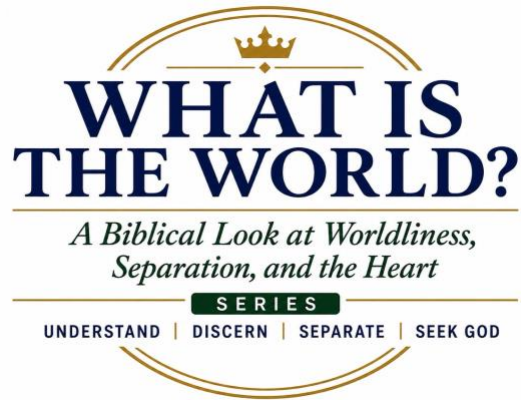




Lesson 4: Hidden Worldliness and the Lusts of the Flesh

1. What Does the Bible Mean by “The World”?	5. The Fear of Man and the Danger of Tradition
2. Plain on the Outside, Worldly on the Inside	6. Modesty, Technology, and Christian Liberty
3. The Sins We Do Not Always Call Worldly	7. Born Amish Is Not the Same as Born Again
4. Hidden Worldliness and the Lusts of the Flesh	8. You Can Leave the Amish and Still Miss Christ

Lesson Overview

Some forms of worldliness are easy to hide. A person may dress plain, follow church rules, and appear faithful while feeding lust, drunkenness, pride, or the fear of man. Other people may not see these sins, but nothing is hidden from God.

This lesson looks at secret desires and habits that Scripture calls worldly. It also keeps an important balance. Rejecting human rules does not give us permission to live in sin. The grace of God saves us and teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Jesus Christ brings hidden sin into the light and gives power for a holy life.

Main Scripture

1 John 2:15-17

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Main Truth

Hidden worldliness lives in sinful desires, secret habits, pride, and the fear of man. God's grace teaches us to deny these lusts and follow Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse

Titus 2:12

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

Section 1: The Worldliness of Lust and Secret Sin

Aaron dresses plain, attends church, works hard, and appears respectful. His parents believe he is doing well. But Aaron has a hidden phone. Late at night, he looks at pornography. He tells himself that nobody knows and that he has not touched anyone, but every look feeds lust in his heart.

Sexual sin does not begin only with an outward act. It often begins with what a person chooses to look at, think about, and desire. A man can live without television and still be controlled by lust. A young person can follow strict courtship rules and still entertain immoral thoughts.

Lust Begins in the Heart

Matthew 5:28

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

Jesus goes directly to the heart. Owning a phone is not the same as using it to feed lust. The object may provide an opening, but the sinful desire comes from within. We should not become so focused on a tool that we fail to deal with the heart using the tool.

1 Corinthians 6:18

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”

God does not tell us to manage sexual sin or hide it better. He tells us to flee. That may require confession, wise help, removing private access to sinful material, changing habits, and avoiding places where temptation is strong. A person should seek help from a trustworthy mature Christian rather than protecting a secret life.

A Hidden Sin Is Still Sin

Joseph is married, has children, and is respected in his church. Yet he has begun an improper relationship with another woman. He continues attending services and presenting himself as a faithful husband. He may hide the relationship from his family and church for a time, but he cannot hide it from God.

Hebrews 4:13

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

Secret sin creates two lives: one that people see and another that God sees. The answer is not to become better at hiding. We must come into the light, confess our sin, turn from it, and trust Christ for forgiveness and cleansing. God already knows the whole truth, and His mercy invites honest repentance.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is using a phone to feed lust different from simply owning a phone?
2. What choices can help a person flee sexual temptation instead of trying to manage it?
3. How does a secret sin affect a person's heart, marriage, family, or walk with God?
4. Is there a hidden sin that you need to confess to God and bring into the light with wise help?

Section 2: The Worldliness of Drunkenness and Pride

Mose works hard all week. On weekends, he drinks heavily with friends. He tells himself it is normal because other men do the same thing. Mose may never own a television or drive a car, but alcohol controls more of his life than he wants to admit. His drinking harms his judgment, marriage, children, health, and testimony.

