

THE DEEP STATE CONSPIRACY

1 JOHN 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world.

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

What if I told you there exists in the world today a great conspiracy - a master plan for world domination.

Right now there is a secretive cabal of sinister characters, cloistered behind closed doors. They've drawn up a blueprint, and they're working in concert to capture the minds of men and women, boys and girls.

These agents of evil are imbedded in the institutions around us. They've infiltrated the *government, media, education, business, medicine, finance, entertainment, sports, and sadly even the church*. There is a **deep state** trying to control the institutions that influence our lives.

And their goal is to enslave our families and friends.

Now if this is true, *what are we waiting on?*

Let's grab some crowbars, and battering rams, and a few automatic rifles. Tell us their whereabouts and we'll storm their headquarters. We need to defend ourselves.

I wish it were that easy, but it's not. **First**, these conspirators are hard to pin down. They're everywhere and always on the move. They have the ability to appear in different forms and always in appealing shapes.

Second, this isn't a new group. This deep state collusion isn't associated with one administration, or one political party, or one country. It's existed for thousands of years. It transcends cultures, nations, eras. It's seasoned operatives are highly-skilled and well-funded.

And **third**, the accomplices in this scheme aren't from the human ranks. I wish this diabolical ruse was being carried out by global entrepreneurs - *greed would get the best of them...* or by politicians - *put a government in charge and it wouldn't be nearly as efficient as it is...*

No, *the deep state conspiracy* that threatens the world today isn't a socialist plot, or a globalist takeover, or some multinational blackmail, or even a military coup.

We're not talking Bilderbergers, or Freemasons, or the Trilateral Commission, or the Illuminati, or some puppet master behind the scenes pulling the strings. The real conspiracy in the world today is being orchestrated by Satan and his cronies. The deep, deep state is demonic.

John refers to it simply as **"the world."** *How ominous!*

This conspiracy is so pervasive, so entrenched, so far-reaching John calls it **"kosmos"** or **"the world."** It's all-encompassing. No human being can escape its reach.

The Bible teaches us that Satan is the archenemy of God. And he's concocted a plan to wrestle creation from God's

control, and rule in God's place. And he's been quite successful. Humans unwittingly fall into his snare.

Even today, most people are so ignorant of Satan's schemes, it's as if they're under his spell. Satan is like a Pied Piper playing his flute, leading his unsuspecting followers off the cliff, and toward eternal damnation.

Two kingdoms exist in today's world, and each of those kingdoms has its own set of values and priorities.

God's kingdom is the kingdom of life and light. Satan's kingdom is characterized by death and darkness.

There really is a right and a wrong, a true and a false, a good and a bad - certainly, a heaven and a hell - and *ultimately, human beings will be winners or losers.*

Realize, these kingdoms are at perpetual war. There's never been a ceasefire, let alone a peacetime. They're constantly slugging it out - competing for the same prize.

Both kingdoms want to control every human heart. Satan, so he can *destroy us*. God, so he can *restore us*... And Pastor John is concerned for his flock.

He wants to make sure the believers under His care line up on the right side of the ball. He exhorts them in 2:15, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world.”**

Realize, when John says **“world”** he's not speaking of our natural world per se. The *hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere, lithosphere*... that's not what he has in mind.

The **“world”** as John puts it, isn't what God created.

Rather, it's the systems, and values, and motives that thrive in the absence of God. It's *the devil's way*. "**The world**" is a way of life custom designed by Satan himself. It's a rebellious lifestyle that runs contrary to *God's way*.

Famous pastor John Henry Jowett once said, "**Worldliness is a spirit, a temperament, an attitude on the soul. It is a life without high callings, a life devoid of lofty ideals. It is a gaze always horizontal and never vertical.**" **And worldliness is opposed to godliness.**

This is why John says, "**If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**" Realize, there's no middle ground here. John dispels any illusions...

We need to know "*the ways of God*" are not compatible with "*the ways of this world*." You have to choose... **You got to pick a team!** When Auburn plays Alabama, or Georgia plays Georgia Tech *you can't just cheer for both teams. Not that day! Not for the game! That's just wrong!* Neutrality is just NOT an option.

