

# 1 John 2:16 Commentary

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## FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 2:16 For [all](#) that is in the [world](#), the [lust](#) of the [flesh](#) and the [lust](#) of the [eyes](#) and the [boastful pride](#) of [life](#), is not from

**Greek:** [hoti pan to en to kosmo. e epithumia tes sarkos kai e epithumia ton ophthalmon kai e alazoneia tou biou. ouk estin \(3SPA\) ek tou patros all' ek tou kosmou estin. \(3SPA\)](#)

**Amplified:** For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ASV:** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

**Barclay:** For everything that is in the world—the flesh's desire, the eye's desire, life's empty pride—does not come from the Father but comes from the world.

**BBE:** Because everything in the world, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world.

**GWT:** Not everything that the world offers—physical gratification, greed, and extravagant lifestyles—comes from the Father. It comes from the world, and ([GWT](#))

**ICB:** These are the evil things in the world: wanting things to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, being too proud of the things we have. But none of those things comes from the Father. All of them come from the world. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**ISV:** For everything that is in the world—the desire for fleshly gratification, the desire for possessions, and worldly arrogance—is not from the Father but is from the world.

**KJV:** 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.

**Macent:** for what the world is so full of, sensuality, avarice, and pride, is not deriv'd from the creator, but is the offspring of a vicious world.

**MLB** (Berkley): because everything in the world, the passions of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the proud display of life have their origin not from the Father but from the world.

**NAB:** For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world.

**NCV:** These are the ways of the world: wanting to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, and being too proud of what we have. None of these come from the Father, but all of them come from the world. ([NCV](#))

**NIV:** For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NJB:** because everything there is in the world— disordered bodily desires, disordered desires of the eyes, pride in possession— is not from the Father but is from the world.

**NLT:** For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** For the whole world-system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all that they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**TEV:** Everything that belongs to the world—what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of—none of this comes from the Father; it all comes from the world.

**Wuest:** Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh, and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life, is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source.

**Young's Literal:** For the things in the world—the cravings of the earthly nature, the cravings of the eyes, the

show and pride of life—they all come, not from the Father, but from the world.

**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh: hoti pan to en to kosmo, e epithumia tes sarkos**

- Numbers 11:4,34; Psalms 78:18,30; Proverbs 6:25; Matthew 5:28; Romans 13:14; 1Corinthians 10:6; Galatians 5:17,24; Ephesians 2:3; Titus 2:12; 3:3; 1Peter 1:14; 2:11; 4:2,3; 4:2,3; 2Peter 2:10,18; Jude 1:16, 17, 18
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Resource:** Take this self assessment [What You Really Love](#)

**For** - (See value of pausing to ponder this term of explanation) **For** explains 1John 2:15 explaining why the love of the world will displace the love of God. The following explains why worldliness excludes God's love or is incompatible with the love for God.

**Lange** explains that **for** is causal and means "because there is nothing in the world, the kosmos, which is of the Father, the love of the world is utterly incompatible with the love of the Father. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

**Harris** writes that the introductory **for** "gives the reason why the love of the Father is not in the person who loves the world: it is because everything in the world does not come from the Father but from the world. The construction used in both these phrases is the preposition ek (from, out of) followed by the finite verb estin (is - present tense = continually), which in Johannine usage indicates 'origin from' and/or 'adherence to.' ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 2:12-17](#))

**All (pas)** means all without exception. **Marvin Vincent** explains the "all" this way -- "Not all things severally, but all that is in the world collectively, regarded as a unit. ([Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Adam Clarke** writes that "**All** that it can boast of, all that it can promise, is only sensual, transient gratification, and even this promise it cannot fulfill; so that its warmest votaries (devoted admirers) can complain loudest of their disappointment.

**In the world** - Everything that belongs to the sphere ("in the") of the world that is alienated from God, as qualified or explained by the three succeeding phrases. Obviously John is not speaking about all the inanimate or material objects of the world, but about the anti-god attitudes of the world composed of people.

**Westcott** - In moral and spiritual things there is a law of equilibrium. Nothing rises higher than its source. The desire of things earthly as ends in themselves comes from the world and is bounded by the world. It is therefore incompatible with the love of the Father... It is the false view of them which makes them idols. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - As Jackman notes, "The 'worldly' characteristics of which the verse speaks are in fact reactions going on inside us, as we contemplate the environment outside. John's three articular designations seem best understood as denoting the three basic spheres of worldliness. Although they do not offer exact parallels, these three realities are seen in the accounts of the temptation of Eve in the Garden (Ge 3:6) and of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-12). ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary D. Edmond Hiebert](#)) ([See Hiebert's Excellent Online Paper on 1John 2:2-17 in Bibliotheca Sacra](#))

**Steven Cole** adds that...

Many have pointed out how the three aspects of temptation listed here parallel the way that Satan tempted Eve. She saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food (Ge. 3:6), which was an appeal to **the lust of the flesh**. She saw "that it was a delight to the eyes." This appealed to **the lust of the eyes**. She also saw "that the tree was desirable to make one wise." This appealed to **the boastful pride of life**.

The same pattern occurs in Satan's temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-12). Satan urged Jesus to turn the stones into bread (**the lust of the flesh**). He showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth, offering to give them to Him (**the lust of the eyes**). He encouraged Him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple, which could have been a source of **pride** in this miraculous accomplishment.

**Boice** observes that in this verse **John**...

is not thinking then so much of materialism ("things") as he is of the attitudes that lie behind materialism. For he knows, as we should all know, that a person without worldly goods can be just as materialistic as a person who has many of them; and, conversely, a rich person can be quite free from this and any other form of worldliness. John is actually thinking of selfish ambition, pride, the love of success or flattery, and other such characteristics. Law recognizes this in his excellent rephrasing of the apostle's appeal. He writes,

"Do not court the intimacy and the favour of the unchristian world around you; do not take its customs for your laws, nor adopt its ideals, nor covet its prizes, nor seek fellowship with its life."

The NEB says, "Do not set your hearts on the godless world or anything in it." (Boice, J. M. The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary. Baker Books)

**Constable** adds that "John summarized the appeal of the world system as three-fold. Here is a picture of the infernal trinity, the three faces of the world, three sources of worldly temptation (cf. Gen. 3; Matt. 4). ([1John Expository Notes](#))

**World** ([2889](#)) (**kosmos** related to the verb **kosmeo** = to order or adorn, to put in order [Mt 25:7 = "trimmed"], to adorn literally [1Ti 2:9], to adorn figuratively [Titus 2:9-note]) means essentially something that is well-arranged, that which has order or something arranged harmoniously. **Kosmos** refers to an ordered system or a system where order prevails. As explained below however, **kosmos** as used here in James 4:4 and many places in the NT, takes on a considerably more negative shade of meaning. In this sense **kosmos** is much like the Greek word for **flesh** (**sarx**), which can be a neutral word, but which many times in the NT takes on an evil connotation.

**Related Resource:** [An Out-of-this-World Experience A Look at Kosmos in the Johannine Literature](#)

The basic meaning of **order** leads to the two main uses...

- (1) **Adornment**, decoration, eternal adorning (used this way in NT only in 1Pe 3:3-note, where **kosmos** speaks of the woman wearing that which is fitting with her character as a believer and not incongruous or "out of order". In the context of Jas 4:4 she should not be a believer who seeks external adornment that mimics that of the world [cp "friendship with the world"]! Beloved, a believing woman's attire should always be so "ordered" as to draw attention to her face, not her form! Compare God's desired "adornment" in 1Pe 3:4-note)
- (2) **The world**, which has in turn a variety of nuances which must be determined by examining the **context** in which it is used.

**Kosmos/kosmeo** give us our English words **cosmos** (the ordered universe), **cosmopolitan** (literally a citizen of the world!) and **cosmetics** (those things we put on in order to bring order out of "chaos"! English terms. A matter of "cosmic" significance, is something which is important for the whole world. When one speaks of a "cosmopolitan" city, it means a city which has citizens from many parts of the world.

**Kosmos** is the absolute antithesis of **chaos** (a Greek word meaning a rude, unformed mass), **chaos** being the fantasized condition with which the theory of evolution begins! The Bible on the other hand uses **kosmos** to describe the original condition of the universe (cp kosmos in 2Pe 3:6-note) as one of perfection ("it was very good" Ge 1:31, not very chaotic! **Kosmos** is used the first time in LXX of Ge 2:1 all their hosts = "and the whole world". The sons of God (the angels) did not shout for joy over chaos, but **kosmos** when they saw this universe come into existence by the creative fiat of God (Job 38:4, 5, 6, 7)!

