

NOTE TO THOSE SEEING THIS STUDY ON THE WEB SITE:

Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

LESSON 157, 1 John chapter 2 (continued)

We have seen that this letter of John is written to show the marks of one who, as being a true believer, has eternal life. As we continue in 1 John chapter 2, we see John pointing out that one of those marks, or tests, of being a true believer, is how he relates to this world system.

VERSES 15-17 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. (16) 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. (17) And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of Yahweh abides for ever.

Here John makes it plain that the true believer - one who loves Yahweh - does not love the world. This is the same thing that James says. In James 4:4 he writes, “You adulterers and adulteresses, don’t you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with Yahweh? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of Yahweh.” This, just like John’s statement, is very strong condemnation for those who are friends of the world.

In both cases, that of James and that of John, the term for the world is “kosmos” (English “cosmos”). This term in the Greek means the “orderly arrangement” and refers to the system of things in this physical realm of creation.

When Yahweh created things we read in Gen 1:3, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the

sixth day.” Yet John says, “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.” Why is that so?

There are two things that enter into this. First, even though all was very good as Yahweh made it, mankind was not made to be attached to the things Yahweh made, but to Yahweh Himself. The Heavenly Father gave us all good things to enjoy. But we must not love them in the sense of allowing them to captivate our hearts.

Sin entered in when Eve was deceived and tempted by the enemy through his stirring up her natural desires to the point where she put them ahead of obedience to her Creator and, then, with his eyes wide open Adam followed her in it.

Even, desires that are not wrong in and of themselves should never have the control of our lives.

But now, since the fall of man, many of our desires are wrong and sinful. Something happened to Adam and Eve when they took of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. From then on this knowledge became the sin principle dwelling in their bodies. This, sinful nature became passed on to Adam’s offspring and on down the line. Thus the apostle Paul, using himself as an example of what is true of us all tells of this sinful condition in Romans chapter 7. For example, He says, “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:17-18) In other words, the inclination to sin became greater than the influence of conscience.

Yahweh is against this “cosmos” or world system as it now is operating under the spirit of this age. Moreover, Satan is called the “god of this world” in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, which says, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Messiah, who is the image of Yahweh, should shine unto them.”

Here the word translated “world” is not “kosmos”, but “aion”, which means “age”. However, they are used somewhat interchangeably, for it is this present age and condition of things that has polluted the “kosmos” that Yahweh created. We are told in Galatians 1:4 that Yahshua “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world” [or “age”] “according to the will of Yahweh, even our Father.”

So John, in keeping with the whole word of Yahweh is letting us know that loving the world is an indication that the one who does so is not a true believer: “the love of the Father is not in him”. Therefore, he or she does not “have eternal life”.

He tells us this not in order to leave us in condemnation, but that we might adjust our thinking, our ways and manners so as not to continue to fall into that category. In

other words we are to examine ourselves and see where we stand in this relationship. If we see that we are a lover of the world, what we must do is to repent, ask forgiveness and change our ways.

So, then, it is very important to have a real understanding of this. We need to realize just what it means to love the world in order to make sure we are not doing so.

What John says is “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.” The word “lust” does not in itself mean sinful desire. It just means “desire”. So John is saying the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life (or desire to be somebody admired in the eyes of others) are not to be our guides or controlling interest in life. We are not to “love” them.

This is the same thing James was talking about when, as we have seen, he calls those who are friends with the world “adulterers and adulteresses.” Before he made that comment James said, “From where *come* wars and fightings among you? *Come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts [desires] that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.” In other words, wars and conflicts come by each one trying to get their own desires satisfied at the expense of, or in conflict with, the others getting their desires satisfied. (James 4:1-2)

Then, in verse 3, just before he calls them “adulterers and adulteresses”, James says, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.” In other words James, like John, says to be living to satisfy one's desires is to be against Yahweh. He does not mean only sinful desires, but just living for the desires of the things of this world and of our own appetites and wants, instead of for Yahweh's will.