The differences are too pronounced - too opposed.

You can't have one foot in one camp and the other foot in the other camp. *And the same is true when it comes to life.* The Apostle is crystal clear, "**If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**"

But *what is it that makes up the lifestyle that opposes God?* John explains it in verse 16, "**For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world.**"

Here's what makes *our world go round*. Satan entices folks to focus their attention in three directions: *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...”*

Here're a few other ways to think about it, “Feelings, fashion, and fame... appetites, appearance, and arrogance... self-gratification, self-awareness, and self-promotion... obsessions, possessions, and concessions... pleasure, treasure, and measure... vice, vanity, and vainglory... **finally**, stuff, image, and ego...”

This is *“the world”* of Satan. These are the values of his kingdom, and every sight, and sound, and seduction that pushes this agenda and perpetuates this lifestyle is considered by John to be *“the things of the world...”*

And it's all around us. It truly is a deep state collusion.

Here's *“the Satan way”* plucked from the marketing world. *“The lust of the flesh”* sounds like “if it feels good do it” or “obey your thirst.” Life is all about consumption.

“The lust of the eyes” could also be rendered “what you see is what you get” or “image is everything.” Life is all about keeping up the proper appearances.

And for *“the pride of life”* think “you can have it all” or “have it your way.” Life is being captain of your own ship.

For the philosophers in the crowd here's *“the world”* in three isms: “hedonism, materialism, and humanism.”

And my favorite phrasing of *the worldly way* is “the desire to feel great, and look great, and be great.” *“The lust of the flesh”*

is to **feel great**. *“The lust of the eyes”* is to **look great**. And *“the pride of life”* is to **be great**.

How much do we do... how much of our day is spent trying to “feel great, and look great, and be great.”

And over and over again this is the modus operandi of the devil. When he tempted Eve in the garden of Eden it was along these exact same lines. Genesis 3:6 tells us, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.”

Notice, her reasoning - it was “good for food” - *eat it and you’ll feel great...* It was “pleasant to the eyes” - *it looks so great*. And she said it was “desirable to make one wise” - *she saw it as a means to become great...*

Recall too, when Satan tempted Jesus in the desert.

He said, *turn these stones into bread. “Jesus, why starve, you can feel great.”* Throw yourself off the Temple, and let the angels catch you. *“You’ll look great.”* Then bow to me and I’ll give you the kingdoms of this world to reign and rule - *“You will be great.”*

Feel great, Look great, Be great... Beware!

Here’s still another way to think of *“the world”* system that opposes God’s way... Folks suppress their spiritual needs and gorge themselves on physical pleasures...

They gloss over a person’s integrity and character and measure their worth solely based on their visible status.

And they ignore the reality of eternity, and spend all their time and effort trying to make a splash on earth...

God created each of us to find real **satisfaction in the spiritual not the physical...** Real **beauty is in the inner person not a person's outward appearance...** And real **meaning is found in eternal not temporal pursuits.**

To reject *the world*, and to live life God's way - in God's kingdom - a person has to **put principle above pleasure**, he emphasizes **integrity over appearance**, and he **lives for eternity not just the here and now.**

This is so important... Several weeks ago I was talking to a dad in our church who's son has left home. The boy is at college now, and the dad told me, "**Pastor Sandy, my boy was listening when you preached. The other day he told me, 'Dad, all temptation stems from the desire to feel great, or look great, or be great.'**" That line stuck.

And it needs to stick in each of our minds and hearts.

In the Old Testament this three-fold concept was so important to God, He instituted a special vow that put this commitment on display. The person who took the vow became a walking billboard for the values of God.

It was called the vow of the Nazirite.

The Bible mentions three men who were Nazirites from birth... Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

It was a honor among the Hebrews to be a Nazirite. As they interacted in the marketplace, and walked to the Temple, and moved in society, Israel could point to the Nazirite, and be reminded of what really mattered in life.

The first part of the Nazirite vow was to abstain from the fruit of the vine. He couldn't eat grapes, or drink wine... The second part of the vow was no razor could touch his head. Normal grooming was forbidden. A Nazirite had nappy hairy and wore a heavy beard... The last part of the vow was not to touch anything dead...