**A W Pink** writes that worldly lusts "are those affections and appetites which dominate and regulate the man of the world. It is the heart craving worldly objects, pleasures, honors, riches. It is an undue absorption with those things which serve only a temporary purpose and use. "Worldly lusts" cause the things of Heaven to be crowded out by the interests and concerns of earth. This may be done by things which are quite lawful in themselves—but through an immoderate use they gain possession of the heart. "Worldly lusts" are "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). ([Grace Preparing for Glory](#))

## THE STRONG DESIRES FOR EVIL WITHIN US

**Paul reminds** us this battle is one that we will wage every day -- it is a battle we cannot win on our own but only as we begin each morning surrendering our will to the sweet, perfect will of the all-powerful Holy Spirit of God! Why... (see the "**for**" = a term of explanation).

(Gal 5:17-note) **For** the **flesh** sets its desire (**present tense** = continually!) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for (another term of explanation!) these are in opposition to one another, so that (another term of explanation!) you may not do the things that you please.

(Gal 5:24-note) Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

**Marvin Vincent** explains that the **lust of the flesh** as used by John in this verse refers in essence to our "Sensual appetite. The desire which resides *in the flesh*, not the desire *for* the flesh. For this subjective usage of the genitive with lust, see John 8:44; Ro 1:24-note; Re 18:14-note. Compare 1Pe 2:11-note; Titus 2:12-note. The lust of the flesh involves the appropriation of the desired object. ([Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Jamieson** explains that the **lusts of the flesh** "is the lust which has its seat and source in our lower animal nature. Satan tried this temptation the first on Christ: Lk 4:3, "Command this stone that it be made bread." Youth is especially liable to fleshly lusts. ([1John 2 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** writes that "The expression lust of the flesh brings to mind primarily sexual sins, but, while they are included in its definition, the phrase is certainly not limited to that meaning. The base desire of the human heart perverts and distorts all normal desires (Jer 17:9), sending them into a relentless, slavish pursuit of evil that exceeds the proper limits of what is good, reasonable, and righteous—any attitude, speech, or action that opposes God's law (cf. Ro 7:5-note; Ro 8:7-note). Those lusts include all the immoral excesses about which Paul warned the Galatians: (Gal. 5:19, 20-note, Gal 5:21-note; cf. Ro 1:24-32; 1Cor. 6:9-10) Those sinful attitudes and actions are primary characteristics of the world system and are irresistibly appealing to the corruption of the unconverted soul. (1-3 John. MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**Constable** writes that "The **lust of the flesh** is the desire to **do** something apart from the will of God. The **lust of the eyes** is the desire to **have** something apart from the will of God. The **pride of life** is the desire to **be** something apart from the will of God. The first desire appeals mainly to the body, the second to the soul, and the third to the spirit. Perhaps the most common manifestation of the lust of the flesh in modern western civilization is illicit sex (hedonism, idolizing pleasure). Perhaps the most common manifestation of the lust of the eyes is excessive buying (materialism, idolizing possessions). Perhaps the most common manifestation of the pride of life is trying to control (egoism, idolizing power). ([1John Expository Notes](#)) (Bolding, color and italics added for emphasis)

The **lust of the flesh** was Israel's problem from the outset of her liberation from bondage in Egypt...

(Ps 78:18) And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire.

Note: Acting on the lust of the flesh is to put God to the test!

(Ps 78:30) Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths, 31 The anger of God rose against them And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel.

**Lust** ([1939](#)) (**epithumia** from **epi** = at, toward {the preposition "epi-" in the compound is directive conveying the picture of "having one's passion toward"} + **thumos** = passion. The root verb **epithumeo** = set heart upon) is a neutral term denoting the presence of strong desires or impulses, longings or passionate craving (whether it is good or evil is determined by the **context**) directed toward an object. ([Click](#) article in ISBE)

**Hiebert** sums up the meaning of **epithumia** in the 3 uses in 1Jn 2:16, 17 - "**Lust**" is here collective, denoting the varied cravings of fallen human nature pursued in the interest of self in self-sufficient independence from God. . The genitive "of the flesh" is not objective, "lust for the flesh," but subjective, the lust which has its seat in "the flesh," man's fallen nature with its disposition of hostility toward God (**Westcott** = *the desire of the flesh, the desire of which the flesh is the seat*) Plummer calls attention to the fact that John did not say "the lust of the body." The cravings which God has placed in the human body in themselves are not sinful; they are God-given and essential for continuance of life here on earth. But they readily be-come sinful when used for illegitimate ends. The reference is to those temptations that arise from within. ([The Epistles of John An Expositional Commentary D. Edmond Hiebert](#)) ([See Hiebert's Excellent Online Paper on 1John 2:2-17 in Bibliotheca Sacra](#))

**Epithumia** is used 38 times in the NAS - coveting, 2; desire, 4; desires, 8; earnestly, 1; impulses, 1; long, 1; lust, 5; lustful, 1; lusts, 15 (NASB). Other versions translate epithumia as strong impulses or desires, yearnings, longings after.

Mk. 4:19; Lk. 22:15; Jn. 8:44; Rom. 1:24; 6:12; 7:7, 8; 13:14; Gal. 5:16, 24; Eph. 2:3; 4:22; Phil. 1:23; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:17; 4:5; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:6; 4:3; Titus 2:12; 3:3; James. 1:14, 15; 1 Pet. 1:14; 2:11; 4:2, 3; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:10, 18; 3:3; 1 Jn. 2:16, 17; Jude 1:16, 18; Rev. 18:14

**W. E. Vine** summarizes **epithumia** as follows: **epithumia** denotes "strong desire" of any kind, the various kinds being frequently specified by some adjective (see below). The word is used of a good desire only in Lk 22:15; Phil 1:23 [note]; 1Thes 2:17 [note]. Everywhere else it has a bad sense. In Ro 6:12 [note] the injunction against letting sin reign in our mortal body to obey the "lust" thereof, refers to those evil desires which are ready to express themselves in bodily activity. They are equally the "lusts" of the flesh, Ro 13:14 [note]; Gal 5:16 [note], Gal 5:24 [note]; Eph 2:3 [note]; 2Pe 2:18 [note]; 1Jn 2:16, a phrase which describes the emotions of the soul, the natural tendency towards things evil. Such "lusts" are not necessarily base and immoral, they may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God. Other descriptions besides those already mentioned are: "of the mind," Ephesians 2:3 [note]; "evil (desire)," Colossians 3:5 [note]; "the passion of," 1Thessalonians 4:5 [note], RV; "foolish and hurtful," 1Ti 6:9; "youthful," 2Ti 2:22 [note]; "divers," 2Ti 3:6 [note]; Titus 3:3 [note]; "their own," 2Ti 4:3 [note]; 2Pe 3:3 [note]; Jude 1:16; "worldly," [Titus 2:12](#) [note]; "his own," Jas 1:14 [note]; "your former," 1P 1:14 [note], RV; "fleshly," 1Pe 2:11 [note]; "of men," 1Pe 4:2 [note]; "of defilement," 2Pe 2:10 [note]; "of the eyes," 1Jn 2:16; of the world ("thereof"), 1Jn 2:17; "their own ungodly," Jude 1:18. In Re 18:14

[note] "(the fruits) which thy soul lusted after" is, lit., "of thy soul's lust." [Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

**Vine** adds that **lust** - describes the inner motions of the soul, the natural tendency of men in their fallen estate toward things evil and toward things forbidden." **Vine** further adds that the phrase **the lust of the flesh** "stands for the temptation which proceeds from our corrupt nature, a nature which, owing to **sin**, stands opposed to the will and commandments of God. [Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Sin** within fallen man is often personified in Paul's writings and is portrayed as an organized power [think of SIN as an evil "king" for example] which ever seeks to rule our will and act out through the members of the body. Thus we see Paul explain that "**Sin** (the source of the desires)... produced in (him) coveting (**epithumia**) of every kind." (Ro 7:8-note)

**Lusts** occur in our mind and are not physical actions per se although they may (and frequently do) lead to physical actions. Thus James warns us of the evil character of "**lusts**" writing that

each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own **lust**. Then when **lust** has conceived, it gives birth to sin and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (Jas 1:14,15-note)

We can't afford to play with fire  
Nor tempt a serpent's bite;  
We can't afford to think that sin  
Brings any true delight.  
-- Anon.

**Lusts** denote the varied cravings of fallen human nature pursued in the interest of self in self-sufficient independence of God. Oswald Chambers wrote that "Love can wait and worship endlessly; lust says, "I must have it at once.""

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "these fundamental **desires** of life are the steam in the boiler that makes the machinery go. Turn off the steam and you have no power. Let the steam go its own way and you have destruction. The secret is in constant control. These desires must be our servants and not our masters; and this we can do through Jesus Christ. [\(Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor\)](#)

**Paul** instructs the Ephesians that

in reference to (their) former manner of life (as unbelievers), (they were to) lay aside the old self, which (was) being corrupted in accordance with the **lusts of deceit**. (Eph 4:22-note)

In other words, **lusts** deceive us and lead us astray, promising more than they deliver and producing (spiritual, soul) rotteness when "conceived".

