

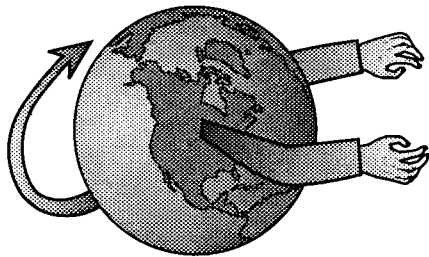
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2 *The World: Living For The Physical*

In our last lesson we looked at temptation and found that it sprang from three sources – the world, the flesh and the Devil. In this lesson we begin taking a closer look at these three sources. The next three lessons will examine the first source – the world.

In this lesson we will see:

- Worldliness is an attitude
- “The lust of the flesh” is living for the physical
- Two biblical illustrations of living for the physical

“The World” Is An Attitude

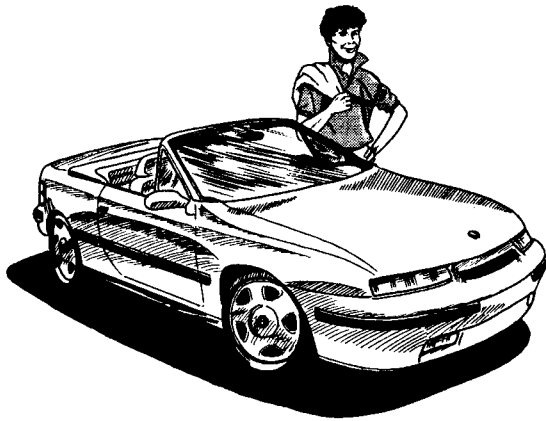
Actually, worldliness is an attitude. It is that attitude that causes one to live for the here and now. It is forgetfulness of eternity. It is living as though this life were all there was to reality.

First John 2:16 lists three attitudes that summarize what worldliness is all about.

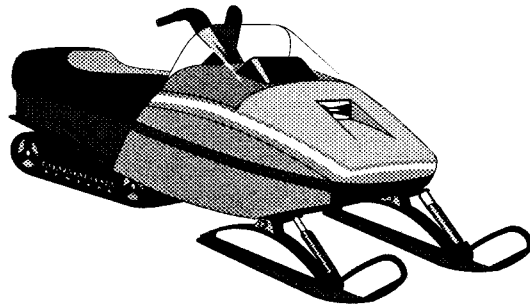
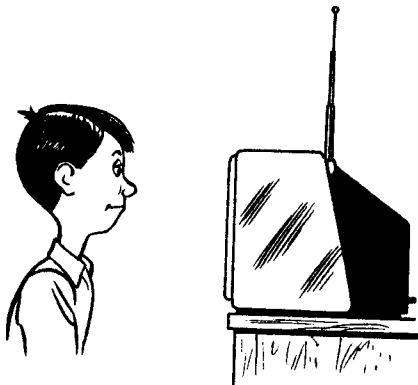
- “The lust of the flesh” shows us that “the world” is living for the physical.
- “The lust of the eyes” shows us that “the world” is living for the present.
- “The pride of life” shows us that “the world” is living for the temporal.

In this lesson we will look at the first of these attitudes – the world is living for the physical.

Living For Physical Things ("The Lust Of The Flesh")



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● Are these things "worldly"? No

● What's wrong with physical things? Nothing!

Worldliness is not in the physical things themselves, but in the desire
and attitude toward them.

Two Biblical Illustrations Of Living For The Physical

The Poor Man Robbed Of His Inheritance (Luke 12:13-15)



- What was wrong with this man's question? _____
It had nothing to do with what the Lord had been teaching.
- What does the question tell us about the man? _____
He was more interested in his physical welfare than in what Christ
was teaching.
- What does Jesus' rebuke tell us about Him? _____
He had more important things to do than concern Himself with
physical possessions. His mission on earth was to the lost.
- What does Jesus' warning mean?
"Take heed" = _____ Look out!
"Beware" = _____ Protect and keep yourself safe in the presence of danger.
- "Covetousness" = _____ Greed

The Rich Man And His Barns (Luke 12:16-21)

What was this man's sin? Why was his attitude "foolish"?

- He had an attitude of permanence (12:19). He acted as though he would live forever.
- He lived for the physical rather than the spiritual (12:21).

2

The World: Living For The Physical

In our last lesson we looked at temptation and found that it sprang from three sources — the world, the flesh and the Devil. In this lesson we begin taking a closer look at these three sources. The next three lessons will examine the first source — the world.

