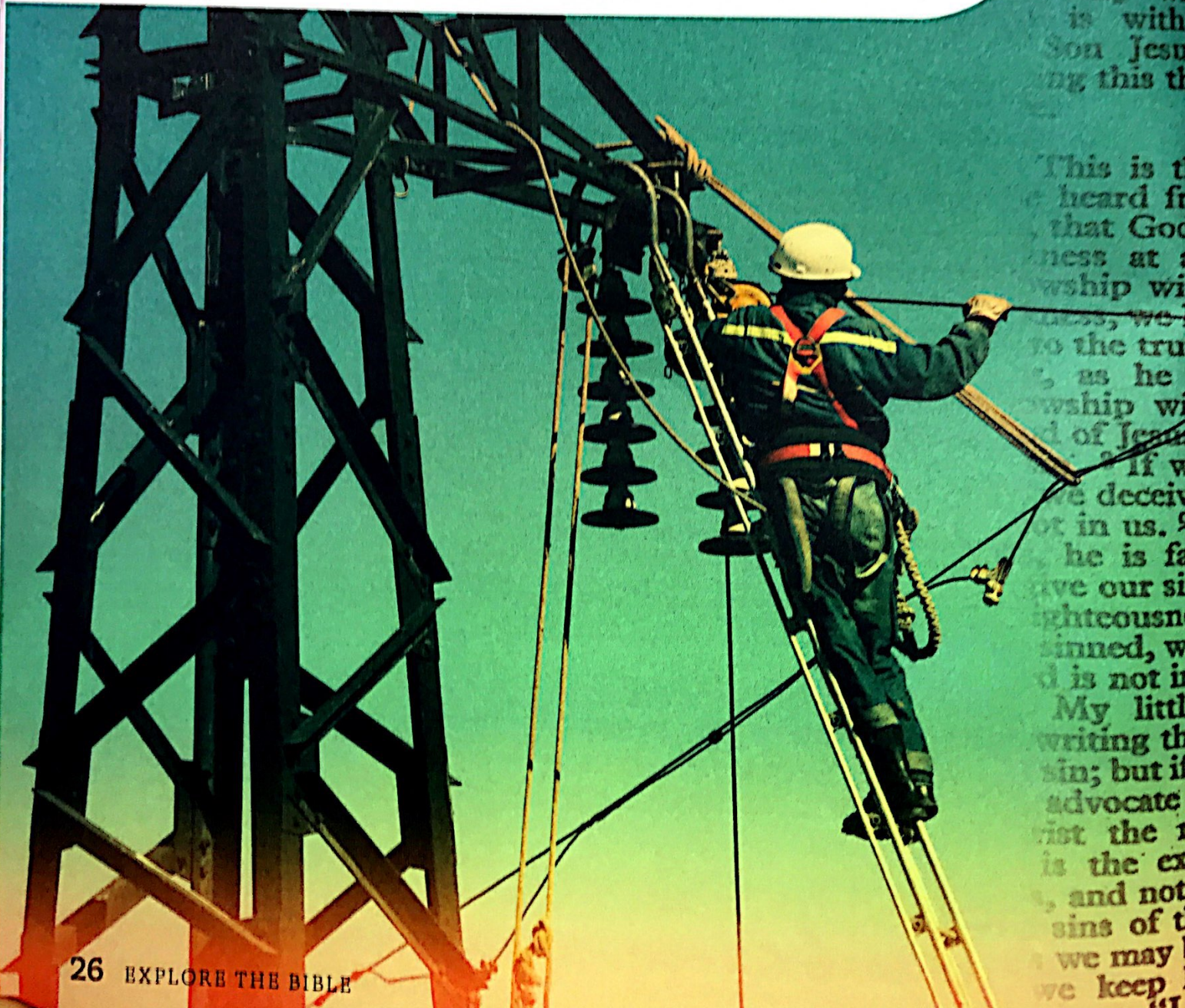


# DANGERS TO AVOID

Believers will be tempted by the things of this world and by the deceit of false teachers, but they can abide in the truth of the gospel by the power of God's Spirit.



# UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

USE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO PREPARE FOR YOUR GROUP TIME.