**Peter** reiterates the detrimental effect of **lust**, writing about

"the corruption (moral decay - corruption is much deeper than defilement on the outside - it is decay on the inside) that is in the world by **lust**." (2Pe 1:4-note)

Believers unfortunately are still continually assailed by **lusts**.

**Paul** exhorts believers not to

let **Sin** (continually) reign in your mortal body that you should obey its **lusts** (Ro 6:12-note)

In this passage Paul is implying that **Sin** will try to usurp the "throne" of our heart by lobbing fiery missiles laden with lustful thoughts (not restricted to sexual lusts but are quite variegated or multi-colored!)

In a similar warning, **Peter** urges us

as aliens and strangers to abstain from (continually hold yourself away from) fleshly **lusts**, which (continually) wage war (describing not just a battle but a veritable military campaign) against the soul. (1Pe 2:11-note)

Believers are called to

**flee** from youthful **lusts** (a warning against contamination from one's own evil propensities -- It is not sufficient to guard against evil in others, we must be watchful against evil within) and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2Pe 2:22-note)



In this letter Paul writes the wonderful truth that the

grace of God has appeared (one important effect of this grace is that believers need not try to "fight" lusts in their own strength but in dependence of God's grace or enabling power)" and is continually "instructing us to deny (once and for all refuse to follow or agree with evil strong desires coming from the evil world system ruled by Satan and opposed to God) ungodliness and worldly **desires (lusts)** and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:12-note)

In Romans Paul commands believers to

**Put on (aorist imperative** = urgent command to do this now and first) the Lord Jesus Christ and**make (present imperative with a negative)** no provision (act of making prior preparation) for the flesh (here it means the seat of SIN in man) in regard to its **lusts**. (Ro 13:14-note)

The Jewish historian Josephus, speaking of Cleopatra, says "She was an expensive woman, enslaved to lusts."

Lusts acted upon are indeed costly! (cp David's agony of defeat by lust indulged - 1Sa 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with 2Sa 12:1-19)

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A Christian, writing anonymously in Leadership magazine, told of his ten-year bondage to lust, which included a regular diet of pornography. During this time, he conducted Christian conferences and seminars across the country. The agony of his inner conflict finally became unbearable. To his horror, he realized that such pleasures as a breathtaking sunset or the soft spray of an ocean breeze no longer excited him. His obsession with lust had dulled his appreciation of life's finest enjoyments and prevented the joy of fellowshiping with Jesus. Although he had been outwardly faithful to his wife, not having engaged in adultery, he had sinned against her, and their relationship had suffered. When he turned anew to God, he realized that a necessary step in breaking his lustful pattern was a long talk with his mate. The whole experience was painful and awkward, but the repentance was genuine. She forgave him, and love returned to their marriage. Repentance, though painful, results in life's true pleasure—communion with God and spiritual oneness with fellow believers. Repentance means not only a heart broken for sin but from sin. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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**Satisfaction - Albert Lee** - Pornography, once a secretive backdoor industry, is now out in the open. The easy access and anonymity of the Internet have turned it into a multibillion-dollar-a-year "business." But it leaves a trail of broken families, ineffective Christian leaders, and men who have lost the respect of their loved ones.

The apostle John was known for his great love for Christ and His church. In 1John 2:12-17, he warned fathers and young men against these three lusts:

**The lust of the flesh**—the insatiable appetite to indulge in pleasures that inflame the flesh but never satisfy.

**The lust of the eyes**—wandering eyes that continually want more riches and possessions but always remain covetous.

**The pride of life**—the vain mind that thirsts for man's applause. But the glory evaporates quickly.

Pornography damages users and victims alike. It feeds lustful desires in ways that can never satisfy. True satisfaction is found only when we give our affections to eternal things—to a right relationship with our heavenly Father and with those He has created in His image.

"The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1Jn 2:17).

Many Christian men struggle with the temptations of pornography. Find help by reading [When A Man's Eye Wanders- Breaking The Power Of Pornography -](#)

**Inner peace springs out of inner purity.**

**Editorial Comment** - I also have three other recommendations -

1. [Internet Accountability and Filtering - Covenant Eyes](#) is a filter that allows access to everything but logs every location visited and scores for appropriateness - would also be great to monitor you computer savvy kids, as it keeps a running complete log of every place visited!
2. There is an excellent book by Steve Gallagher (albeit it does get a bit graphic at times!) [At The Altar of Sexual Idolatry](#)
3. [Vidangel.com](#) - This service allows you to filter language and sex - not all movies are available but there is a good selection. You will generally experience minimal if any loss of continuity in the movie. This service is worth the price so that you are not defiled by the increasing offensive language on just about anything you watch. And remember when you watch R and MA

rated movies you are quenching/grieving the Holy Spirit so do not be surprised if you are not experiencing His power in your life! God is serious about sin and calls for His children to be holy in an increasingly unholy world! Subscribe to this service.

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**My Way (The Flesh) - Vernon C Grounds** - For more than five decades, Frank Sinatra has been one of America's most popular entertainers. Perhaps he is best known for the song "My Way." Apparently it has struck a responsive chord among his fans. What chord is that? **Self-will (Ed)**: Another way to describe the middle letter of "sin" or our fallen flesh!). It's the dominant desire of human beings to do things their own way. And that's exactly how the song ends: "I did it my way."

In the ordinary affairs of life, the exercise of self-determination may be commendable. But in relationship to God, **our way** is never (the **right way**). Our self-will must be subordinated to His will, as our Savior submissively prayed in Gethsemane's Garden, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Lk. 22:42, cp 1Jn 2:6, 1Pe 2:21, 1Cor 11:1).

Regardless of how painful the surrender of our will may seem, obedience to God saves us from unhappy loss in this world and irrecoverable loss in the world to come. Proverbs 14:12 reminds us that a sinful insistence on self-will can be self-destructive: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Trustful obedience to God's way, however, brings blessing both now and forever.

Whenever you feel like saying, "I want to do it my way," remember that Jesus did it His Father's way.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay;  
Mold me and make me after Thy will,  
While I am waiting, yielded and still.  
—Pollard

In His will is our peace. —Dante

In summary, the **lusts** John refers to are the sensual bodily appetites that proceed from within our evil nature (fallen flesh). (cp Jas 1:14-note)

## THE BEAST WITHIN

**Lust of the flesh** - This describes the passionate desire or the craving that comes from the evil nature, the **flesh**. In other words the evil craving has its origin in the fallen **flesh**.

**Various renderings of lust of the flesh**: **ISV** = the desire for fleshly gratification. **Phillips** paraphrase = men's primitive desires. **NCV** = wanting to please our sinful selves. **NIV** = the cravings of sinful man. **NJB** = disordered bodily desires. **NLT** = a craving for physical pleasure. **Young's Literal** = the cravings of the earthly nature.

**Of the flesh** ([4561](#)) (**sarx**) is used 147 times in the NT and a simple definition is difficult because **sarx** has many nuances (e.g., some Greek lexicons list up to 11 definitions for **sarx**!). The diligent disciple must carefully observe the **context** of each use of **sarx** in order to accurately discern which nuance is intended. The range of meaning extends from the physical flesh (both human and animal), to the human body, to the entire person, and even to all humankind!

In the context of 1Jn 2:15-17, John uses **flesh** with its moral/ethical sense. Flesh here refers to the totally depraved nature as governing the individual's reason, will, and emotions. It describes that outlook which is totally orientated toward self, which is prone to commit sins, which is opposed to God and which pursues its own ends in self-sufficient, independence from God. Flesh is that ugly complex of human sinful desires that includes the ungodly motives, affections, principles, purposes, words, and actions that sin generates through our bodies. **Sarx** as used in this manner denotes the entire fallen human being—not just the sinful body but the entire being, including the soul and mind, as affected by sin. To live according to the flesh is to be ruled and controlled by that evil complex. Because of Christ's saving work on the believer's behalf, the sinful flesh no longer reigns over us, to debilitate us and drag us back into the pit of depravity into which we were all born.

**Flesh** is that urge within us toward total autonomy and rebellion, toward being our own "little gods" accountable to no one, responsible to no one, obeying no one, respecting no one, and running our own little worlds to suit ourselves. It is that continual tug of self-centeredness and selfishness within each of us that fights to keep us from being wholly devoted to God.



Born again believers need to understand that there is still this remnant of the flesh within our physical bodies of flesh. In contrast to the unregenerate man, believers now have the power led by the Holy Spirit to say "yes" to God and "no" to the **flesh**, whereas before the co-crucifixion explained by Paul in Romans 6 (Ro 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11-see **notes** on Ro 6:1-3; 6:4-5; 6:6-7; 6:8-10; 6:11) took place we had no choice but to obey **Sin**, which ruled unopposed in our bodies. The apostle Paul teaches that in believers, the flesh is opposed to Spirit (Gal 5:17-note). While the unbeliever can live **only** in the flesh, the believer can now live in the Spirit although he can fall back into living *according to* the Spirit. And so the apostle Paul repeatedly encourages believers to overcome the deeds of the flesh in the only way possible - by living in the Spirit (see Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:18-note, Gal 5:25-note)

To live **according to the flesh** is to be ruled and controlled by the flesh. Because of Christ's saving work on our behalf, the sinful flesh no longer reigns over us, to debilitate us and drag us back into the pit of depravity into which we were all born.

