



THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD

Christians do not belong to this world. Christians must live in the world, they must work in the world, and they must associate with people who are not Christians. This does not give Christians the right to act like people who belong to the world. Christians belong to God. While people who belong to the world live to get the things of the world, Christians belong to Christ and live to do and to receive the things of Christ. In John 17:14-16, Jesus prayed for the apostles. He did not pray that God would remove them out of the world, but he prayed God would protect them from evil. Christians cannot go hide from the world by living all alone. God does not want this. God wants us to live in this world, and He wants us to refuse to do the evil things of this world.

Who are the people who belong to the world? All people who are not Christians, who do not truly belong to God, belong to the world. These are people who are hungry for the things of the ground. They work hard for the things of the ground because those are the things they love most. They have no time for God, or they always put God second and the things of the world first.

1 John 2:15-17 warns Christians not to love the world or the things in the world. Worldly things are not godly things. The world will pass away (be destroyed), but the man who does God's will shall live forever. What are the things of the world? There are so many all could not be listed. Some of them are the hunger for high life, the hunger for riches with fancy clothes and fine houses, the hunger for fornication and adultery, the hunger for alcoholic drinks, the hunger for the praise of men, the hunger to be a big man, the hunger to enjoy wicked, drunken celebrations, and such like. Such things are of the world. Money, clothes, homes, power, authority, and such things are not wrong of themselves. They become worldly things when a man hungers for them more than he hungers for God. Fornication, adultery, drunkenness, wicked celebrations, and such like are always worldly and wrong. You are a person who belongs to this world when you value your lusts and desires for anything in the world more than you desire spiritual things.

Things not of this world are love for and faith in Christ, commitment to Christ's church, love for and faith in the word of God, respect for the commandments and teachings of Christ, compassion for those who have trouble and sickness, the fellowship of Christians, and such like.

A Christian must give his love to God, not the things of this world (Colossians 3:2). He must not live by the way of the wicked, but must change his life to be like Christ (Romans 12:2). He must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:12), and must refuse fleshly lusts that make war against his own soul (I Peter 2:11).

Remember that Jesus said no man can serve two masters (Luke 16:12, 13). A man cannot love and serve the things of the world and belong to God. A Christian cannot love and serve God and belong to the world. You can belong to only one - you must choose between God and the world.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus pray in John 17:14-16? What did he mean?
2. Who are the people who belong to this world?
3. What warning is found in I John 2:15-17?
4. List some of the things of the world.
5. When do money, clothes, power, authority, and such like become worldly things?
6. At what point does a person become a man who belongs to this world?
7. List some of the things not of this world?
8. What does I Peter 2:11 say will war against our soul?
9. In Luke 16:12, 13 what did Jesus say was impossible? What does this mean?