Some jobs are dangerous, but the value and necessity of the work outweigh the risk involved in completing the tasks. Miners face cave-ins. Medical professionals risk daily exposure to infectious diseases. Firefighters could easily lose their lives at the next blaze. Individuals who regularly face hazards pay attention and try to minimize their risks. Similarly, Christians can't abandon the work God has given them to do in this world; rather, they must be alert and diligent.

John guided his readers along a spiritual path that would lead them away from danger. He used this section of his epistle to warn his audience about sinful interests that lead away from God and toward self-centeredness. The end result of such values is destruction, but the reward of following God's path is everlasting fellowship with Him.

John identified those who taught false doctrines as antichrists—misguided or deliberately evil individuals, some of whom had previously identified with the group of believers to whom John was writing. Their straying away from truth was proof that they didn't know God and, in fact, were living in disobedience to Him. An antichrist is someone who refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and who denies both the Father and the Son. John assured his readers of their salvation by proclaiming that they were living in light of God's truths by opening their lives to the Lord. Because God is truth, He can't lie or mislead others, as the false teachers were doing.

John reminded his readers to continue abiding in Christ, remaining obedient to His commands. Although human effort is important in terms of living out one's professed beliefs, John asserted that salvation depends solely on God's faithfulness, not on human achievement. By receiving John's instruction, readers could distance themselves from the misinformation of the false teachers and could experience dynamic fellowship with God.

