



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Don't get caught up in the things of this world!

Sub-Topic: Do not love this evil world!

Scripture: 1 John 2:12-17

John was writing to believers of all ages, his “little children,” who had experienced forgiveness through Jesus. The older men (“fathers”) were mature in the faith and had a long-standing relationship with Christ. The younger men had struggled with Satan’s temptations and had won. The boys and girls had learned about Christ and were just beginning their spiritual journey. Paul emphasizes God’s action in making believers new people (1 Corinthians 6:11). The three aspects of God’s work are all part of our salvation: Our sins were washed away, we were set apart for special use (“sanctified”), and we were pronounced not guilty (“justified”) for our sins.

In our life we battle against “principalities and powers” (the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by Satan who is a vicious fighter.) First Peter 5:8 says, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*” To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God’s strength and use every piece of His armor (Ephesians 6:10-17). The whole body needs to be armed. As you do battle against “the rulers of the darkness of this world,” fight with the strength of the Holy Ghost.

In spite of the inevitable struggles we face, we are not alone. Jesus does not abandon us to our struggles either. If we remember that the ultimate victory has already been won, we can claim the peace of Christ in the most troublesome times. It is easy to be frightened by the wickedness we see all around us and to be overwhelmed by the problems we face. Evil is obviously much stronger than we are. John assures us, however, that God is stronger yet. He will conquer all evil—and His Spirit and His Word live in our heart!

We commit sins, of course, but we ask God to forgive us and then continue serving Him. God has freed us from the slavery to Satan, and He keeps us safe from Satan’s continued attacks. The rest of the world does not have the Christian’s freedom to obey God. Unless they come to Christ in faith, they have no choice but to obey Satan. **There is no middle ground; people either belong to God and obey Him, or they live under Satan’s control.**

Some people think **worldliness is limited to external behavior**—the people we associate with, the places we go, the activities we enjoy. **Worldliness is also internal, for it begins in the heart.** It is characterized by three attitudes: (1) lust of the flesh—preoccupation with gratifying physical desires; (2) materialism (“lust of the eyes”)—craving and accumulating things; and (3) pride of life—obsession with one’s status or importance.

We are called to “**be not conformed to this world**” with our behavior and customs that are usually selfish and often corrupting. We that are saved have wisely decided that much worldly behavior is off-limits. Our refusal to conform to this world’s values, however, must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs; it must be firmly founded in our minds: “*Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). It is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Ghost renews, reeducates, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed. “*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*” (Romans 8:5).

Not everyone who talks about heaven belongs to God’s Kingdom. Jesus is more concerned about our *walk* than our *talk*. He wants us to do right, not just say the right words. Your spiritual house will withstand the storms of life only if you do what is right instead of just talking about it (Matthew 7:25). **What you do cannot be separated from what you believe.** Jesus exposed those people who sounded religious but had no personal relationship with Him. The day of judgment only our relation with Christ—our acceptance of Him as Savior and our obedience to Him—will matter. Many people think that if they are “good” people and say religious things, they will be rewarded with eternal life. In reality, faith in Christ is what will count at the judgment.

People of God remember: “*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*” (1 John 2:17).