This man's joy and satisfaction came from the *Holy Spirit* not *distilled spirits*... His attractiveness came from his character, not from his appearance... And his ambitions were fixed on the next life, not the current one.

A Nazirite was committed to God's Kingdom. **He put the spiritual above the physical, the inward ahead of the outward, and the eternal over the temporal.**

George Orwell once illustrated "*the lusts of the flesh*" with a brutal experience he had one day at lunch.

He wrote of his encounter with a pestering wasp. "It was sucking jam on my plate when I cut him in half. He paid no attention, merely went on with his meal, while a tiny stream of jam trickled out of his severed esophagus. Only when he tried to fly away did he grasp the dreadful thing that had happened to him."

And there are people who are just as preoccupied. They're so consumed with porn, or drugs, or boos, or greed that they don't realize what's happened to them! They're dying a slow death. Life is seeping from them.

"The lust of the flesh" is extracting a steep price.

Years ago we had a worship leader who played in a rock and roll band called *Small Town Poets*. Miguel and his guys had a song entitled, *“The Lust, The Flesh, The Eyes, and The Pride of Life.”* Here’re the lyrics...

“Well I feel like I have to feel something good all of the time. With most of life I cannot deal, but a good feeling I can feel, even though it may not be real. And if a person, place, or thing can deliver I will quiver with delight. Will it last me for all my life or just one more lonely night. Then the chorus: “The lust, the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life drain the life right out of me.”

And it does. God made us more than glands, and taste buds, and dopamine. *Stop short of the spiritual life God has for you... settle for only the physical pleasures the world offers* - and rather than live, you’ll be drained of life. A stream of jam will trickle out of you.

We were made with tastes only God can satisfy.

And *“the lust of the eyes”* is just as tragic. *Image isn’t everything.* In recent months we’ve seen this firsthand.

Hollywood is known for glitz and glamor. It’s called *“tinsel town.”* But the *Me Too movement*, and one brave woman after another have revealed that Hollywood has a dark side. Evil lies behind the lights.

Beneath the stars and stardom Hollywood power brokers have used their leverage to seduce, and exploit women. An abuser in a tuxedo is an abuser still.

But what about us? Do we dress up for church, while harboring evil inside? Have we done as much to build our character as we have to shape our image? I know people

when you walk through their front door you end up in their back yard. There's not much there. *What's a higher priority for you to look good or to be good?*

I'm always stunned by the skill of video producers. What we see is not always what is. You think that TV family is headed to a house. In reality, it's just a facade.

And this is the way the world operates.

Satan is skilled in teasing us with an image - baiting us to believe there's more to it than there is. He can paint a deceptive picture where evil appears beautiful

When David took Bathsheba, we're told, *"he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold."* It all *seemed* so beautiful, but what followed in David's life ended up an ugly nightmare of murder, and manipulation, and heartbreak for all concerned. It wasn't what it seemed. He should've never gone there!

There's the *"lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes..."*

And *"the pride of life"* believes the here and now, this life, is all there is to living! It denies there's another world awaiting where we'll be held accountable for how we lived this one. One day the real living will begin.

The biggest need for some people is to see an eternity in their future. Some of our friends think no further ahead than the weekend. Even those who're planning for retirement are still being short-sighted.

This world is just the staging area for eternity. We're foolish to take pride in the achievements and awards of this life when *"everlasting"* is right around the corner.

John the Baptist was a Nazirite fixated on the future. He was willing to sacrifice his *pride* for the bigger *prize*.

When he was told that his disciples were leaving him and following Jesus, *he rejoiced!* John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John’s pride was not invested in this life. He knew there was more than just the here and now. He was living for the world to come.

Over the last few weeks I’ve seen one of the TV networks advertising a documentary on the kidnapping and subsequent exploits of Patty Hearst. If you don’t know her story, she was a 19 year-old heiress of a wealthy estate, when she was kidnapped by terrorists.

During her time in captivity she developed an affinity for her kidnapers. A strange bond formed between the young girl and the people who had taken her hostage.

