

## Lesson One

# IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18,19).

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:15,16).

## Introduction

In this beginning lesson we want to define what it means to be in the world but not to belong to the world. This is an important concept for Christians who are called upon to be lights in a world of darkness (Mt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15).

### I. In the World but not of the World

#### A. The "World" in the New Testament - Its Meaning.

1. The universe or earth. Rom. 1:20 Acts 17:24 Jn. 21:25 2 Pet. 3:6 (Gr. *kosmos*)
2. All the possessions of the earth. Mt. 16:26 (Gr. *kosmos*) Note also 1 Cor. 7:31.
3. The people who inhabit the earth, mankind. Mt. 5:14 Jn. 1:9; 3:16 (Gr. *kosmos*)
4. The people of the Roman empire. Lk. 2:1 (Gr. *oikoumene*, the inhabited earth)
5. The present sinful condition of mankind, alienated and in opposition to God, ruled by Satan. Jn. 7:7; 8:23,24; 14:30 Not only a condition but a way of thinking and living. Gal. 6:14 Col. 2:8 Jas. 1:27 (Gr. *kosmos*)
6. A period of time marked by moral and spiritual characteristics; this present age. (Gr. *aion*)  
"cares of the world" Mt. 13:22 "sons of this world" Lk. 16:8  
"wisdom of this world [age]" "rulers of this world [age]" 1 Cor. 2:6,8  
the thinking and ways of this world [age] Rom. 12:2 Eph. 2:2  
"this present evil world [age]" Gal. 1:4  
Satan, "the god of this world [age]" 2 Cor. 4:4

*Which of these definitions do you think best indicates what we are not to be a part of?*

#### B. The "World" We Are Not to Leave

1. Not to avoid social contact with sinners. 1 Cor. 5:9,10 (Gr. *kosmos*)
2. To be a light to the world of lost men and women. Mt. 5:14-16 Phil. 2:15 (Gr. *kosmos*)

### C. The "World" We Are Not to Join and Be a Part Of.

1. Not to love the values and ways of the "world" 1 Jn. 2:15-17 (Gr. *kosmos*)

*What is the consequence of loving the "world and the things that are in the world"?*

2. Not to be conformed to "this world" Rom. 12:2 (Gr. *aion*)

*What must we experience in order to resist the pressure of the thinking of this present age?*

3. The way we are to live "in this present world" Tit. 2:11,12 (Gr. *aion*)

*Does the grace of God make no requirements of us? Is life in God's grace free of all restrictions?*

*What two things must we deny and reject? Define these two things.*

*What three qualities must we cultivate? Define them.*

## II. Understanding the Difference Between "In" and "Of".

A. One is not Of the World because He follows some Customs and Practices of the World [culture] in which He lives.

1. Modern inventions if not limited to evil purposes are not a part of "the present evil world" *egs. automobiles and airplanes vs. horses*
2. Innocent features of a culture in dress, speech or action. Paul accommodated himself to these "for the gospel's sake". 1 Cor. 9:19-22

B. One is Of the World when He takes up its Customs Thoughtlessly and Heedlessly.

1. One becomes "worldly" or "of the world" when he *blindly* takes up the values, speech, practices and customs of the culture without evaluating them in the light of the character and will of Christ.
2. One is "walking according to the course of this world" (Eph. 2:2) when he conforms to the customs and practices of his culture *without regard to whether or not they please God*.
  - a. So fashion conscious that he will conform to latest fashion without regard to its impact on his calling as a Christian. 1 Tim. 2:10
  - b. So into the culture's way of communicating that he will take up its corruptions and impurities. Eph. 4:29
  - c. So into conforming to the culture that he makes it insensitive and ungodly excesses the standard by which everything is to be judged rather than the word of Christ. 1 Pet. 4:1-4
  - d. More concerned to please his non-Christians associates than the Lord.

## **Final Thought Questions:**

- 1. What "world" should the Christian love? What "world" should he not love?*
- 2. Should a Christian ever conform to the customs of the people around him?*
- 3. May a Christian ever keep company with the immoral people of the world? What principle should be followed in those relationships? 2 Cor. 6:14-18 1 Cor. 15:33*
- 5. What is the difference between conforming to this world and adapting one's life style to the customs of the times?*
- 6. What do you think Paul meant when he said he became "all things to all men"?*