

LIVING IN THIS WORLD

We all experience life in this physical world God has created. However, there is a way in which God warns us about living in this world. Although the word “world” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to the physical earth (Acts 17:24) or to those who inhabit it (John 3:16), it can also be used to denote something contrary to the will of God. In this sense, the word can be used to denote the system of values, desires, and behaviors that are common among the people who live in this physical world. Therefore, while you naturally live in this physical world, you must also learn how to live in this world if you desire to please God.

1 JOHN 5:19

Although Jesus is reigning as King and has all authority in Heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18), there is a sense in which the Scriptures picture Satan as ruling over this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4). This is because he has influenced many to live in rebellion against God so they live according to their own physical desires while they are in this world (1 Peter 5:8-9). Therefore, living in this world means you must watch for all the ways Satan exerts influence over the people and things around you, so you do not also fall under his sway!

1 JOHN 2:15-17

It is tempting to fall in love with the things and ways of this world that rebel against God. These include lusts/desires that appeal to our fleshly appetites that are driven by the things we want to experience, lusts/desires that appeal to our eyes that are driven by the things we see and covet, and the pride in the things of this life that place confidence in them. Most people have been taken captive by Satan through these things that are focused on this world. However, God warns you not to fall in love with them because they do not last (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11; Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21) and will not bring you into the

kingdom of God or help you do His will (Galatians 5:19-21)!

JAMES 4:4

There is a clear contrast between living according to the rebellious ways of this world and the ways of God. They are opposed to each other. So, you must make a choice about your allegiance (Matthew 6:24). You will either choose to be the friend of God by demonstrating allegiance to Him as you live in this world, or you will choose to be the friend of the world by demonstrating your allegiance to the rebellious ways of this world. As you make this decision, though, you must recognize a few things. First, the things of this world will not last. Second, the world is a “friend” that will always let you down because it is not truly interested in you. Third, God always defeats His enemies in the end.

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

There is a war being fought inside each person in this world between living for the will of God and the rebellious ways of Satan. Sadly, at some point, we all make the decision to live according to the rebellious ways of this world in some way (Romans 3:9-18, 23). So, you have also gotten caught up in the ways of this world at some point to carry out the desires of your own flesh rather than live according to the will of God. This has brought about great spiritual consequences (spiritual death, Romans 6:23) that you could not solve by yourself. Thankfully, God has provided His grace and mercy through Jesus Christ! Now, you can have another opportunity and be used by Him in this world to be useful in His service!

ROMANS 12:1-2

In view of everything God has done to save you from the sinful ways of this world (John 3:16), you must determine not to continue living according to the ways of this world (age). That is, you must not allow your life to continue being molded by the thinking, values, morals, beliefs, practices, etc. of this world that are in rebellion against God! Instead, you must choose to be transformed from these rebellious ways. You can do this by renewing your mind. Challenge your beliefs, assumptions, opinions, traditions, practices, etc. that have been formed

according to the standards of this world. Allow God's word to shape your thinking from this point forward! Then, you will be able to see and determine what is truly the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God!

JOHN 15:18-21

When Jesus left Heaven and came to this world, those who were committed to living in the darkness did not want anything to do with Him (John 1:10-13; 3:19-21). He was, therefore, in the world but not of the world. Those who choose to follow Jesus today are also in this physical world, but not of (belonging to) the rebellious ways of this world. While this rebellious world chooses to listen to the evil one, Jesus's kingdom is not of this world and listens to Him (John 18:36). But, Jesus also warns that those who are part of this world will hate those who are not, just as the world hated Him (2 Timothy 3:12)!

1 PETER 1:13-17; 2:11-12

Rather than being at home in and conformed to this world, Jesus's followers should see themselves as strangers (exiles, pilgrims) who are passing through this world in search of their Heavenly home (Hebrews 11:13-16). As one who is just passing through, you must be careful not to get too comfortable with the things of this life and live according to the rebellious ways of this world. Instead, you must conduct yourself honorably in God's sight and stay away from the sinful desires in this world that are trying to destroy your soul! In everything, you must choose to conduct yourself reverently before God by living holy as He is holy (set apart from evil and committed to what is right and good)!

CONCLUSION

You live in this physical world. However, you do not have to be among those who rebel against the will of God. Although the ways of this world are very enticing, they never satisfy and are short-lived. Soon, your life on this earth will be over, and this world will not be able to help you. Therefore, you must take advantage of the opportunity God has given you to experience His grace and mercy and be transformed rather than conformed to this world!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How can the word "world" be used in Scripture?

In what way does Satan rule over this world?

How does Satan tempt you through the things of this world?

Why must you refuse to love the things of this world?

What does friendship with the world do to your relationship with God?

What is the nature of the war being fought inside each person?

How can you be transformed rather than conformed to the ways of this world?

What should your relationship be to this world if you desire to please God?

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