Be Filled With the Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

Drunkenness is clearly condemned by Scripture. A person can reject electricity and still be controlled by alcohol. He can wear plain clothes and still stagger home drunk. Obeying a rule about transportation cannot make up for disobeying God's command about sobriety.

Alcohol is not the only desire that can become a master. Drugs, food, entertainment, gambling, work, and other habits may begin controlling a person. A Christian should ask, “Is this ruling me? Is it harming my family? Does it weaken my judgment and make sin easier?” We need the Holy Spirit, not another master.

Proud of Being Plain

Benjamin takes pride in how plain his family is. He looks down on another Amish family because their church allows more modern equipment. He believes his group is more faithful because its Ordnung is stricter. When he sees someone driving a car, he quickly assumes that person is worldly.

1 John 2:16

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

Benjamin believes he is separated from the world, but the pride of life is part of the world. Pride can grow around clothing, church rules, family name, hard work, business success, Bible knowledge, or how much a person has given up. Any good choice can become a reason to feel better than someone else.

Luke 18:11

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.”

The Pharisee compared himself with other people and felt secure. Pride still says, “I am not like them.” Humility says, “Without the mercy of God, I have no hope.” True holiness does not make us boast about being plain or strict. It makes us thankful for grace and gentle toward others.

Plainness can be a wise choice, but separation itself becomes worldly when it produces pride. The question is not only what we have refused to own. We must ask whether our outward choices have helped us love Christ and serve others or have given us a reason to look down on them.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should drunkenness be called worldly when Scripture clearly condemns it?
2. What habit or desire can quietly begin to control a person or harm a family?
3. How can a person become proud of being plain, strict, hardworking, or separated?
4. When you compare yourself with other people, does it lead you toward humility or pride?

Section 3: The Fear of Man and the Teaching of Grace

David has questions about what he has been taught. As he studies the Bible, he begins to see some things differently. Yet he is afraid to speak honestly because his family may reject him. He worries about what the ministers will say and fears losing friends. He continues doing certain things, not because he believes God requires them, but because he wants people to accept him.

Whose Approval Matters Most?

Galatians 1:10

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

This does not give us permission to be rude, proud, or rebellious. We should honor parents, respect leaders, listen carefully, and seek peace. But people cannot take the place of God. When Scripture speaks clearly, the servant of Christ must obey God even when others do not understand.

Rebecca believes from Scripture that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. She wants to speak about the new birth, but she fears people will call her proud. Fear tempts her to remain silent about the very truth that could help someone else.

Proverbs 29:25

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

A snare is a trap. Fear of people can keep us from confessing sin, asking questions, seeking help, speaking truth, or openly following Christ. We should speak the truth with love and humility, but the question “What will people think?” must never become stronger than “What does God say?”

Grace Does Not Mean Anything Goes

Someone may ask, “If cars, electricity, and clothing styles do not make us worldly, can Christians live however they want?” The Bible answers no. Rejecting human rules does not mean rejecting holiness. Biblical freedom is not freedom to satisfy every desire. It is freedom to follow Jesus rather than being controlled by sin or fear.

Titus 2:11-12

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

Grace saves, and grace teaches. It does not say, “Do whatever you want.” It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly lusts. A former Amish person can leave man-made rules and still become trapped by lust, alcohol, pride, or selfishness. That is not freedom in Christ.

Galatians 5:13

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

True freedom does not move us from the control of people to the control of our flesh. It brings us under the loving rule of Jesus Christ. His grace leads to purity, sobriety, humility, courage, love, and service. The answer to hidden worldliness is not legalism or careless living. The answer is Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. How can the fear of people become a trap even when a person appears obedient?
2. How can someone speak biblical truth with both courage and respect?

3. What does Titus 2:11-12 say that God's grace teaches a Christian to deny and to practice?
4. Are you using freedom to serve Jesus Christ, or is there a desire that still controls your life?