

# Worldliness

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The word *worldliness* does not appear in the standard versions of the Bible, but the trait is referred to often. Worldliness is the condition of being worldly. The “world” God’s Word warns us not to embrace is not the physical, material world in which we live, but the moral and spiritual morass that is opposed to and is alienated from God. All of those who love and are dominated by the world stand opposed to and alienated from God. Consider some of the warnings the Lord gives us against worldliness and the world.

- **Be not fashioned by it:** “And be not fashioned according to this world...” (Rom. 12:2).  
Worldly people are constantly pressuring us to be like them. They don’t want to do right, and they don’t want unworldly folk to rebuke them by their righteous behavior. They harass, ridicule, denounce, curse, sue, and sometimes inflict bodily injury in their attempts to make us conform to their worldliness. Paul urged us to resist such pressures: “be not conformed....” Why should saints of God let modern pagans determine how we talk, dress, spend our money, and what we do for recreation and entertainment? We have a Savior who died and is risen to become **our** Lord, **our** Ruler. True Christians allow Christ to set our standards. If the world dictates one’s behavior, such a one isn’t a follower of Christ.
- **Be not stained by it:** “...keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27): Worldly behavior in a Christian soils and stains the fabric of his life. It prevents the practice of “pure and undefiled religion” in service to God. Those who profess to see nothing wrong with such worldliness as drinking, dancing, near-nudity in public places, barhopping, filthy speech, dishonesty, and so forth, merely advertise their embrace of worldliness. They also advertise a woefully low and ignorant view of the ethical standards of the Gospel. They want to behave in the ways of the world while maintaining “respectability” in the church; they desire to “have it both ways,” but it can’t be so. To practice “pure and undefiled religion” one must “abstain from every form of evil” (1 The. 5:22).
- **Be not a lover of it:** “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15). John made the issue very clear in this passage. One must choose between loving the world with its treasures, temptations, and trinkets, and loving God. Love for the world excludes love for God (and vice versa) because all worldliness is opposed to God and will sooner or later perish (vv. 16–17).

The worldly church member not only invites the justified charge of “hypocrite” for himself/herself, but also for the whole church.

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