

## 1 John 2:15-17 | Are you Gratified or Satisfied?

A lot of 1 John has been about obedience

- Obey what? God's commands
- Why?
  - Gospel...
  - God's Glory
  - Our Good

Isaiah 48:17-18

**17** Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.

**18** If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

- #1 Command
  - Greatest Glory
  - Greatest Good
- Text reveals what challenges that
- Daily struggle

### Culture of instant gratification...

- Instagram—Google—Amazon Prime
- The more you are gratified the less you are satisfied
- We love to be gratified and will sacrifice being truly satisfied

### Verse 15 (The Command)

**Do not love the world** = stop loving the world (literal translation) (1<sup>st</sup> direct imperative in 1 John)

- What does that mean?
- Must understand "love" and "world"

### Love (*agapao*)

To esteem, love, indicating a direction of the will and finding one's joy in something or someone

- It differs from *philéō*, to love, indicating feelings, warm affection, the kind of love expressed by a kiss
- To love something on the basis of a **high regard for its value or importance**—'to take pleasure in'
- I.e., to **delight** in
- 'They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God' John 12:43

But aren't there things in this world that are gifts from God that we are meant to pleasure in and enjoy?

### World (*kosmos*):

- Used 3 primary ways in the NT
  - Sometimes it is used to refer to Planet Earth (not the meaning here)
  - Sometimes it is used to refer to people, as in **John 3:16** (not the meaning here)
  - Sometimes "world" is used to refer to the organized evil system with its principalities and practices, all under the authority of Satan, which includes all teachings, ideas, culture, attitudes, activities, etc., that are opposed to God (the meaning here)
  - A fixation on the material over the spiritual, promotion of self over others, pleasure over principle
  - "The world" here means everything that opposes Christ and His work on earth<sup>1</sup>
    - Jesus called Satan "the ruler of this world" (John 14:30; 16:11)
    - Paul called him "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4)
    - In **Luke 16:8** Jesus referred to all unsaved people as "the sons of this world"

<sup>1</sup> David L. Allan, 1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2013), 96

Verse 15 ≈ “Do not let the content of this world that is contrary to Christ direct your will. Do not seek ultimate pleasure in it or delight in it. Do not place high value on or attempt find your true joy in that kind world and the stuff it offers.” (for God’s glory and our good)

Loving the world is the sin of allowing your appetites, ambitions, and conduct to be fashioned according to earthly (anti-Christ) values.

How do we discern whether or not we are loving the world in a sinful way?<sup>2</sup>

1. Engrosses our thoughts and conversation
2. An unwillingness to part with something (or give anything up for God’s purposes)
3. Discontentment with our portion
4. Enjoying it and pursuing it with more joy and zeal than the things of God
5. Pride in earthly distinctions
6. Seeking to obtain things in wrong manner

This is all kind of getting at what John would have heard Jesus say:

- No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (Matthew 6:24)

John says it this way (v. 15<sup>b</sup>)

- “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”
  - Refers to our love for the Father
  - **A better affection**
- Love of the world is not compatible with love for God (divided heart)
- Ex.: married to one who loves another

Verse 15 reminds us that there is a better affection—a greater love

Verse 16 reminds us that there are better gifts—a greater joy

## Verse 16 (The Reasoning)

The lust of the flesh (v. 16)

- **Lust** = inordinate desire; to be hot after something; not limited to sexual desire
  - Could be something good that we long for in an inordinate way
- **Flesh** = human nature corrupted by sin
  - Together = a life dominated by the senses (inordinate desire rooted in the sinful nature)
  - Desires apart from the will of God (fights against the things of God in your life)
- Galatians 5:19-24 (2 kinds of fruit)

The lust of the eyes (v. 16)

- Inordinately desiring what we see
- In Scripture the eyes are often represented as being the primary organ of perception and a principal avenue of temptation
- “If your eye causes you to sin gouge it out” –Jesus
- “I will set no worthless things before my eyes” –The Psalmist
- Your eyes are closely related to your heart

The boastful pride of life (v. 16)

- A spirit of self sufficiency
- Desire for recognition, applause, status and advantage in life
- One-ups-manship

<sup>2</sup> For this section I am indebted to David L. Allen, p. 97-98

## Genesis 3:6 (NASB) (With inserts from 1 John 2:16)

When the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** (the lust of the flesh), and that it was a **delight to the eyes** (the lust of the eyes), and that the tree was **desirable to make one wise** (the boastful pride of life), she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

(Passions, Possessions, Position)

Verse 16 reminds us that there are better gifts—a greater joy  
Verse 17 reminds us that there is a better future—a greater reality

## Verse 17 (The Promise)

Do you want to be instantly gratified or truly satisfied?

- **Already passing away**
  - A bad investment
  - Lesser gifts, lesser joy, lesser reality
- We fall into these things all the time
- We are often ruled by and influence (in our decisions) by lesser things

## Jesus in John 6:26–27

“I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but **because you ate the loaves and had your fill**. Do not work for food that spoils, **but for food that endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give you”

- The Greek word translated “**had your fill**” is a word that is used of animals filling their bellies
- Low view of even of a legitimate appetite if it dulls one’s hunger for more important things

Contrast their appetite with King David’s, who was in a real desert and was really hungry and really thirsty. But he knew his **physical hunger pointed to something eternal and deeper** than mere food. **It was a signpost to God**. He wrote:

- **Psalm 63:1, 3–5**

O God, you are my God, **earnestly I seek you**; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water....

**Because your love is better than life**, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

**My soul will be satisfied** as with the richest of foods.

These things (**the things in the world**) are idols, God-substitutes<sup>3</sup>

- They are the spiritual hot dogs we ingest on the way to God’s banquet
- They dull and eventually kill our appetite for the deep and nourishing richness of his holy fare
- **The more we eat, the less we like what we eat, but the more we want to eat it.**
- Like raiding the refrigerator to cure a case of spiritual malnutrition

“Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” –C. S. Lewis

The human heart will never relinquish its love affair with the world unless it finds **something greater** to love than the world

- **The only way to disposes the heart of an old love is by the expulsive power of a better one**

<sup>3</sup> This section adapted from Ben Patterson and David L. Goetz, *Deepening Your Conversation With God*, The Pastor’s Soul Series (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 57-58.

## Isaiah 55:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

<sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.

<sup>3</sup> Give ear and **come to me**; listen, that you may live.

## HOW DO WE FIND SATISFACTION IN GOD?

- Perhaps first we have to find dissatisfaction in the world (**evaluation**)
  - To be convinced that there is something better
- Maybe we have to be mysteriously touched by that which is deeper (**prayer**)
  - Maybe we have to trust the Word of God
- For sure we have to seek Him with all our hearts (**pursuit**)
  - You cannot say God does not satisfy if you have never drank deeply of Him
  - **Psalm 34:8**
  - **Come to Me...**