Redefining "The World"

First John 2:16 describes the world as consisting of three things: *"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."* Another way to state these three ingredients is to say ...

- "The world" is living for the physical — *"the lust of the flesh."*
- "The world" is living for the present — *"the lust of the eyes."*
- "The world" is living for the temporal — *"the pride of life."*

Actually, worldliness is an attitude. It is that attitude that causes one to live for the here and now. It is forgetfulness of eternity. It is living as though this life were all there was to reality. The above three attitudes summarize "the world."

In this lesson we will look at the first of these attitudes — the world is **living for the physical**.

Living For Physical Things

Another way to define *"the lust of the flesh"* is to say that it is living for the physical. That is, it is living for "things." It is the attitude that puts cars, houses, money, clothes and material possessions above the Lord.

Are cars, clothes, money and houses worldly? **No**. In and of themselves, there is nothing wrong with possessions. However, when we *live* for these things, when we put the obtaining of material things above the Lord, then they have tempted us to worldliness. Even then, worldliness is not in the car, but in the desire and attitude toward the car. This is illustrated in the Gospel of Luke.

The Poor Man Robbed Of His Inheritance (Luke 12:13-15)

The story of a man who was cheated out of his inheritance in **Luke 12:13-15** is a good illustration of living for the physical.

The Background

Notice what took place just prior to Jesus' confrontation with this poor man. A large crowd had gathered to hear the Lord's teaching (**verse 1**). In the midst of His teaching, however, an unidentified man asked the Lord for a favor. It seems that he had been unjustly cut out of his inheritance. His brother had taken the entire inheritance and given him nothing. He begged the Lord to correct this injustice. Yet, the Lord rebuked him.

Discuss: What was wrong with the man's question? The man's question had absolutely nothing to do with what the Lord had been teaching (verse 13). Jesus had just finished talking about the Pharisees, the fear of the Lord and confessing Him before others. Suddenly this man interrupts and asks Christ to persuade his brother to give him half his family inheritance. What did that have to do with what Christ had been teaching? Nothing! What does that tell us about the man? He was more interested in his physical welfare than in what Christ was teaching. This is worldliness!

Do we not manifest worldliness when we sit in church and think about other things while the preacher is preaching? Are we not just as guilty of thinking of the physical when we should be thinking about the spiritual?

Certainly, there is a proper time to think about our physical needs, but not during church. Not when we should be thinking about the spiritual.

Jesus' Rebuke

This man's problem with his inheritance may have been a just one. He may have had a justifiable case. Yet the Lord rebuked him because his attitude was wrong. He was more concerned with the physical than with the spiritual.

Jesus' question was designed to expose the man's attitude: "*Who made me a judge or a divider over you?*" In essence, He said: "I have more important things to do than to administrate your inheritance. I am talking about spiritual truths, and all you have on your mind are physical concerns. I'm not a judge or administrator of earthly things. I'm a teacher of spiritual things." Christ had more important things to do than concern Himself with physical possessions. His mission on earth was to the lost. His mission was not to solve *legal* questions but to settle the *sin* question.

Jesus' Warning

Christ followed His rebuke with a stern warning to the entire multitude. Notice **verse 15**: "*He said unto them*" What He is now about to say is aimed at the whole multitude. Why? Because we all have the same problem the poor man had. We all tend to be more concerned with our physical welfare than our spiritual welfare. We live for "*the lust of the flesh,*" the longing for things.


◆ "**Take Heed.**" Jesus' warning is against this very attitude. "*Take heed*" literally means, "Look out!" It is the phrase we use when someone is in immediate danger. It is the phrase we might use if we saw a snake coiled and ready to strike a friend.

◆ "**Beware.**" This word comes from Greek word that means to guard, defend, watch over, protect and keep safe. It demands extreme caution in the presence of danger. And what is the danger that is so near? What is this snake, coiled and ready to strike?

◆ "**Covetousness.**" The Greek word translated "covetousness" is the word for greed. Greed is constantly nearby. It is that lust within us that takes our minds off spiritual things and places them on physical things. The Greek word for greed or "covetousness" has the sense of "the thirst for having more" (William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Luke*, Baker, 1978, p. 662). Shakespeare's *Othello* describes greed as "the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on" (III. iii. 166, 167).

This man is typical of us all. "Look out!" the Lord cries. "Greed is about to fasten its fangs to your veins!"

Do we look upon greed as being this awful? Sadly, we almost love greed and hold it to our bosom.