**"NOTHING SHORT  
OF GOD CAN SATISFY  
YOUR SOUL."**

—John Wesley

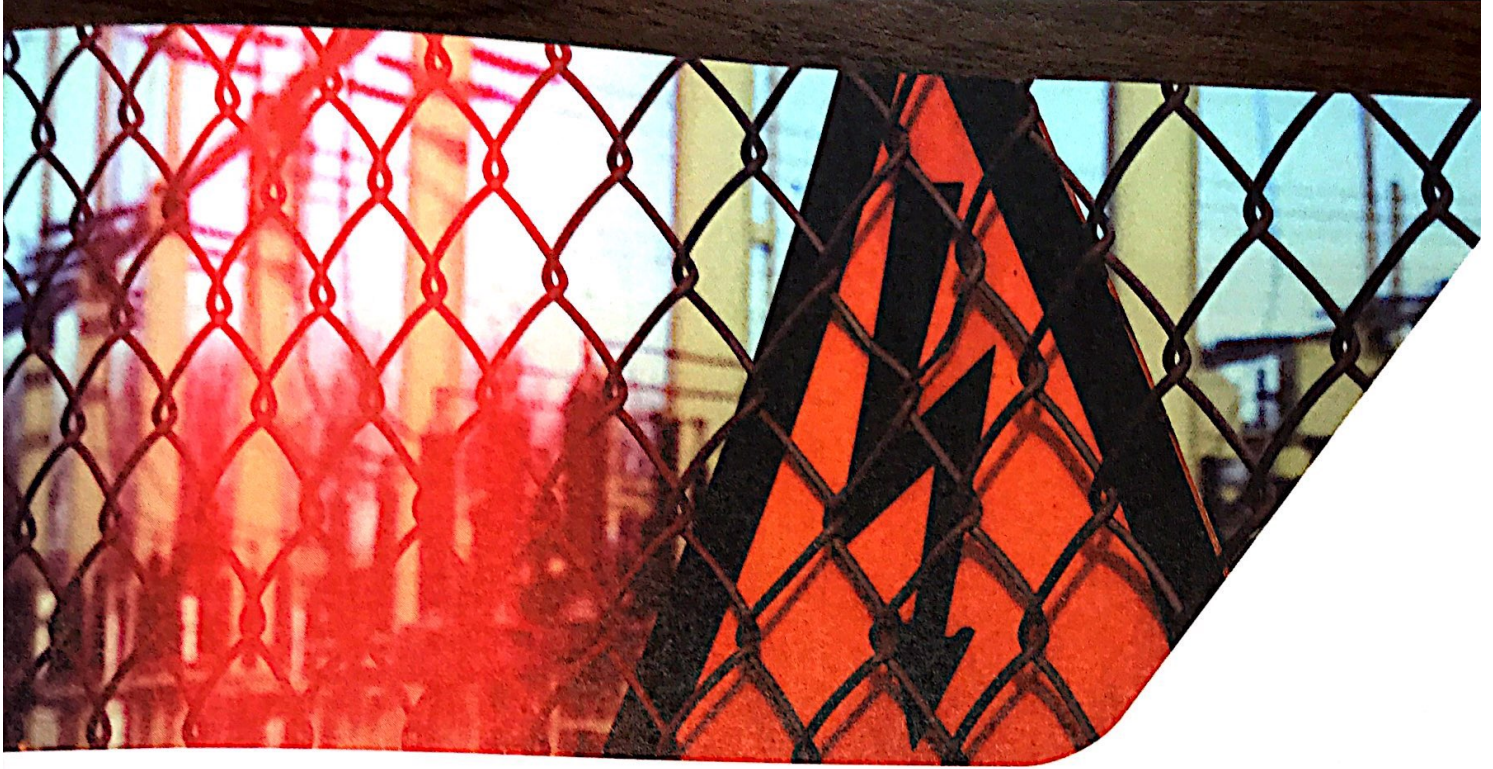
## ➤ 1 JOHN 2:15-27

### Think About It

*Notice the contrast John made in verses 15-17 between the things of the world and the things of God. What's the ultimate outcome of each?*

*Identify characteristics John pointed out to differentiate believers from the world.*

**15** Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. **16** For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world. **17** And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever. **18** Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard, "Antichrist is coming," even now many antichrists have come. We know from this that it is the last hour. **19** They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us. **20** But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge. **21** I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. **22** Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. **23** No one who denies the Son can have the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well. **24** What you have heard from the beginning must remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. **25** And this is the promise that He Himself made to us: eternal life. **26** I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. **27** The anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as He has taught you, remain in Him.



## ▶ EXPLORE THE TEXT

### ***LOVERS OF THE WORLD (1 John 2:15-17)***

**<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.**

John had instructed his readers to demonstrate their love for God through holy conduct (see 2:3-6) and to love fellow believers (see 2:9-11). Next John commanded believers not to love the world or what's associated with the world. John's emphasis here isn't a warning against appreciating the created world or against loving other humans. Rather, believers are to refrain from attaching themselves to attitudes and values that are directly opposed to God. Such affections can absorb or replace our love for God.

Because we can't express genuine love for God and the world simultaneously, to love one is to exclude the other (see Matt. 6:24). Love is a powerful emotion that can be either misapplied to an inappropriate object or person or expressed in ways that honor God, who is the very definition of love (see 1 John 4:8).

**<sup>16</sup> For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

According to John, the world prioritizes all the body desires, all the eyes long to see, and all we can possess. John simply identified these as basic ways sinful humans rebel against God. John didn't mean that the created world itself was evil but that the presence of sin has caused people to worship created things instead of worshipping the Creator.

"The lust of the flesh" refers to sinful interests and desires that lead us away from God. Because of our sinfulness, humans seek to fulfill natural desires in ungodly ways. While John certainly had in mind sexual desires, the meaning here is more encompassing, including any human craving used to gratify inappropriately. "The lust of the eyes" addresses our tendency to ascribe worth to the things we see without evaluating their eternal significance. The eyes are frequently the means by which sinful desires enter our mind. "The pride in one's lifestyle" is an attitude that glorifies self and worldliness as opposed to complete dependence on God. All these values hinder our fellowship with God.

***List ways Christ followers can avoid loving worldly things.***

***17 And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever.***

Whatever belongs to the worldly nature might seem important during our lives on earth, but these things won't last for eternity. God's kingdom is eternal, and those who live for God's glory above our sinful desires will be a part of God's eternal kingdom. The things of the world are a poor substitute for an eternal destiny of fellowship with God.

***In what ways can focusing on the eternal value of an action serve as a guard against loving worldly things?***

## ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL

### (1 John 2:18-23)

<sup>18</sup> Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard, "Antichrist is coming," even now many antichrists have come. We know from this that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us.

