain and Abel
 - Cain was full of personal pride
 - He went on to build a great worldly city

- The 'giants' - the 'men of renown' in Genesis were the pinnacle of worldly proud men from the pre diluvian world.
 - They had power, strength, long lives, good looks, could do impressive physical feats, etc.
 - Just read the ancient epic of Gilgamesh (I'm sure this was drawn from the 'memory' of stories about such men)

- Then came Babylon, and Egypt
 - The Kings who puffed themselves up and vaunted themselves

- We see it today in celebrities, rappers, sports personalities, movie stars.
 - Same old thing as Satan, Cain, the 'giants', Nebuchadnezzar, etc etc

- We see it in vain Absalom- David's rebellious son.

- The same thing expressed in different ways
- That's why it's difficult to pin down a specific practice and say - "that's worldly" for all ages, because culture is always changing.
- But we can recognise the same thing *behind* the practice and behaviour of people in all ages

- There have always been proud and vain people, practising things that make idols of themselves and others.
 - Always vain show in clothes and body (that's why overt bodily adornment, piercings, and tattoos are clearly worldly)
 - Always a vain show in seeking personal glory from physical prowess, whether vaunting oneself by battle or sport or music etc.
 - Always seeking to show this life with all its wealth and physical possessions, not for any good use, but just for its own sake and show.

- It's the children of Israel singing and dancing at the foot of Sinai
- It's Jezebel painting her face but hating the prophets
- It's Absalom and his show of hair and beauty
- It's the man who built a bigger barn but was not rich towards God
- It's king Herod making a speech and taking all the credit when they called him a god.
- It's making statues and cities in your image
- It's Satan tempting Jesus with all the kingdoms of the world and to worship him.

- We should be able to discern this in any age for ourselves

- 'the World' is this underlying world system that is opposite to God's kingdom.
- It sets up all kinds of things for people to worship instead of God - chiefly ourselves.

- If you find yourself trying to copy the world and its ways in these things then:-

- Recognise it for what it is, **Do not** love them
- Babylon will fall, come out from among them, and be separated and holy from its defilement.
- Have no part with their practices.

- It's a sad thing to see even Christians (who should have a different culture and practice) being influenced by the world.
 - Copying its styles,
 - talking its language,
 - adopting its ways,
 - wearing its labels,
 - marked by it - like walking adverts for it.
 - Like the mark of Cain!
 - Doing things just for vain show, to draw attention to themselves rather than Christ
 - In an evil age the world will find its way into the Church, and the Church will start to look more like the world.
 - Don't go to churches whose worship looks just like a secular show -

they have fallen to worldliness like Demas who forsook Paul because he "loved this present world".

- We should learn from the most glorious beings that have ever been created-

The angels

- Powerful beyond imagination
- Beautiful beyond description
 - Satan is the poster child for where this sort of pride gets you.
- The angels that remained holy, know all too well not to vaunt their glory like earthly worldlings do
- When John tried to worship an angel he is sharply told by him *"See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."*
- When angels are depicted they are depicted as symbolically covering their glory with their wings.
 - They don't want to draw attention to themselves but to glorify God
- How much we, who are nowhere near the glory of angels, should do the same.
 - When we try to show off our physical beauty or abilities, even the animals must laugh at us out of pity, let alone the angels!
- When the sprinter laps up the glory of the crowd for winning a race- how the cheetah must laugh!
- When the cage fighter roars at the crowd for winning a fight- how the gorillas, lions and bears must laugh!
- When the model walks down the catwalk- how the beautiful cats, peacocks, butterflies, the lilies of the field must laugh at these foolish humans!
- When the musicians sing- how the birds and whales must laugh at their crass tunes. Even the sounds of the waves on the shore, the wind in the trees, the thunder and rain!
- How much more the glorious angels look with pity and shudder at the same sin in men which took down a third of their own kind
- Needless to say. Have no part in such behaviour.
 - It's alluring to do such things, but it is inordinate affection, and the wise shrink from it, and don't want any part of it.
- It's especially seductive to the young.
 - That's why the Bible pictures it like a great prostitute tempting young foolish men.
 - But may you be like those who say "your seduction has no power over me" and walk away.
- Generally: watch out for physical adornments and things which draw praise to yourself.

- In clothes, physical prowess, preening and showing off.
- In copying the actions and behaviours of people who only live for praise, and all the impressive things of this life, without regard to God, but only to glory this life and Mankind- like the pop industry.
- In possessions,
power,
pleasures
and money.
- In trying to do impressive things to draw praise for yourself - “setting traps for claps” as C.H.Spurgeon used to say.
- All this is earthly, fleshly, worldly.
 - It is the pride of life.
- Much more could be said, but I hope you get the picture.