**J Vernon McGee** has a simple classification for **sarx** writing that...

It can be used in three different ways. It can speak of the body, the physical body that we have, the meat that is on the bones. It can speak of weakness, meaning that which is psychological. It can also mean that corrupt nature which you and I have, that fallen nature. That is the spiritual meaning. So this word can be used in a physical sense, in a psychological sense, and in a spiritual sense. Paul uses the word flesh in all three senses but more frequently in the sense of the old Adamic, fallen nature. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**John Piper** defines **flesh** (in its moral/ethical sense) as

the old ego that is self-reliant and does not delight to yield to any authority or depend on any mercy. **Flesh** craves the sensation of self-generated power and loves the praise of men... in its conservative form it produces legalism -- keeping rules by its own power for its own glory... (in its more liberal form) produces grossly immoral attitudes and acts (Gal 5:19, 20, 21-see notes Gal 5:19; 20; 21) The **flesh** is the proud and unsubmitive root of depravity in every human heart which exalts itself subtly through proud, self-reliant morality, or flaunts itself blatantly through self-assertive, authority-despising immorality. (Read John Piper's full sermon [Walk By the Spirit!](#))

**Harry Ironside** - It is not that the flesh (referring to the moral/ethical meaning) is, or ever will be, in any sense improved. The flesh in the oldest and godliest Christian is as **incorrigibly evil** as the flesh in the vilest sinner... All efforts to reform or purify it are in vain. The law only demonstrates its incurable wickedness. And this explains why the natural man is so completely unprofitable... To say so would be to declare that man is not a responsible creature but is simply the victim of a hard, cruel fatalism. But although he knows the evil and approves the good, the natural man inclines toward the wrong and fails to do the right. Because he is dominated by the flesh, to which he yields his members as instruments of unrighteousness (Ro 6:13-note), he is powerless to change his nature. The natural man therefore cannot really please God." ([Romans 8 Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Larry Richards** summarizes **flesh** (specifically the moral/ethical aspect) writing that...

"**flesh**" is a complex word with many meanings... The NT emphasizes humanity's moral inadequacy. When they are isolated from God, human beings are energized by evil desires and guided by perceptions that distort God's will and His nature. The word "**flesh**" reminds us that we are caught in the grip of sin. Even a desire for righteousness cannot enable us to actually become righteous. God deals with our **flesh** in a surprising way. He does not free us now from the fleshly nature. Instead, he provides a source of power that will release us from the domination of the flesh. Jesus has paid for sins generated by our flesh, whether sins of our past or those yet in our future. But Jesus has also provided us with his Holy Spirit. The Spirit lives within us, and He is the source of new desires and a new perspective. Even more, the spiritual power unleashed in the resurrection is made available to us in the Spirit... If we choose to rely on the Spirit and if we commit ourselves to His control, we will experience a resurrection kind of life--now. The limits imposed by our fleshly human nature will no longer contain us, and we will be freed from the mastery of the flesh." ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#)) (Bolding added)

**Lewis Sperry Chafer** wrote that **flesh** (the moral/ethical definition) is...

Any aspect of life or conduct which is undertaken in dependence upon the energy and ability of the flesh is, to that extent, purely legal in character, whether it be the whole revealed will of God, the actual written commandments contained in the Law, the exhortations of grace, or any activity whatsoever in which the believer may engage.

[Middletown Bible Church](#) has an instructive note on explaining that...

**There are five things that will never happen to the flesh** (referring to the moral/ethical aspect):

1 ) **The flesh cannot be changed.** The rebellious, non-submissive flesh will never be transformed into

submissive, obedient flesh. God's method of dealing with the flesh is not to change it but to CONDEMN IT (Ro 8:3-note) and crucify it (Gal 5:24-note; Gal 2:20-note and compare Ro 6:6-note).

2) **The flesh cannot be reformed.** It cannot be corrected or restored to purity. That which is corrupt remains corrupt. That which is desperately wicked remains desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). The Church was reformed (we speak of the Protestant "Reformation") and restored to some degree of purity but the flesh will never have a reformation. Two thousand years ago it did not have a reformation but it had a crucifixion!

3) **The flesh can never be trained.** The flesh is stubborn. It refuses to change its ways. It's immutable. You can never teach the flesh how to please God. The flesh is incorrigible--incapable of being corrected or amended. The flesh refuses to change its ways. The works of the flesh always remain the same (Gal 5:19, 20, 21-see **notes** Gal 5:19; 20; 21).

4) **The flesh cannot be improved.** It always remains as it is: depraved, corrupt, wicked, sinful, evil, anti-God, rebellious, stubborn, proud, etc.

5) **The flesh cannot be reconciled to God.** It is always and ever opposed to God (Gal 5:17-note). It will never be at peace with God; instead there is constant war. God can never be brought into harmony with that which is out of harmony with His holy and righteous character.

Finally **Wuest** emphasizes that in using the word **flesh**, the apostle John...

has no reference to the physical body except as that body is controlled or energized by the evil nature. The physical body and its members in themselves have no evil desires except as controlled by the totally depraved nature. To say that the physical body of itself has evil desires is Gnosticism, the heresy that matter is inherently evil. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#))

#### And the lust of the eyes: kai e epithumia ton ophthalmon:

- Genesis 3:6; 6:2; Joshua 7:21; Job 31:1; Ps 119:36,37; Ecclesiastes 5:10,11; Matthew 4:8; Luke 4:5
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Lust of the eyes** - "I see it. I want it. I take it!" **Have you ever done that?** I call this the "**Achan syndrome**" (read the instructive, frightening account in Joshua 7:1-26, esp Josh 7:1, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26).

(Achan answering Joshua) when I **saw** among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I **coveted** (Lxx = enthumeomai = Achan thought carefully about, pondered on, reflected inwardly regarding) them and **took** them; and behold, they are **concealed** (Heb = taman = they were hidden by covering over so that they could not be found; Lxx = egkrupto = to put something into something so as to hide out of sight) in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it. (Joshua 7:21)

**Comment:** Note the principle of progression of the passion to possess - '**I saw... I coveted... took.**' Note also what we do with our sin! We hide our sin from others [cp Ge 3:10] and we think (foolishly) even from God Himself (cp Achan "**concealed**", see Nu 32:23, Ps 90:8-note, Isa 3:11-note)

**Thomas Fuller** - Our eyes, when gazing on sinful objects, are out of their calling and God's keeping.

**Wuest** writes that **the lust of the eyes** refers to...

the passionate cravings of the eyes for satisfaction, these cravings finding their source in the evil nature.

**Hiebert** explains that **lust of the eyes** refers to "the cravings and lusts stimulated by what is seen. Now the reference is to those lusts which are aroused by what enters through the eye-gate. The reference is not merely to physical sight but includes intellectual visualization. One may understand the expression "**the lust of the eyes**," appearing only here in the New Testament, in two different ways. The reference may be to the craving to acquire the things seen. So understood, the expression "points to man's covetous and acquisitive nature." Or, as Plummer notes, the lust may be "the desire of seeing unlawful sights for the sake of the sinful pleasure to be derived from the sight; idle and prurient curiosity. The expression may well include both aspects. Some things an individual observes readily stimulate the craving to possess; other things he may desire to feast his eyes on without personally possessing. Under either view, "In a day of billboard advertising, movie and television screens, and eye-catching magazine spreads, this aspect of the world is predominant." (**Ed:** And this comment antedates the Internet, a vehicle for heretofore unspeakable visual evils! Maranatha!) ([The Epistles of John An Expositional Commentary D. Edmond Hiebert](#)) ([See Hiebert's Excellent Online Paper on](#)

## [1John 2:2-17 in Bibliotheca Sacra](#))

In this section John emphasizes our intractably covetous nature even from the time of infancy (Ps 51:5-note). The eyes serve as the window (Mt 6:22-note) by which the fallen flesh is "energized" to covet that which is seen with the purpose that it take it and might be gratify the flesh (albeit only temporarily and incompletely! Contrast Ps 16:11-note) as portrayed in Jas 1:14-note.

**Eve** fell prey to her eyes, Moses recording that...

When the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight (Heb = desirable) to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she **took** from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Ge 3:6)

**Solomon** whose eyes saw all that the world had to offer and who partook of most of this world's offering had this warning...

