

Fri day- March 14

“...and the boastful pride of life [pretentious confidence in one’s resources or in the stability of earthly things]”

WHAT IS THAT? {I can hear you cry}. The word ‘boastful’ is ἀλαζονεία in Greek and is a tough one to translate into English. It can best be described as ‘life’s empty pride’- the measure we put on ourselves to gauge our own self-worth. It’s the internal scale all of us have to measure our own perceived sense of self-worth. How valuable am I to others? How wanted am I by others? How desirable, am I? This isn’t the cliché self doubt, “Have I still got it?” This is a genuine measure of self, based on the thousands of interactions we have with others continuously. John’s #3 description of Lust is the ways we lie to ourselves about what we ‘have to be’. The world tells us that we ‘have to be’ fashionable, and exotic, and mysterious and sexy and powerful and RICH! We fall in love with what we ‘could be’, and we start to actually believe that is what we ‘should be’. As you can imagine, these unhealthy and unrealistic expectations of an unreal self (and other people) ends up just further breaking our already broken world.

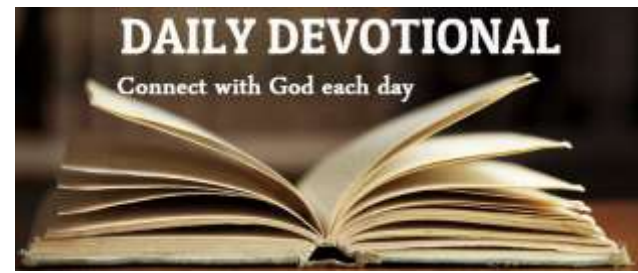
Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.

Saturday- March 15

“The world is passing away...”

It’s my own interpretation here, but I just carried the earlier understanding of ‘world’ into this line. I don’t read this line as John speaking of an external ‘end times’ (end of the universe)... but speaking of ‘world’ in the same way, meaning that (as believers) the ‘broken world influence of humanity’ is concluding as an influence for us. If you are a believer (which is who John was writing to), John was encouraging them to have hope, because their faith would be drawing them further and further away from these influences. A slavery to lust is something that ANYONE can struggle with, and I think John’s words speak true to that. Being human means that we all can get ‘distracted’ by sin. Let’s face it, our world has CONSISTENTLY worked on us to create programming to make us feel so very inadequate, dumb, unbeautiful, unneeded, disempowered and worthless. That’s how they sell us stuff- to make us feel more powerful and wanted and useful! We need to allow ‘that world’ to pass away, as John is trying to help us see. We need to allow Christ to release us from the slavery of those weird expectations, faulty perceptions and broken fantasies. Instead, (as John promises) we can live in the purposes and will of God- finding true happiness, real affirmation and a healthy pursuit of life!

Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.



### 1 John 2 : 15—17

Amplified Bible (AMP)

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world [of sin that opposes God and His precepts], nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the lust *and* sensual craving of the flesh and the lust *and* longing of the eyes and the boastful pride of life [pretentious confidence in one’s resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father, but are from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God *and* carries out His purposes lives forever.



Monday- Mar 10

'Do not love the world...'

This can be read a few different ways, and it HAS been read a few different way, which can create some serious confusion. The word 'world' is the Greek κόσμος (kosmos)- which could be read as the 'ordered structure', the universe, the world we live in... from that reading, God's Word is telling us to 'not love' living in this physical world. This has been used to demonize all pleasures of life (eating, drinking, loving a good nap!) In my own reading, 'world' is intended to mean (I believe) the structured order that humanity has set up... like when Jesus says in Matt 5:14 that we are 'the light of the world'... we are the ones to carry His light to human order and society. In THAT way of reading it, 'do not love the world' means something entirely different. It means that we shouldn't fall in love with the broken parts of creation. The Amplified Bible does a good job explaining this in the [brackets]. Listen, Creation is good! God made it! Unfortunately, there are some really broken parts (thanks to us). As such, we should be careful to not become attached and needlessly enslaved to broken systems, which will only imprison us!

Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.



Tuesday- Mar 11

"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Again, this can be read a few ways, and can really create some confusing interpretations. I think it's important to clarify that this is not written from a top-down directive (as I've unfortunately heard preached) as if it is saying that GOD will not love anyone who loves the worldly things. This is not a judgement. This is a warning- much as when Jesus warned the disciples that a person cannot have 2 masters, but must choose one or the other. (Matt 6:24) This is the simple reality, that we might not WANT to believe, but is painfully true. We will only serve ONE master. If we love the way for the world and abandon ourselves to that blind lust- then we will not allow ourselves the freedom to choose to see the greater glory, autonomy and splendor that comes in loving Christ. John is pointing out that if we are in lustful love with the world, we will choose a 'friendship' with Christ- not a brotherhood or sisterhood. It isn't that God rejects us for not loving Him enough (?) as many preachers and Christian authors might suggest, but it is simply OUR rejection of Christ, because we haven't made room for Him in our Heart.

Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.

Wednesday- March 12

"For all that is in the world- the lust and sensual craving of the flesh..."

John rattles off 3 items here that summarizes 'lust', or 'things of the world', pretty well! The first is 'lust and sensual craving of the flesh'. NO DOUBT. The #1 cause of conflict, violence and pain in MOST individual's lives can often be traced back to sex. Human beings make some of the DUMBEST choices in relation to poor sexual motivations and temptations. It's like we just STOP thinking. John recognizes this and points out that it is our misplaced image and our misuse of sexuality that is the problem. AGAIN, creation is good, but we have broken it and we fall in love with the broken parts. Human sexuality was not designed to be a bad thing, but we misuse that... BREAK that sacred trust and turn a healthy thing, into a means to do HARM to both ourselves and to others. We become a slave to 'sensual cravings'- which can be sex, or drugs, or online shopping, or any number of things... and we lose ourselves to the unhealthy attachment we create.

Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.



Thursday- March 13

"...an the lust and longing of the eyes..."

#2 is 'longing of the eyes'. What's that? That is the daydreaming, infatuation, and fantasy universe that people create in their lusting. It gets its own category, believe it or not. People have confessed to me, 'What harm is that?' "I'm not hurting anyone with my thoughts!" Again, from God's point of view, this isn't about judgement (harm)- it's about recognizing what the problem is (slavery). C.S.Lewis wrote about this well. He said, "... this [longing] takes an appetite that leads a person out of themselves... out of their own personality, and into another entirely." We create a reality in which we are everything that we want to be, but are afraid that we aren't (in real life). We are desired, and powerful and attractive and irresistible in that place. We are NEEDED and WANTED in that place. Lewis points out a few problems with falling 'in love' with 'that place'. 1) It doesn't help us to focus on what isn't working in 'this place' (reality) and how we can become happier, healthier and holier. 2) The 'longing of the eyes' can lead us to be unable to see the beauty of the world that we DO have around us. 3) The lustful fantasy world we create can make this life feel like a prison when we return to it. Lewis points out that if we allow ourselves to be free of those attachments, we can experience the reality of wholeness and feeling valued.

Prayer- Mighty God, help me to love more deeply.