

Small Group Curriculum • 1 John • Hello, Life.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE • WEEK 3 • 1 John 2:12-17

As we took heed last week to John's warning against a fellowship destroyer: deception, sin and darkness, this week we are challenged with the delicate dance of being "in" the world, yet not "of" the world. A part of saying "Hello" to the abundant life is saying "Goodbye" to our desire for the things of this world.

REMINDERS

Awakening News:

- Are you looking for a place to serve? Please consider joining our Connections Team that provides a welcoming environment for our Sunday services. To explore a volunteer role, email our Connections & Communications Director at sarina@awakeningchurch.com.
- We had a GREAT start to Alpha this past Thursday at the Livingroom Coffee House. It's not too late to invite a spiritually seeking friend! More information [here](#).

ICEBREAKER

QUESTION: What's your guilty pleasure?

INTRODUCTION

In this next section of 1 John, John gives a word of encouragement to his readers, and but then quickly turns to once again giving a warning towards another destroyer of fellowship with God and others: loving the world.

QUESTION: We have heard of the phrase, "You are what you eat." Do you agree with the statement, "You are what you love?" Explain your answer.

Transition: This motto highlights the theme of today's passage, giving us a warning towards elevating our love for the things of this world above God. Let's take a look at what John writes.

DISCUSSION

READ: 1 John 2:12-14

QUESTIONS:

1. Quest teacher, Carolyn Taketa, asked us to reflect on this statement: "*If I had _____, I will be happy.*" What do you tend to put in your "*blank*?"
2. When we read all that has been given through Jesus in 1 John 2:12-14, why do you think we still seek to fill in our *blank* with the things of this world?

AWAKENING

READ: 1 John 2:15-17

QUESTIONS

1. In verse 15, John tells his readers, “*not to love the world,*” yet we find that he writes in his Gospel that “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...*” Is this a contradiction?
 1. “world” in 1 John isn’t referring to the material world or its inhabitants, but those aspects of the world that are in rebellion to God, such as our flesh, temptations and the things or idols of this world that draw us away from God. (See James 4:4)
 2. “love” isn’t referring to care or compassion, but is directed more towards a pleasure one has an appetite or desire for.
2. How does verse 16 help us understand John’s use of the word “world” and “love”?
3. How have Christ followers sometimes misinterpreted verse 15 by not *loving* the world?
 - By creating an “us against them” mentality towards the unchurched or those who think differently than us, forgetting Paul’s words that “*our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (Ephesians 6:12).
 - By avoiding the pleasures that this world has to offer forgetting that when God finished creating his world he declared it “*very good*” (Gen 2), not intending life on earth to be miserable.
 - By separating ourselves from the world forgetting Jesus’ prayer for his followers: “*My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one*” (John 17:14-16).
4. As God made the world, it is also fallen from its original form (Gen 2-3). Therefore, anything in the world can become a source of love and/or sinful desire. How does John illustrate these types of sinful desires in verse 16?
 - Physical pleasure (lust of the flesh)
 - Everything we see (lust of the eyes)
 - Pride in our achievements and possessions (pride of life)
5. All humans struggle with these temptations. Where do you tend to struggle the most?
6. How do you practically receive things of this world with thanksgiving and yet not come under their control? (See 1 Cor 10:23)

RESPONSE

1. Take a moment in prayerful reflection asking the group to simply meditate on each of these statements as you slowly read them:
 - a. What are your loves?
 - b. What are the worldly things you are craving?
 - c. What may be squeezing God out from the center of your hearts?
 - d. What is one step you can take this week to reorient your life to the “true north” of God’s love?

AWAKENING

2. As we reflected on each of these questions, did anything become clearer to you? Did the Holy Spirit speak to you in any particular way?
3. What is that one step you will take this week to increase your love and direction towards God?

Transition: We desire our small groups at Awakening to regularly experience relational connection, biblical study, and also *prayer*, taking our praise, requests, and confessions to God.

PRAYER

As a reminder of who we are in Christ, in a posture of prayer, read over the group 1 John 2:12-14. Take a moment to thank God for his grace and rescuing power. Knowing we are sinful people all in process of following a perfect God, ask God to shine his light into every corner of our lives, revealing anything that is sitting on the throne of our hearts where God's place should be. Take a moment to allow everyone to confess these sinful desires to God in the quietness of their hearts. End by asking God to give the group His power for greater obedience and breakthrough from bondage.