Do not desire (cp use of this Hebrew verb in Dt 5:21 = It is the first verb - covet. **NB**: Strong desires usually lead to taking!) her beauty in your heart, nor let her capture you with her eyelids. (Pr 6:25-note)

**Comment**: Note that this evil desire is rooted in our heart (Jer 17:9) which is tantamount to our fallen flesh and that it seeks to take us prisoner. The Greek rendering of the Hebrew is intriguing for it is translated "Let not the desire of beauty **overcome** (LXX = Greek nikao [word study] = defeat, conquer, prevail, be victor over) thee"! If God inspired this instruction, He obviously must and does enable the believer to fight against the "lust of the eyes" in the form of the *fem fatale* (cp His instruction to Cain "You must master it". - Ge 4:6,7). **Men, notice carefully** - Don't set your "eye" on her "eyelids" or you run the risk of being captured!

The Christian life is not a collection of **do's and don'ts**, but instead is a faith-filled daily walk surrendered to and guided by the Holy Spirit Who indwells us (Eph 5:18-note, Gal 5:16-note, Ro 8:13-note). He alone can enable us to bear the fruit of self-control (Gal 5:23-note) and give us direction through the principles in Scripture (cp Ps 119:9, 11). With His help, we can set good standards for our behavior and walk forth into the enemy territory of the "world" as more than conquerors through Christ! (Ro 8:37KJV-note) Fellow believer, isn't it our natural tendency to look at all the things we "can't" do so that we might thereby be holy as He is holy (and even make a mental "list" of these do's and don'ts)? We need to ask God to open **the eyes of our heart to know... the surpassing greatest of His power in us who believe** (Eph 1:18, 19-note) so that we are empowered to fight the good fight of faith and will not have to suffer the certain consequences of bad choices.

**Matthew Henry** wisely wrote - "Natural desires are at rest when that which is desired is obtained (cp the wisdom of Solomon - Pr 5:18, 19-notes), but corrupt desires are insatiable. Nature is content with little, grace with less, but lust with nothing."

In the oldest book in the Bible, **Job** (see the character of Job in Job 1:1. **Why did he continually turn away from evil?**) understood that a man's **eyes** needed to be continually protected so that they might not see, covet and take one who was not one's own...

I have made a covenant with my **eyes**. How then could I **gaze** (Hebrew = **bin/biyn** = not just a casual or accidental, unavoidable glance, but careful consideration. The Lxx translate bin with **sunimi** = to understand!) at a virgin?" (Job 31:1-see comment) (**Amplified** = I dictated a covenant (an agreement) to my eyes; how then could I look [lustfully] upon a girl?) (See a similar principle of the vital importance of guarding one's heart in Pr 4:23-note, cp Pr 4:25, 26, 27)

The psalmist also understood the wickedness of his own heart (Jer 17:9, Ge 8:21) and wisely pleaded with Jehovah to...

**Turn away** (A command in Hebrew. A pleading with God to do this!) my **eyes** from looking at vanity, and revive me in Thy ways. (Ps 119:37-note) (NET Bible note "Make my eyes pass by from looking at what is worthless.")

**David**, who in his late 40's or early 50's had a serious spiritual "eye problem" (2Sa 11:1, 2 "saw a woman"... "so David..." 2Sa 11:3,4, cp 2Sa 12:9, 10 - note what David despised!!) declared...

I will set no worthless (Heb = Belial = evil, naughty, ungodly, wicked, and fittingly used for Satan = 2Co 6:15) thing before my **eyes**; I hate the work of those who fall away ("the doing of swerving [deeds] I hate"); It shall not fasten (Heb = dabaq = to stick like glue! Used in Ge 2:24 of husband to cling to his wife) its grip on me. (Ps 101:3-note)

**Jesus** warned of the path down which our eyes will lead us if they are not continually guarded...

but I say to you, that everyone who **looks** (present tense = emphasizes not just a glance but a continual gaze!) on a woman to lust (epithumeo) for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Mt

5:28-note) (William Gurnall rightly asked "What lust is so sweet or profitable that is worth burning in hell for?" cp Mt 5:29-note)

**Jamieson** comments that the **lusts of the eyes** serve as

the avenue through which outward things of the world, riches, pomp, and beauty, inflame us. Satan tried this temptation on Christ when he showed Him the kingdoms of the world in a moment. By the lust of the eyes David (2Sa 11:2) and Achan fell (Joshua 7:21). Compare David's prayer, Ps 119:37; Job's resolve, Ps 31:1; Mt 5:28-note. The only good of worldly riches to the possessor is the beholding them with the eyes. Compare Lk 14:18, "I must go and see it." ([1John 2 Commentary](#))

**Thomas Brooks** rightly warned that...

A little will satisfy nature; less will satisfy grace; nothing will satisfy men's lusts.

**Adam Clarke** writes that **lust of the eyes** speaks of...

Inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings, and decorations of all sorts.

**Wuest** writes that here "John speaks of one of the manifestations of the evil nature, **the lust of the eyes**, namely the passionate cravings of the eyes for satisfaction, these cravings finding their source in the evil nature.

**H A Ironside** has an interesting interpretation of this section writing that "I remember when I was a young Christian, my world against which I had to guard most was the world of polite literature. I used to love it, its poetry, its essays, its wonderful books, and I appreciate them yet in a certain sense, but I had to remember this, that if ever these things came in between my soul and my love for this blessed Book, I had to turn away from them and give my time and attention to this Book, and so it is with many things. There was a young lady with great musical ability preparing to go on the concert stage when the Lord saved her. She said one day, "You know I have made a wonderful discovery; my very love for music is coming in between my soul and Christ," and that young woman for eight years would not touch a musical instrument, for she was afraid she would become so absorbed that she would not enjoy the things of God. The time came when she said, "I cannot enjoy music for its own sake, but I, can use it as a vehicle to bless the souls of men," and she gave her talent to Christ, and He used it in attracting people to hear the gospel. No matter what it is, if you lay it down at Jesus' feet and use it for Him, you do not need to be afraid of it. But do not put your work before Jesus Christ. Sometimes a fine house is "the world." Here is a Christian, and while he is little in his own eyes and has not much means, he lives in a quiet little home, but the Lord trusts him with a good deal of money, and he immediately says, "I must have a better house now; I must have some style about me; I must have magnificent furniture and draperies." What for? Is he any more comfortable? He can eat just three meals a day, he can sleep in just one bed at a time, and sit in just one chair at a time, but he feels he must impress people. Beauty, too, can get in between you and Christ, and it will prove to be "the world" if one is not careful. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

#### And the boastful pride of life: kai e alazoneia tou biou:

- Esther 1:3-7; Ps 73:6; Daniel 4:30; Revelation 18:11-17
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Boastful pride of life** - The Greek could be read literally as "the pretension of human life" ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#)) Wuest paraphrases this as "the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life".

**Hiebert** observes that "While the two preceding aspects are inward, relating to what one wants, this is outward, relating to what one has or professes to have. ([See Hiebert's Excellent Online Paper on 1John 2:2-17 in Bibliotheca Sacra](#))

**Barker** writes that the **boastful pride of life** "will be reflected in whatever status symbol is important to me or seems to define my identity. When I define myself to others in terms of my honorary [or earned] degrees, the reputation of the church I serve, my annual income, the size of my library, my expensive car or house, and if in doing this I misrepresent the truth and in my boasting show myself to be only a pompous fool who has deceived no one, then I have succumbed to what John calls the pride of life. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

**Jamieson** comments on **the boastful pride of life** as

literally, "arrogant assumption": vainglorious display. Pride was Satan's sin whereby he fell and forms the link between the two foes of man, the world (answering to "the lust of the eyes") and the devil (as "the lust of the flesh" is the third foe). Satan tried this temptation on Christ in setting Him on the temple pinnacle that, in

spiritual pride and presumption, on the ground of His Father's care, He should cast Himself down. The same three foes appear in the three classes of soil on which the divine seed falls: the wayside hearers, the devil; the thorns, the world; the rocky undersoil, the flesh (Mt 13:18–23; Mk 4:3–8). The world's awful anti-trinity, the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," similarly is presented in Satan's temptation of Eve: "When she saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," Ge 3:6 (one manifestation of "the pride of life," the desire to know above what God has revealed, Col 2:8, the pride of unsanctified knowledge). ([1John 2 Commentary](#))

**Adam Clarke** writes **boastful pride of life** speaks of "Hunting after honors, titles, and pedigrees; boasting of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honorable acquaintance, and the like.

**H A Ironside** says that **the boastful pride of life** is the

The ostentation of living, trying to make an appearance before others, the vainglory (excessive or ostentatious pride especially in one's achievements) of the world. I think sometimes if some Christians took two-thirds of the money that they put into a mansion down here, and invested it in sending the gospel to a lost world, they would have a much finer mansion up there.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world... The world passeth away, and the lust thereof."

I was passing along the street the other day with a friend, and he said, as he pointed out one house after another, "There is an awful lot of tragedy connected with that house. A man built this great home for his beautiful wife, and suddenly she died. Here is a house that had much money put into it, but there was a suicide in the family, and now no one cares to live in it."