Satan originally used the things that John speaks of as “the things that are in the world” to tempt Eve and cause man to fall into sin and disobedience. When Satan put doubt into Eve's mind concerning Yahweh's love and suggested that Yahweh wanted to keep them from something good, Eve began to look at the tree and saw its fruit as pleasant to her eyes – the lust of the eyes - and to think of it as being something tasty – the lust of the flesh. Then, she thought of it as something that would make her wise – “the pride of life”.

Read it in Genesis 3:6: “And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” For her to like to see nice things, to eat tasty things, and to want to be wise was not wrong in itself. That was the way she was made by Yahweh.

He made us to have such enjoyments. However, to put them ahead of obedience to her Creator was to love them instead of Him. Until then, man was dwelling in total

innocence. He was given free reign to enjoy things as Yahweh made them. But when Eve in deception, and, then, Adam knowingly (on the urging of his wife) put desire ahead of Yahweh and His word, it became sin and brought them a polluted nature that they passed on to their descendents.

Originally Adam and Eve were not ashamed of their nakedness. They freely enjoyed life and the way Yahweh had made things with a childlike innocence without having to think about what is right and what is wrong. They only knew the enjoyment of things made for them and the joy of knowing Yahweh. To them everything was good and to be enjoyed as Yahweh made them. Their joy and pleasure must have been immense.

However, after their minds were infected by the fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, we read that their eyes “were opened and they knew that they were naked”. They now began to think of all things as either bad or good. Their conscience now began to accuse them about doing those things that they came to think of as bad or evil. Now their nakedness became evil in their sight as they saw it in a different light than before. So they tried to cover up their nakedness with garments made of fig leaves.

They now were dwelling in a condition of mind of having both good and bad thoughts and desires, and saw things as being good or bad, instead of seeing everything as good as it came from the hand of Yahweh. This knowledge was not just on an intellectual level, but also on a physical level of experiencing good and evil drives, inclinations, or desires in their body, which in turn worked in their minds to draw them to do those things that their conscience told them were wrong.

Thus it was that the cosmos, or world order, that was originally made by Yahweh for mankind to enjoy at will with thanksgiving to their Creator while putting Him ahead of it all became a source of sinful desires and thoughts that drew them to even want those things that they now looked at as evil. We all now have this force that draws us to desire even those things that we look at as evil at work in us.

Furthermore, when man obeyed the devil, the world system that was originally put under man’s dominion, then, became under the devil’s control, for by obeying the devil man became his servant. Satan became the god of this age. (2 Cor 4:3-4) Thus when he tempted Yahshua we read in Luke 4:5-6, “And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, ‘All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.’” Yahshua did not dispute his claim, but just refused his offer and rebuked him.

Thus it is that the Bible teaches us that we are to hold loosely this world and its things and not to love them, but to consider ourselves as pilgrims and strangers in this present evil world. We are to use this world, but not abuse it (meaning not “overuse it”)

as 1 Cor 7:31 tells us. Satan uses this world and the things in it to draw us into living for it and for self instead of living only for Yahweh as we should.

As we read John's statement, we see that he emphasizes that this present world and the things, and desire for the things, of this present world system, or cosmos, is soon going to pass away, but that he who does the will of the Father remains forever.. He gives this as a reason, and incentive, for not loving this world, but for loving the Father and doing his will instead. Peter puts it this way in 1 Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Our love is to be toward Yahweh and the heavenly things, not the things that pertain to this world in gratifying the desires of the flesh and natural mind. We are to love righteousness, meekness, kindness, and whatever else is good and virtuous, and to be striving for these things rather than the things that satisfy the desires of the flesh, eyes, and admiration of others. This way of life – that of seeking after the things of Yahweh and His righteousness – can, and should, be our way of life. But it can be only so by having Messiah in us and by walking after the promptings of the Holy Spirit through the word, rather than following our own natural propensities, which are selfish and sinful as a mixture of good and evil due to the nature that Adam passed on to us.

We will now conclude, this lesson by reading again John's words to, "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man loves 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 which we should all say a hearty "Amen".