Illustration: An Apache folk tale is told about a snake who  had gotten trapped in cold weather. A young warrior, happening by, hears the snake call out to him. "Please pick me up and hold me," cries the snake. "I promise I won't bite." The young warrior is reluctant and starts to pass by, but the snake persists. "Please," says the snake, "can't you see that I can't bite. I'm nearly frozen. If you will hold me in your arms and warm me, I will forever be your friend."

The Apache hesitates and listens as the snake continues to plead: "I will die if you leave me. My life depends on you. Just hold me close to your body until I am warm enough to get back to my den."

At last, the young Apache gives in and picks up the stiff snake. He holds him close to his body and breathes his warm breath on the snake's frozen skin. Gradually, the snake warms up and then, suddenly, he strikes and bites the surprised young man.

"Why?" cries the warrior. "I saved your life. I gave you warmth. You promised you wouldn't bite!"

"Yes," replies the snake with a wily smile, "but you also knew I was a snake!"

The moral of the story is that sin promises you the world, fun, fame and fortune — but brings death. "I won't hurt," says greed.

Then, when we are wounded and our lives are ruined, we ask, "Why? You said you wouldn't hurt."

"Yes," cries greed, "but you knew I was greed!"

◆ **What Life Is Not.** The Lord then tells the multitude that they have the wrong definition of life: *"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* Life is not "things." Life is not cars, houses, money and clothes.

The Greek word translated "abundance" means excess. It has the idea of accumulating things. Take all of our cars, houses, clothes, toys and comforts and pile them up in one huge heap. They are not life. In reality, they are garbage!

Why do we get so caught up in things? They will not last. **First John 2:17** tells us that the world will pass away. All of these things will turn to dust, but we will live forever. Thus, we need to be concerned with those things that will last, not those things that will soon be gone.

The Rich Man And His Barns (Luke 12:16-21)

To make sure the multitude understood, the Lord gave them a parable. A rich man was blessed with rich farmland that produced an abundance of crops. To care for the excess, he made plans to pull down his barns and build larger barns. Then he would retire, take it easy and live out the rest of his days eating, drinking and having a good time. However, God called him a fool and took his life that night.

Discuss: What was the man's sin? Was his sin building bigger barns? Was it in planning for retirement? His sin was in his attitude. Notice that God called him a "fool." That is, the man did not think rightly. His attitude was foolish.

What exactly was this man's attitude?

He Had An Attitude Of Permanence (12:19)

He acted as though he would live forever. He said to himself: *"thou hast much goods laid up for many years."* He did not consider the possibility of death. When we live as though this life is all, we are fools. This day may be our last. He is wise who lives as though each day was his last. He is foolish who thinks he will live forever.

He Lived For The Physical Rather Than The Spiritual (12:21)

Christ's statement at the end of this parable shows the root problem of both the man who interrupted Christ with the question about his inheritance and the rich man who pulled down his barns. Both had their minds on physical riches rather than spiritual riches — treasures for themselves rather than riches toward God.

Challenge

What about us? Do we have this worldly characteristic? Do we find ourselves living for the physical? Are we so caught up with buying and selling, having and possessing that we ...

- Fail to tithe?
- Are more concerned with our bank accounts and income than with our treasures in heaven?
- Take jobs that keep us from church or youth activities?
- Have little time for devotions, Scripture memory and Bible study?
- Attend church irregularly?
- Miss half of what the speaker says when we come to church services or youth activities because our minds are on physical things?
- Live as though we will live forever on this earth?