There is no real joy in these things. As Christians, ours are the only joys that last forever; ours are the things that will never pass away, and yet to think that we can be so foolish and invest so much in that which is simply fleeting and will leave us dissatisfied and unhappy at last. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** notes that...

While the **lust of the flesh** and **lust of the eyes** refer to the desire to have what you do not have, the **boastful pride of life** refers to sinful pride over what you do have. It is the desire to be better than others so that you can glory in yourself and your accomplishments.

There is a proper sense, of course, of doing your best in school, athletics, or at work in order to be a good steward of God's gifts and to bring glory to Him. But it's easy to forget that He gave you everything that you have (1Cor. 4:7) and to start boasting in your achievements and possessions as if you attained these things by your own intelligence or hard work. It's easy to think like Nebuchadnezzar, who said (Da 4:30),

"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?"

God immediately drove him out into the fields to live as a wild beast until his heart was humbled!

We all battle these temptations daily, and we often fail. But John's point is, if you go on yielding **to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life** as your way of life, you are not maintaining love for the Father. Rather, you are maintaining love for the world. Worldly people wallow in these things; God's children fight them continually. How do we maintain our love for the Father? (click here for Pastor Cole's answer to "how we maintain our love for the Father") ([Choose Your Love: the World or the Father?](#))

**The NET Bible** note comments that in this context, **alazoneia** refers to...

The arrogance produced by material possessions. The person who thinks he has enough wealth and property to protect himself and insure his security has no need for God (or anything outside himself). ([NET Bible](#)) (See related comment below on "**bios**")

**Boastful** ([212](#)) (**alazoneia** - related word **alazon**) according to Thayer refers (a) in secular writings (from Aristophanes down) generally to empty, braggart talk sometimes also empty display in act, swagger, (b) an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights and (c) an impious and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthly things (Jas 4:16). It speaks of pretension, arrogance in word and deed. (see Barclay's note below for more detail).

The only other NT use of **alazoneia** is by James...

James 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

**Vincent** writes that **alazoneia** means...

It means, originally, empty, braggart talk or display; swagger; and thence an insolent and vain assurance in one's own resources, or in the stability of earthly things, which issues in a contempt of divine laws. The vainglory of life is the vainglory which belongs to the present life.

(In his note on Jas 4:16 Vincent writes) The kindred word **alazon**, a boaster, is derived from **ale**, a wandering or roaming; hence, primarily, a vagabond, a quack, a mountebank. From the empty boasts of such concerning the cures and wonders they could perform, the word passed into the sense of boaster. One may boast truthfully; but **alazoneia** is false and swaggering boasting. Revised (of Jas 4:16KJV) renders vauntings, and rightly, since vaunt is from the Latin vanus, empty, and therefore expresses idle or vain boasting.

**Barclay** notes that **alazon** and the related word **alazoneia** have...

behind them a most interesting picture, which makes them all the more vivid and meaningful. The Greeks derived them from ale, which means a wandering about; and an alazon was one of these wandering quacks who could be found shouting their wares in every market-place and in every fair-ground, and offering to sell men their patent cure-alls.

Plutarch, for instance, uses it to describe a quack doctor (Plutarch, Moralia 523). It was the word for these quacks and cheapjacks who travelled the country and set up their stalls wherever crowds gathered, to sell their patent pills and potions, and to boast that they could cure anything.

So in Greek the word came to mean a pretentious braggart. The Platonic Definitions define alazoneia as 'the claim to good things which a man does not really possess'.

Aristotle defines the alazon as the man 'who pretends to praiseworthy qualities which he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out' (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1127a 21). Again in the Rhetoric (1384a 6) he says that 'it is the sign of alazoneia to claim that things it does not possess belong to it'.

Plato uses the word alazon to describe the 'false and boastful words' which can get into a young man's mind and drive out 'the pursuits and true words which are the best guardians and sentinels in the minds of men who are dear to the gods' (Plato, Republic 560c).

In the Gorgias Plato draws a picture of the souls of men before the judge in the afterworld, souls 'where every act has left its smirch, where all is awry through falsehood and imposture, alazoneia, and nothing straight because of a nurture that knew not the truth' (Plato, Gorgias 525a).

Xenophon tells how Cyrus the Persian king, who knew men, defined the alazon: 'The name alazon seems to apply to those who pretend that they are richer than they are, or braver than they are, and to those who promise to do what they cannot do, and that, too, when it is evident that they do this only for the sake of getting something or making some gain' (Xenophon, Cyropaedia 2.2.12).

In the Memorabilia he tells how Socrates utterly condemned such imposters. Socrates said they are found in every walk of life, but they were worst of all in politics. 'Much the greatest rogue of all, is the man who has gulled his city into the belief that he is fit to direct it' (Xenophon, Memorabilia 1.7.5).

Theophrastus has a famous character sketch of the alazon. 'Alazoneia', he begins, 'would seem to be, in fact, pretension to advantages which one does not possess'. The alatan is the man who will stand in the market-place and talk to strangers about the argosies he has at sea and his vast trading enterprises when his bank balance is precisely tenpence. He will tell of the campaigns he served with Alexander the Great, and how he was on terms of personal intimacy with him.

He will talk about the letters which the chiefs of the state write to him for help and advice. When he is living in lodgings he will pretend that the house in which his room is situated is the family mansion, and that he is thinking of selling it because it is not commodious enough for the entertaining which he has to do (Theophrastus, Characters 23).

The alazon was the braggart and the boaster out to impress men; the man with all his goods in the shop window; the man given to making extravagant claims which he can never fulfil. But we have still to see the alazon in his most damaging and dangerous form.

It was not so very dangerous for a man to lay claim to a business or a fortune which he did not possess; but in



the days of the NT there were men who made claims which were exceedingly dangerous.

These men were the Sophists. The Sophists were Greek wandering teachers who claimed to sell knowledge; and, in effect, the knowledge they claimed to sell was the know-ledge of how to be a success in life. The Greeks loved words; and the Sophists claimed to give men subtle skill in words, so that, in the famous phrase 'they could make the worse appear the better reason'. They claimed to give men that magic of words which would make the orator the master of men.

Aristophanes pillories them in *The Clouds*. He says the whole object of their teaching was to teach men to fascinate the jury, to win impunity to cheat, and to find an argument to justify anything. Isocrates, the great Greek teacher, hated them. 'They merely try,' he said, 'to attract pupils by low fees and big promises' (Isocrates, *Sophist* 10. 193a).

He said : 'They make impossible offers, promising to impart to their pupils an exact science of conduct by means of which they will always know what to do. Yet for this science they charge only £15 or £20... They try to attract pupils by the specious titles of the subjects which they claim to teach, such as Justice and Prudence.

'But the Justice and Prudence which they teach are of a very peculiar sort, and they give a meaning to the words quite different from that which ordinary people give; in fact they cannot be sure about the meaning themselves, but can only dispute about it. Although they profess to teach justice, they refuse to trust their pupils, and make them deposit the fees with a third party before the course begins' (Isocrates, *Sophist* 4. 291d).

Plato savagely attacks them in his book called *The Sophist* : 'Hunters after young men of wealth and position, with sham education as their bait, and a fee for their object, making money by a scientific use of quibbles in private conversation, while quite aware that what they are teaching is wrong.'

It is these men, and the like of them, of whom the NT is thinking, and against whom it warns the Christian. The warning is against the false teacher who claims to teach men the truth, and who does not know it himself. The world is still full of these people who offer men a so-called wisdom, who shout their wares wherever men meet, who claim to have the cure and the solution to everything. How can we distinguish these men?

(i) Their characteristic is pride. In the Testament of Joseph, Joseph tells how he treated his brethren : 'My land was their land, and their counsel my counsel. And I exalted myself not among them in arrogance (alazoneia) because of my worldly glory, but I was among them as one of the least' (Testament of Joseph 17. 8). The alazon is the teacher who struts as he teaches, and who is fascinated by his own cleverness.

(ii) Their stock in trade is words. The Sophist defended himself to Epictetus that the young men came to him looking for someone to teach them. 'To teach them to live?' demands Epictetus. And then he answers his own question : 'No, fool; not how to live, but how to talk; which is also the reason why he admires you' (Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.23). The alazon seeks to substitute clever words for fine deeds.

(iii) Their motive is profit. The alazon is out for what he can get. Prestige for his reputation and money for his pocket is his aim. The programme he preaches is designed to return his party to power and himself to office.

The alazon is not dead. There are still the teachers who offer worldly cleverness instead of heavenly wisdom; who spin fine words which never end in any lovely action; whose teaching is aimed at self-advancement and whose desire is profit and power. ([Barclay, William: New Testament Words:. Westminster John Know Press, 1964](#))

Help me, Lord, to live my life  
Free from selfishness and strife  
So that others clearly see  
Changes You have made in me.  
-- Sper

**Of life** (979) (**bios**; English biology) refers to everyday life including the daily functions of one's life on earth, such as our natural preoccupation with food, clothing and shelter (Lk 8:14, 1Ti 2:2, 2Ti 2:4-note, 1Pe 4:3-note). In this sense bios refers to the necessities of life and includes those pursuits and occupations pertaining to civil life. That which sustains life.