She became sympathetic to her captors and to their cause, to the point of participating in a bank robbery.

It was similar to what occurred a year earlier in 1973, in Stockholm, Sweden at another bank robbery.

Over a several day hostage situation four of the bank employees became empathetic toward their captors.

Because the robbers were nice at times the hostages forgot who the bad guys were. They even feared the police would hurt them in a rescue. Oddly, their loyalty shifted from the police to the crooks.

During Patty Hearst's trial, her lawyer's defense was that she suffered from [the Stockholm Syndrome](#). It was his explanation for how she had been so brainwashed.

Today, the term is used in any hostage situation where a victim develops an attachment to his assailant.

It's a bizarre phenomena when a person loses touch with reality and becomes friends with an actual enemy.

Yet I think we all suffer a bit from the Stockholm Syndrome ourselves. John saw it in the first century believers. They were willingly cozying up to the world.

They were seeking satisfaction in creature comforts and physical pleasures... They were attracted to exteriors - to eye-catching and pleasing shapes... And they were tying their ambitions to the here and now...

John realizes these are the signs of drifting - of a people who are inching further and further away from God. Thus, he jars them with strong words, *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

Seeking joy in earthly pleasures, getting fixated on outward beauty, wasting a life on temporal gains is the death knell for a Christian. It's developing an affection for our captor. It's loving the very things that are trying to hold us hostage. And it lures us away from God.

Sadly, even in churches today *"the world and the things of the world"* have become fixtures - even doctrines. *"The lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life"* are now embedded in the modern church.

Rather than teach believers to dig deep and draw from Jesus on a spiritual level, we supply them with emotional experiences and feel-good, happy times. We trade discipleship for goose-bumps. It's *"the lust of the flesh"* with religious lyrics and a contemporary beat.

Churches today put on a show... It's lights, camera, action every week. What is it but *"the lust of the eyes?"*

And when we preach sermons exhorting folks to *have their best life now* and *today is what matters* - we can take their eyes off eternity and encourage them to live only for the present. Is that not *"the pride of life?"*

I'm just saying the world can come to church.

Like the ancient Nazirites, John is calling on all Christians - even you and I - to distance ourselves from how the world around us thinks, and feels, and sees, and operates - and show people a different way to live!

This is what it means to live a godly life.

The Nazirite was a daily participant in Jewish society, yet he reflected values different from his surroundings.

He participated in many of the activities other people were involve in, but he was driven by what was spiritual, and what was on the inside, and what was eternal. *And this is Jesus' intention for you and me...*

In John's Gospel, Chapter 17, when Jesus prayed for His followers, He thanked God, *"for the men whom You have given Me out of the world."* He recognizes that the disciples came to Him from *"out of the world."*

Several times in His prayer Jesus says of His followers that they were “not of the world.” They don’t share the world’s priorities. They’re off a different spirit.

Yet in verse 15 Jesus also prays, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.” And it’s these words that’ve spawned the famous adage that sums up a believer’s status in the world, “we’re in it, not of it.”

“We’re in the world...” Jesus didn’t pray for our immediate evacuation. At that point, the rapture could wait. He wasn’t sheltering His followers from the world.

Christians are destined to live in hostile territory among *competing ideas* and *contrasting values*.

Sadly, over the course of Church history people have read John’s words, and in an attempt to “*love not the world*” they’ve withdrawn from it to monasteries and deserts to seclude themselves from evil influences.

Or they’ve gone overboard in protecting themselves from anything that might inflame sinful lusts... I went to a youth camp once that had separate swimming times for boys and girls, *lest we saw a girl in her swimsuit and sinned*. Legalism isn’t the life God calls us to live. In Christ we’re given the power to overcome the world.

Certainly, we should be wise and never subject ourselves to a temptation we know we can’t handle.

But God wants us in the fray... walking and talking with people steeped in worldly ways... yet marching to a different drummer - showcasing a better way to live.

We should “be in the world, but not of the world.”

In a sense, a Christian lives a normal life... I can enjoy certain physical pleasures. At their core they come from God - *a good meal, or night with my wife.*

I can also admire the beauty in this world. God created dazzling sites for us to sense and appreciate.