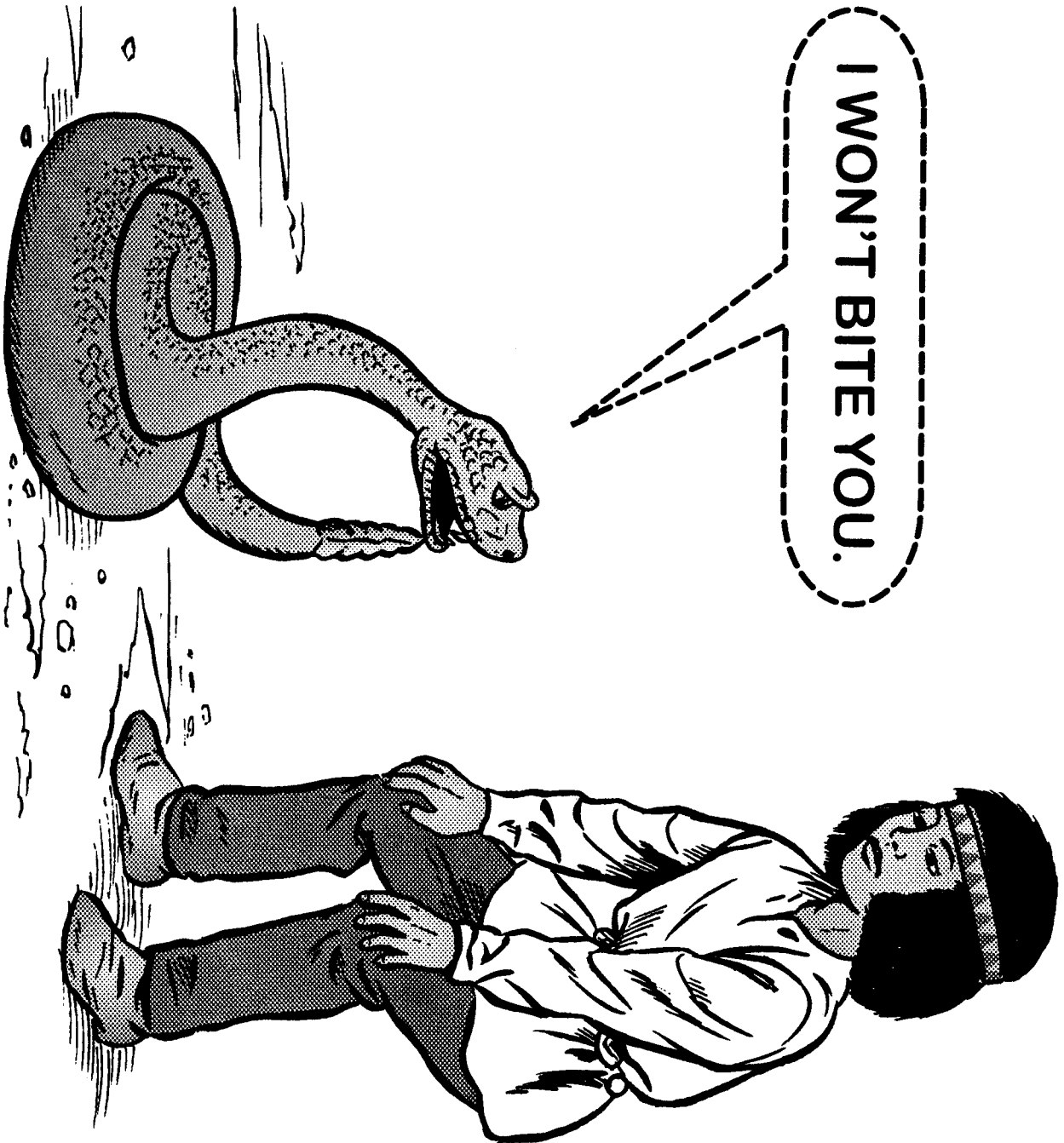
May God help us to confess and forsake our worldliness.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Living for the Physical
2. Living for the temporal
3. Living for the present
4. The poor man robbed of his inheritance
5. The rich man and his barns
6. (1) He had an attitude of permanence. (He acted as though he would live forever.)
(2) He lived for the physical rather than the spiritual.
7. He was more interested in physical welfare than in what Christ was teaching.
8. (1) Protect and keep yourself safe in the presence of danger.
(2) Look out!
(3) Greed

Sin promises fun, but in the end it bites and kills.

I WON'T BITE YOU.



LESSON 2 QUIZ — *THE WORLD: LIVING FOR THE PHYSICAL*

NAME _____ ISC # _____ DATE _____

CHURCH/CITY _____

LEVEL _____ SCORE _____ (5 points Level One; 11 points Level Two)

Level One And Level Two

(1) 1. "The lust of the flesh" shows us that "the world" is living for the _____.

(1) 2. "The pride of life" shows us that "the world" is living for the _____.

(1) 3. "The lust of the eyes" shows us that "the world" is living for the _____.

(1) 4. What illustration of living for the physical is found in Luke 12:13-15? _____

(1) 5. What illustration of living for the physical is found in Luke 12:16-21? _____

Level Two Only

(2) 6. List the two reasons why the man's attitude in Luke 12:16-21 was foolish or sinful.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(1) 7. What does the man's question in Luke 12:13-15 tell us about him? _____

(3) 8. What do these words from Jesus' warning mean?

(1) "Beware" _____

(2) "Take heed" _____

(3) "Covetousness" _____