**Bios** can also refer to one's livelihood or means of subsistence including property, worldly goods, how one makes a living (1Jn 3:17)

**Wuest** contrasts **bios** with **zoe**, the latter term referring to...

**life** in the sense of one who is possessed of vitality and animation. It is used of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God. It is used to designate the life which God gives to the believing sinner, a vital, animating, spiritual, ethical dynamic which transforms his inner being and as a result, his behavior.

**BDAG** states that **bios** refers to...

**life** in its appearance and manifestations freq. distinguished from **zoe**, the condition of being alive... Although there is freq. overlapping in usage, **bios** may be said to denote the manner in which one's **zoe**, finds expression and the latter term may be used to connote quality of existence as such (cp. IPriene 105, 10 the birth of Augustus marked the 'beginning of life (bios) and living (**zoe**)... Cass. Dio 69, 19 'Here lies Similis, alive [bios] for a number of years, but really living [**zoe**] for seven'). Hence, as the semantic history shows, the loss of bios need not terminate **zoe** (q.v.). (Eg, compare the **zoe** of a believer in 1Jn 2:17b = "abides forever"!)

(1) Life and activity associated with it... 2 Cl 1:6.(chronos tou biou) = time of life; (eiserchesmai eis ton biou) = come to life Dg 1 (which speaks) of a new way of living. The present life and its pleasures (hedone). Contrasted with **bios** is life beyond the grave (coming lifebut different (heteros biou) = which involves punishment. The affairs of everyday life (2Ti 2:4).

(2) Resources needed to maintain life, means of subsistence, specifically property, worldly goods (1Jn 3:17)

**Hiebert** explains that **of life** is "The genitive "of life" (*tou biou*) and is the same word rendered "**this world's goods**" in Jas 3:17. The term occurs ten times in the New Testament (Mk 12:44; Lk 8:14, 43; 15:12, 30; 21:4; 1Ti 2:2; 2Ti 2:4-note; 1Jn 2:16; 3:17) and basically denotes "the means of life, livelihood." John's expression, "**the boastful pride of life**," appearing only here in the New Testament, portrays an attitude of boastfulness and a hollow self-exaltation based on material possessions or social prominence. It is the disposition to "show off" before others on the basis of worldly possessions or personal abilities and achievements. Thus as Plummer notes, "The first two may be the vices of a **solitary**; the third requires **society**. We can have sinful desires when we are alone, but we cannot be ostentatious without company. ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary D. Edmond Hiebert](#)) ([See Hiebert's Excellent Online Paper on 1John 2:2-17 in Bibliotheca Sacra](#))

**The NET Bible** note comments that in 1John 2:16...

The genitive **biou** (bios) is difficult to translate:

(1) Many understand it as objective, so that **bios**, "material life", becomes the object of one's **alazoneia** ("pride" or "boastfulness"). Various interpretations along these lines refer to boasting about one's wealth, showing off one's possessions, boasting of one's social status or lifestyle.

(2) It is also possible to understand the genitive as subjective, however, in which case the **biou** itself produces the **alazoneia**. In this case, the material security of one's life and possessions produces a boastful overconfidence. This understanding better fits the context here: The focus is on people who operate purely on a human level and have no spiritual dimension to their existence. This is the person who loves the world, whose affections are all centered on the world, who has no love for God or spiritual things ("the love of the Father is not in him," 1Jn 2:15). ([NET Bible](#))

**Bios** - 11 uses in the NT...

Mark 12:44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had **tdive on**."

**NET Note:** The contrast between this passage Mk 12:41-44 and what has come before in Mk 11:27-12:40 is remarkable. The woman is set in stark contrast to the religious leaders. She was a poor widow, they were rich. She was uneducated in the law, they were well educated in the law. She was a woman, they were men. But whereas they evidenced no faith and actually stole money from God and men (cp Mk 11:17) she evidenced great faith and gave out of her extreme poverty everything she had. ([NET Bible](#))

Luke 8:14 "And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this **life**, and bring no fruit to maturity.

**NET Note:** On warnings about the dangers of excessive material attachments, described here as the worries and riches and pleasures of life, see Lk 12:12-21; 16:19-31. The verb (telesphoreo = fruit to maturity) means "to produce mature or ripe fruit" (L&N 23.203). Once again the seed does not reach its goal. ([NET Bible](#))

Luke 8:43 And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, **bios** not in this version but is in the ESV - see explanation below)

**Note the difference in the ESV** Luke 8:43 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and **though she had spent all her living (bios) on physicians**, she could not be healed by anyone.

**NET Bible note explains:** Most MSS, including the majority of later MSS (a[\* C] A L W Q X [Y] ⱥ(1, 13 )33 [1424] Ū [lat sy(c,p,h)]) read here, "having spent all her money on doctors." Uncertainty over its authenticity is due primarily to the fact that certain important witnesses do not have the phrase (e.g., ⱥ(75 )B [D] 0279 sy(s )sa Or). This evidence alone renders its authenticity unlikely. It may have been intentionally added by later scribes in order to harmonize Luke's account with similar material in Mark 5:26 (see TCGNT 121). NA(27) includes the words in brackets, indicating doubt as to their authenticity. ([NET Bible](#))

Luke 15:12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his **wealth** between them.

Luke 15:30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your**wealth** with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

**NET Note:** Note the younger son is not "my brother" but this son of yours (an expression with a distinctly pejorative nuance). This is another graphic description. The younger son's consumption had been like a glutton. He had both figuratively and literally devoured the assets which were given to him. The charge concerning the prostitutes is unproven, but essentially the older brother accuses the father of committing an injustice by rewarding his younger son's unrighteous behavior. ([NET Bible](#))

Luke 21:4 for they all out of their surplus ("out of what abounded to them") put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to **live on** (bios)." ("put in her entire livelihood.")

1Timothy 2:2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet**life** in all godliness and dignity.

2Timothy 2:4-note No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday**life**, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride **of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's**goods**, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**NET Note:** Here **bios** refers to one's means of subsistence - material goods or property ([NET Bible](#))

1Pe 4:3-note For the time already past (referring to the readers' behavior in time past) is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles (used here of those who are not God's people), having pursued a course of sensuality (literally sensualities = plural), lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries (The Greek words here all occur in the plural and describe their common practice in the past)

**Bios** - 24 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) - Ezra 7:26; Esther 3:13; Job 7:1, 6, 16; 8:9; 9:25; 10:5, 20; 12:12; 14:5f, 14; 15:20; 21:13; Pr 3:2, 16; 4:10; 5:9; 16:17; 31:3, 12, 14; Song 8:7

**Bishop Trench** has the following notes on **bios** as compared to **zoe** "The Latin language and the English not less are poorer than the Greek, in having but one word, the Latin 'vita,' the English 'life,' where the Greek has two. There would, indeed, be no comparative poverty here, if zoe and bios were merely duplicates. But, contemplating life as these do from very different points of view, it is inevitable that we, with our one word for both, must use this one in very diverse senses; and may possibly, through this equivocation, conceal real and important differences from ourselves or from others; as nothing is so effectual for this as the employment of equivocal words. ([Synonyms of the New Testament online](#))

**Marvin Vincent** commenting on John 1:4 "in Him (the Word = Jesus, Jn 1:14) writes that "He was the fountain of life — physical, moral, and eternal — its principle and source. Two words for **life** are employed in the New Testament: **bios** and **zoe**. The primary distinction is that **zoe** means existence as contrasted with death, and **bios**, the period, means, or manner of existence. Hence **bios** is originally the higher word, being used of men, while **zoe** is used of animals. We speak therefore of the discussion of the life and habits of animals as **zoology**; and of accounts of men's lives as **biography**. Animals have the vital principle in common with men, but men lead lives controlled by intellect and will, and directed to moral and intellectual ends. In the New Testament, **bios** means either living, i.e., means of subsistence (Mark 12:44; Luke 8:43), or course of life, life regarded as an economy (Luke 8:14; 1Ti 2:2; 2Ti 2:4). **zoe** occurs in the lower sense of life, considered principally or wholly as existence (1Pe 3:10; Acts 8:33; 17:25; Heb 7:3).