And I need to work hard. I can take pride in a job well done, acknowledging that the glory goes to God...

I'm in the world, but I'm not of the world. *Pleasure, prettiness, and popularity* is not what makes me tick.

It's not my motivation. I've sunk my shovel deeper into the soil of life. It's not that I don't appreciate the physical, and external, and temporal sides of life, it's that I've prioritized **the spiritual over physical, the internal over external, and the eternal over temporal.**

Like the Nazirite, a Christian's lifestyle should be a walking billboard for the values of God's kingdom.

The Greek word translated “Church” is “Ekklesia” which means “called out ones.” We've been called out of this world to live a different kind of life - a holy life...

Our lives should prove that **real satisfaction** doesn't come from gratifying physical desires, but from a relationship with God... We should teach that **real beauty** isn't about a pleasing appearance, it's about reflecting God's glory from the inside out... And **real meaning** isn't found in earthbound

objectives, but comes to a life that ultimately wants to impact eternity.

Is this how you're living?... Are you pointing people deeper - encouraging them to pursue a spiritual life?

Do you look past people's appearances - in hopes of getting to know what's going on inside their hearts?

And do your goals aim for eternity; instead of just setting your sights on what can be achieved right now?

I hope so, for John writes in verse 17, **"And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."** This world, and how it operates - what people live for now - is on its way out.

Core values that have made the world go round for the 6000 years of human history are about to vanish.

I hope you know, biblical and secular scholars alike predict that this world will one day disintegrate.

Go to the university and speak to the astrophysicist on duty and he'll confirm what I'm saying is true.

The sun that supports life on earth is burning up. It's converting hydrogen to helium, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future... But oh, about five billion years from now its fuel will start running out. At first, it'll swell a hundred times it's current size vaporizing the earth - then it'll just flame out. It will exist no more.

Of course, the Bible says that rather than let things run their course, God will intervene with a final judgment. 2 Peter 3 documents the fiery end God has planned. Our universe is

headed for a colossal meltdown, where all that can be shaken will be shaken.

One day, there'll no longer be any *fleshly pleasures, or visible beauty, or earthly pursuits* to take pride in....

All that will matter then will be the joys of life with Jesus, and a proven character, and the treasure we laid up in heaven beforehand. We'll live in a new world.

What if you heard that the company you work for had been sold, and was going to close in three years?

Would that change your approach to your job?

I'm sure it would! You might not rush out to find a new job right away, but you'll start looking. Its imminent closing will be in the back of your mind... *And why give a lame duck job extra effort if it's not going to last?*

This is how we should feel about *"the world."* It's on its way out... It's *"he who does the will of God abides forever."* Whether you realize it or not, this world is not part of your future. I hope you're not living as if it is.

Let me close with an interesting story. Charles Dutton is an American actor who won two Emmy awards for roles in *The Practice* and *Without A Trace*. He also co-starred in one of my favorite movies, *Rudy*.

Dutton graduated from Yale School Of Drama, and has had a very successful career on Broadway.

But before becoming an actor, Dutton, spent seven years in a Maryland prison. He was convicted on manslaughter charges. He claimed it was self-defense.

Needless to say, Charles has come a long way: from prisoner to actor - from jail to stardom. But when asked how he did it, he had a thought-provoking explanation.

He said, “Unlike other inmates, I never decorated my cell.” He always believed prison was just a temporary situation. He refused to let himself get comfortable.

And this needs to be our attitude. This world is *passing away*, and you and I are just *passing through*.

If we really believe that; then what in the world are we doing decorating our cell. *This is not our home.*

There is a conspiracy going on in the world today. We don't need a Special Counsel to confirm the collusion. John does that for us. Satan and his demons have conspired to bring us down. Let's resist him.

Rather than get caught up in “*the world and the things of the world*” let's live for God - not just in words alone - but in our lifestyle, let's reflect God's values.

Let's put *the spiritual above the physical, the internal above the external, the eternal above the temporal...*

It's time to choose sides, and be part of the Father's kingdom. Rather than *worldliness*, let's seek *holiness*.