

Leaving Neverland

Stepping into the journey of growing up...spiritually

1 John 2:12-17

Leaving Neverland: What stage of maturity do we find ourselves in? | John 2:12-14

- **The maturity of “little children”** 1 John 2:12-13 (cf. James 4:4)
“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.” 1 John 2:12
“I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.” 1 John 2:13
- **The maturity of “young men”** 1 John 2:13-14 (cf. Ephesians 6:17)
“I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.” 1 John 2:13
“I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” 1 John 2:14
- **The maturity of “fathers”** | 1 John 2:13-14 (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:11)
“I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.” 1 John 2:13
“I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.” 1 John 2:14

Loving Neverland: What world do we find ourselves in? | John 2:15-17

- **Loving the world is in opposition to loving the Father** 1 John 2:15
“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
 - **physical world, planet earth** - *“...the God who made the world and all things in it...” Acts 17:24*
 - **human world, mankind** - *“...for God so loved the world...” John 3:16*
 - **an invisible spiritual system opposed to God and Christ** - *“...do not love the world...” 1 John 2:15*
- **The world wants to draw us in and never have us leave** 1 John 2:16
“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”
 - **What the world offered Eve**
*“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (**lust of the flesh**), and that it was a delight to the eyes (**lust of the eyes**), and that the tree was desirable to make one wise (**pride of life**), she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” Genesis 3:6*
 - **What the world offered Jesus**
*“Command that these stones become bread (**lust of the flesh**).” Matthew 4:2-3*
*“All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me (**lust of the eyes**).” Matthew 4:8-9*
*“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down (**pride of life**)...” Matthew 4:5-6*
 - **What is the world offering you?**
- **Loving the world is not a good long-term strategy** 1 John 2:17
“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”
“What can the world promise? Let it promise what you will, it makes the promise, perhaps, to one who tomorrow will die.” - St. Augustine
 - **Tests of worldliness:** Have we lost our enjoyment of the Father’s love?
Have we lost our desire to do the Father’s will?

Digging Deeper: The Slow Fade

We all know a story of someone in our lives that, out of nowhere, all of a sudden, does something that feels like they catapulted themselves into such a category of sin that completely shocks us and we are left asking the question, “How did that happen?” If we only look at the outward action of the sin itself, it appears to be an abrupt shift that surprised even them. Christians do not become worldly all of a sudden. Usually there is a slow fade, a gradual process, a slow walking away from the things of God to embrace the lies of the Enemy. The passage today helps to illuminate some areas of strategy that the world, the system opposed to God, uses to create openings to pull us into a life of worldliness, away from God.

This slow fade begins with a **friendship with the world**. James 4:4 says, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” Then we can become **spotted by the world**. Again James (1:27) addresses this by saying, “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” Here the world can leave dirty marks on one or two areas of our lives. Here we experience a gradual accepting and adopting of the ways of the world. Our friendship with the world leads to love. When this happens we become **conformed to the world**. Romans 12:2 warns us, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

LifeGroup Discussion

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” (1 John 2:16)

1. What are some characteristics of “the world” as John uses the term? Why does God hate the love of the world?
2. Looking at these three areas: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life, where are you vulnerable?
3. In each of these three categories, how deep are you in? Friendship with the world? Spotted by the world? Conformed to the world?
4. Where do you find yourself in terms of your spiritual maturity? Little child? Young man? Father?
5. Personally, for later thought, in the boxes below write out some areas of struggle and openness to the ways of the world. Consider how deep you are in these areas of struggle.

Lust of the flesh

Lust of the eyes

Boastful pride of life

Next Steps:

1. **Take some first steps toward spiritual maturity** by getting involved in a discipleship relationship. This would be a one-on-one set of meetings with a mature Christian who will walk with you for a season to help you work through areas of spiritual maturity and growth. **For more info, contact Laura Copeland, Grow Ministries Director, at lcopeland@calvarylife.org or 714.550.2398.**
2. **Connect in a LifeGroup** for support and encouragement to grow in your faith with others. LifeGroups are ongoing small group communities that gather together throughout the week to **CONNECT** in a smaller setting, **GROW** together in our faith, and **REACH** out together to our community. There are many LifeGroups available on Calvary’s campus and in homes across Orange County. Learn more at calvarylife.org/lifegroups