There seems to be a significance in the use of the word in Luke 16:25: "Thou in thy **lifetime (zoe)** receivedst thy good things;" the intimation being that the rich man's life had been little better than mere existence, and not **life** at all in the true sense. But throughout the New Testament **zoe** is the nobler word, seeming to have changed places with **bios**. It expresses the sum of mortal and eternal blessedness (Mt 25:46; Lk 18:30; Jn 11:25; Acts 2:28; Ro 5:17; 4:4), and that not only in respect of men, but also of God and Christ. So here. Compare Jn 5:26; 14:6; 1Jn 1:2. This change is due to the gospel revelation of the essential connection of sin with death, and consequently, of life with holiness. "Whatever truly lives, does so because sin has never found place in it, or, having found place for a time, has since been overcome and expelled" (Trench). ([John 1 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**Is not from the Father but is from the world: ouk estin (3SPA!) ek tou patros all' ek tou kosmou estin. (3SPA!)**

- James 3:15
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Adam Clarke** writes **not from the Father** indicates that "Nothing of these inordinate attachments either comes from or leads to God. They are of this **world**; here they begin, flourish, and end. They deprave the mind, divert it from Divine pursuits, and render it utterly incapable of spiritual enjoyments.

**Sinclair Ferguson** once said that "A man can be outwardly conformed to the Christian way of life while he is inwardly conformed to the spirit of this world.

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**THE ANTIDOTE FOR LOVE OF THE WORLD** - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Many people come to a sad end because they worship wrong gods. Some are wicked, having made a god out of sensual pleasure. Others are decent people, yet they too have worshiped the wrong god.

After a young farmer committed suicide, his wife said,

Farming wasn't just a job with Floyd. It was his identity, his nationality, his religion. Working with the ground gave us both a sense of connection with the Almighty. But it had gone sour by the time Floyd killed himself.

My heart goes out to people like Floyd. They have a deep appreciation of God's natural world and are willing to work hard. But when-ever an occupation or anything temporal takes priority in life, it be-comes our god. The apostle John admonished us,

Do not love the world or the things in the world... 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 (1John 2:15, 16).

**This can apply to any earthly pursuit that becomes central in our lives When we love anything more than the true and living God revealed in the Bible, we are worshiping it. Whatever it is, it won't last.** (1Jn 2:17-note )

And it won't be able to help us when our plans shatter, our health fails, or death beckons. Only the true God can help us then. — Herbert V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**The "world" is whatever cools our affection for Christ.  
There's no room for double occupancy in the Christian's heart.**

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A man visiting a distant city made no comment when his friends showed him one of the city's most impressive buildings. Disappointed at his silence, one of the friends finally asked, "Don't you think it's beautiful?" "No, not really," he responded. "I've been to Rome, you see."

Because he had seen the magnificent structures of Rome's glorious past, the building his friends showed him did not impress him. It suffered tragically by comparison.

**C. H. Spurgeon**, commenting on that story, said

O believer, if the world tempts you with its rare sights and curious prospects, you may well scorn them, having been by contemplation in heaven, and being able by faith to see infinitely better delights every hour of the day.

Believers who through faith in God's Word have had a foretaste of heaven and have considered their glorious spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus are not attracted by the enchantments of this world. They're not impressed by its empty baubles. They're not enamored

with its allurements. Recognizing that which has genuine worth and lasting value, they respond to the earthly and temporal by saying,

"Take the world, but give me Jesus." —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**The world cannot distract us  
when Christ attracts us.**

[Give Me Jesus](#)

In the morning when I rise  
Give me Jesus  
  
Give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus  
You can have all this world  
But give me Jesus.  
(Sung by Jeremy Camp)

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**WHAT SCENT ARE YOU TRACKING - THE WORLD'S OR HEAVEN'S?** A MAN bought a new hunting dog. Eager to see how the dog would perform, the man took him out to track a bear. No sooner had they gotten into the woods than the dog picked up the trail. Suddenly he stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a new direction. He had caught the scent of a deer that had crossed the bear's path. A few moments later he halted again, this time smelling a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer. On and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Sometimes Christians are like that hunting dog. We start out on the right trail, following Christ. But soon our attention is diverted to things of lesser importance. One pursuit leads to another until we've strayed far from our original purpose. Apparently this is what happened to one of the apostle Paul's companions, for Paul wrote to Timothy, "Demas has forsaken me, **having loved this present world.**" (2Ti 4:10-note)

Every day we must renew our dedication to Christ or we will be drawn away by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (1Jn 2:15-17). These **worldly influences** can divert **even the most devout Christian**. We easily pick up another scent and follow another trail, perhaps the **pursuit of wealth, power, prestige, or pleasure**. When we realize that has happened, we must admit our waywardness and ask God to get us back on the right trail. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) (Bolding added)

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LAST week I got a letter from my credit card company telling me that I was one of their most valued customers. "We would like to raise your buying power by \$3,000," the letter said. The next day, because I was late in sending a payment of \$36.96, I received another letter from the same company. This one said if I didn't pay up immediately, they would take action against me.

So which am I? A valued customer or a loser? With one voice they urged me to go out and spend more of their money. With another they implied that I couldn't be trusted with what they had already loaned to me.

Commercials and advertisements send the same kind of conflicting messages. Some urge us to spend our lives in indulgent behavior. Others warn us of the dangers of doing so—addiction, debt, disease, death, and poverty.

The Bible, however, is consistent in its message. It urges us to spend our lives in controlled, unselfish behavior, for which there are no harmful consequences. If we follow God's plan and listen to His Word rather than to our own lusts, we'll not have to live with the anxiety that results from following mixed signals. —D C Egner

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**Illustration of 1Jn 2:15-17 - Today in the Word** - When rescuers were finally able to pull a middle-aged man from the wreckage of a horrible car accident, he was taken to a nearby hospital. But it soon became apparent that he would die. As the chaplain comforted him, the man, who was a Christian, exclaimed, "As I look squarely at eternity, I realize now just how much I wasted my life on things that don't matter."

What a sad revelation! Today's passage offers a strong challenge to those who "waste their lives on things that don't matter." John opens this passage with uncompromising words: "Do not love the world or anything in the world." At first glance, verse 15 may seem

at odds with John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." Most likely, John is using the word world differently in these two texts. In John 3:16, world refers to the lost people of the world, whereas in 1 John 2:15, world refers to an entire system of beliefs and values—what we might call a "worldview." This worldview is completely opposed to God and His ways.

To clarify what he means, John lists three elements of this worldview in verse 16. First, he warns against "cravings." These are misplaced appetites for some of our most powerful drives such as for food, for intimacy, and for recognition.

Next, John talks about the "lust of the eyes." This includes both what we can see and what we can imagine. This can best be summarized as our tendency to look at the external qualities without really inquiring about what's inside. For example, many people are tempted by the pursuit of wealth because of all they imagine it will enable them to possess.

Finally, John addresses pride, or that self-sufficiency that attempts to manufacture what God has promised—or what He has forbidden—rather than humbly allowing Him to give what we need.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY-** Today's passage doesn't condemn everything material as evil. Instead, it focuses on the affection that we have for the "stuff" around us. In other words, it's not so much about what kind of car we drive, but rather the reasons we might have for wanting it or the intensity of our desire for it. What John is saying, however, is that we can't ever let these things distract us from the eternal: God Himself. All these things will eventually be gone, but God is everlasting. That's a reminder we all need to hear again. ([MBI - Today in the Word](#))

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**STAY ON THE TRAIL!** - A MAN bought a new hunting dog. Eager to see how the dog would perform, the man took him out to track a bear. No sooner had they gotten into the woods than the dog picked up the trail. Suddenly he stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a new direction. He had caught the scent of a deer that had crossed the bear's path. A few moments later he halted again, this time smelling a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer. On and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Sometimes Christians are like that hunting dog. We start out on the right trail, following Christ. But soon our attention is diverted to things of lesser importance (cp loving the world, 1Jn 2:15). One pursuit leads to another until we've strayed far from our original purpose. Apparently this is what happened to one of the apostle Paul's companions, for Paul wrote to Timothy, "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2Ti 4:10)

Every day we must renew our dedication to Christ (Ed: Present yourselves to God Ro 12:1) or we will be drawn away by the lust of the flesh (Jas 1:15), the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. **These worldly influences can divert even the most devout Christian** (cp 1Co 10:12). We easily pick up another scent and follow another trail, perhaps the pursuit of wealth, power, prestige, or pleasure. When we realize that has happened, we must admit our waywardness and ask God to get us back on the right trail. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**LEAVE THE DOG HOME:** The story is told of a man who liked to hunt pheasants. He thought he could do better if he had a dog to help him, so he bought one. However, he was disappointed when he discovered that the dog was interested only in chasing rabbits. The man had acquired a hound dog when what he needed was a bird dog. So instead of hunting pheasants, as he really wanted to, the man spent his time doing what his dog preferred. Finally the hunter decided he had better leave the dog at home.



The hunter solved his problem by taking decisive action. He equipped himself for pheasant hunting and went out without the distracting dog. That's what we must do in the spiritual realm. As we prepare for each day, let's choose to obey the injunction, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." (Ro 13:14-note) When we yield to Christ, rely on His strength, and put Him first, we will reject the evil impulses that arise from the law of sin in our members. That's how we "leave the dog at home." —R. W De Haan ([Ibid](#))

**IF YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A DRAG,  
WORLDLY WEIGHTS MAY BE KEEPING YOU DOWN.**