Once again referring to his readers with the affectionate term *children*, John identified this period of history as the last hour, which likely refers to the time between Christ's first and second comings. That time is characterized by the coming of antichrists, people who oppose God's kingdom as revealed in Jesus. The presence of opposition to the gospel validates that God's kingdom was initiated on earth in the coming of Christ and one day will be ultimately fulfilled with His second coming.

The antichrists John mentioned had once been affiliated with believers in the church. Their presence caused dissension, and they eventually removed themselves from fellowship with believers. As John put it, "they went out from us" (v. 19). Their departure from orthodox Christian beliefs proved they were never genuine believers.

**List anti-Christian influences in our culture. In what ways can Christians minimize the influence of those who oppose the gospel?**

<sup>20</sup> But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge. <sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> No one who denies the Son can have the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well.

#### KEY DOCTRINE

##### *Holy Spirit*

The presence of the Holy Spirit in a Christian guarantees that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

### **BIBLE SKILL**

*Take seriously all biblical commands for Christian living.*

Read 1 John 2:15,27 and identify the commands. Paraphrase them for today, using other words to express the same instruction. Reword any negative commands into positive ones. Identify reasons for these commands, damage that might be caused by ignoring them, and benefits of obeying them.

In contrast to people who hold false teachings about Jesus, Christ followers are blessed with an anointing from God. Both the Spirit and the Word work in harmony to reveal God's truths, affirming the gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus, John could confidently say that believers know the truth, as opposed to heretics, who claimed knowledge but only deceived themselves. Because genuine believers know God, they're able to distinguish God's truths from the lies of false teachers. As a result, there's no need to try to supplement the Christian faith with any kind of mystical experience or insights purported to be available only to a select few. Rather, authentic believers know enough of God's truths to spot counterfeit teachings when they arise.

John labeled the false teachers as liars for failing to acknowledge the truth about Jesus. John exposed their hypocrisy by stating that Jesus and the Father are distinct but inseparable: to be in fellowship with one is to be in fellowship with the other, and to deny one is to deny the other. We must either confess Christ or deny Him; there's no middle ground.

**What standards did John give Christ followers to evaluate themselves?**

## **FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL (1 John 2:24-27)**

<sup>24</sup> What you have heard from the beginning must remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that He Himself made to us: eternal life.

The idea of remaining (abiding) in Christ was central to John's theology. A relationship with God must be cultivated daily if we're to grow as Christians (see John 15:4-5). Being faithful to biblical teachings and abiding in Christ give believers reassurance of our salvation. The reward for trusting our lives to Jesus is eternal life.

which is based on God's faithfulness, not on human achievement. God's promise of eternal life for believers is both a future expectation in heaven and a present reality as believers remain in fellowship with Christ.

**<sup>26</sup> I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. <sup>27</sup> The anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as He has taught you, remain in Him.**

The false teachers were trying to lure believers away from faith in Christ through heretical doctrine. The power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God and obedience to the gospel message strengthen believers to resist giving in to false teachings. Because the Holy Spirit reveals the truth about salvation in Jesus Christ, believers don't need additional teachings invented by misguided humans.

**List the realities Christ followers will experience when they remain faithful to the gospel message.**





## > OBEY THE TEXT

Christ followers must avoid embracing the world's beliefs and values. No matter how glamorous and convincing any worldly philosophy may sound, following the appeal and allure of this world will only lead to destruction. Eternal life can be found only in the truths of the gospel. By rejecting the world's values and keeping a distance from false teachings, Christ followers can remain faithful to the gospel and strong in their faith.

*Review the actions you listed earlier to avoid loving the world and identify one you need to take immediately. List some steps you'll take to complete that action.*

*Consider ways worldly influences impact believers' lives. List ways you can minimize these influences in your life.*

*Discuss ways your Bible-study group can help one another avoid the temptation of worldly beliefs and values.*



### MEMORIZE

"The world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever." 1 John 2:17

Use the space provided to make observations and record prayer requests during the group experience for this session.

## MY THOUGHTS

Record insights and questions from the group experience.

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## MY RESPONSE

Note specific ways you will put into practice the truth explored this week.

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## MY PRAYERS

List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.

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