

are forgiven for all time, for the power of His atoning death remains active for all time.

v. 13 – “you know Him” – Literally, “you have known Him.” At a point in time, through the work of the Ruach, those drawn to faith come into a saving relationship with God through faith in His Son, Yeshua, and that saving relationship, based upon that act of faith, remains active throughout one’s life.

v. 13 – “you know the Father” – Literally, “you have known the Father.” The right-standing with the Father (justification), gained through faith in Yeshua, secures the indwelling presence of the Ruach, by Whose power the covenant relationship with God is maintained in the child of God forever.

John knows that the false teachers are a real threat to those who are seeking the truth, and who are gathering together with the communities of The Way. He is therefore reminding them in this epistle to be watchful and to know what is the true character of genuine faith in Yeshua. But he also wants them to know that their salvation is secure in Yeshua, and that their spiritual strength rests upon a sure foundation which cannot be moved. Thus, in this pericope, he appeals to his readers to remember who they are in Messiah and to rest assured of their salvation, putting away fear and growing in faith that He Who has begun a good work in them will bring it to completion with a view to His return (Phil 1:6).

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, because all that is in the world (the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the arrogance produced by material possessions) is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away with all its desires, but the person who does the will of God remains forever.

In the previous paragraph John has reminded us of a number of fundamental truths which undergird the life of faith for every believer in Yeshua:

1. *your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake* – Our sins, all of them, for all time, have been forgiven because Yeshua, through His death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession

on our behalf, has paid the full penalty of our sins and thus secured our eternal redemption.

2. *you know Him who has been from the beginning* – Yeshua is “from the beginning,” meaning that He has no beginning and no end. This can only mean that He is one with the Father and the Ruach, and that He is therefore God in the flesh. If He were not God in the flesh, His death and His life would not be sufficient to secure the salvation of sinners.
3. *you have overcome the evil one* – Because of the victory won for us by our Messiah, we have been given the power to overcome the evil one, who would, if he were able, seek to take us away from the life which we have in Yeshua. But because the victory is secure in our risen Savior, we likewise have victory over the evil one.
4. *you are strong, and the word of God abides in you* – Our spiritual strength resides in our knowing and applying the word of God, the Bible, in every aspect of our lives. Therefore, the word of God, through the work of the Ruach, is a primary source of spiritual nourishment and strength by which our faith is strengthened and enlarged.

Now John continues by warning us regarding the snares of the world. This highlights the fact that the life of a believer in Yeshua is not to be characterized by “rely and relax” but rather by “be on guard” and “fight the good fight of faith.”

Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; (Lk 21:34)

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1Tim 6:12)

Do not love the world – John now opens with commands or imperatives, and this section of the epistle (2:15–29) is marked by imperatives, giving it a particular emphasis. In fact, of the thirteen imperatives found in 1John, five of them occur in this section.

In this first imperative of our pericope, the Greek imperative “Do not love” (*Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε, mē agapate*), is a present active imperative. Older scholarship held that the present imperative with the negative presented the meaning “stop doing X,” and in our text, “stop loving the

world.”¹ Clearly John is not saying that those he has just commended as exemplifying a genuine life of obedience to God, are, at the same time, engaged in “loving the world.” Rather, the present imperative in this context emphasizes something that the believer must constantly be on guard against. As Culy notes regarding the Greek present tense in the command “Do not love the world” –

The imperfective (present tense) should not be pressed to imply that the readers were currently loving the world and needing to stop.... Rather, it is the natural choice for prohibiting an action that is viewed as a process....²

John is reminding us, as do the other Apostles, that our walk of faith is both one of shalom and victory in Yeshua as well as an engagement in war against the flesh, i.e., the sinful nature, as well as against the enemy of our souls.

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 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. (James 4:1–4)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph 6:10–12)

Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (1Cor 9:25)

1 E.g., A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek NT* (Broadman, 1934), p. 890. “In general μή is used with the present imperative to forbid what one is already doing.”

2 Martin M. Culy, *I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Baylor Univ Press, 2004), p. 42.

In this opening imperative, “Do not love the world,” two obvious questions present themselves: what does John mean by the words “world” and “love”? Such questions arise from the obvious fact that in John’s Gospel he gives the important and categorical statement that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” Clearly the two statements of John, that as believers we are not to love the world and that God did, indeed, love the world, cannot be contradictory. The answer lies in understanding what John means by “love” and “world.”

In the Scriptures, the concept of “love” and the words used to convey the idea of “love” are, at their core, bound up with the idea of covenant. A covenant is a binding agreement between two or more parties in which each covenant partner pledges to maintain a relationship with the other covenant partner(s) through mutually agreed upon actions and consequences if one fails to abide by the covenant stipulations.

In the Tanach, several terms are regularly used to denote faithfulness within the relationship of covenant. One is the word חֶסֶד (*chesed*), translated variously as “lovingkindness,” “steadfast love,” “kindness,” “gracious,” etc.¹ Of course, the other word is אָהַב (‘*ahav*), “to love” and its noun, אֲהָבָה (‘*ahavāh*), “love.”²

These words (and others as well) bear a clear covenant connection in numerous texts of the Tanach. Note first of all these examples where *chesed* is found in parallel with the word בְּרִית (*b’rit*), “covenant.”

Know therefore that ADONAI your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; (Deut 7:9)

Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that ADONAI your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. (Deut 7:12)

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- 1 For further study on the use of *chesed* in the context of covenant, see D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, “חֶסֶד” in VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols. (Zondervan, 1997), 2.210-18.
 - 2 For further study on the use of “love” in covenant context, both in the Tanach as well as in the covenants or treaties of the Ancient Near East, see W. L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ*, 25 (1965), 77–87; Larry Walker, ““Love” in the Old Testament: Some Lexical Observations” in Gerald Howthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 277ff.

He said, “O ADONAI, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart, (1Ki 8:23)

For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” Says ADONAI who has compassion on you. (Is 54:10)

My lovingkindness I will keep for him [David] forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him. (Ps 89:28)

The concept of “love” as characterizing the binding relationship that exists within covenant is likewise well attested in the Tanach. The obvious and well known example is the *Shema* (Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21). The context in which the *Shema* is found is clearly that of the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai (e.g., Ex 19:5; 34:10) and is being renewed as Israel prepares to enter the promised Land.

Hear, O Israel! ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one! You shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (Deut 6:4–6)

Know therefore that ADONAI your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; (Deut 7:9)

by loving ADONAI your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which ADONAI swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. (Deut 30:20)

To summarize: the relationship brought about by the enactment of covenant, from a biblical perspective, is encapsulated in the concept of love—that is, love demonstrated by faithful loyalty to that which one has covenanted. Thus, to love God is to dedicate oneself to faithfully and diligently keep that which one pledged to keep when entering the covenant, namely, to have allegiance to God alone, and thus to keep His commandments and to live in a way that honors Him.

The concept of “love” and the word itself is very prominent in 1John. In the Gospel of John the Greek word *ἀγάπη* (*agapē*), “love,” is found 7

times, while in 1John *agapē* is found 18 times. While the word itself must be given its proper meaning and nuance by the context in which it is found, it is clear that John intends us to consider the importance of our covenant relationships and to do so in the light of our primary covenant relationship, i.e., our membership in the New Covenant by faith in Yeshua.

Having looked briefly at the biblical concept of love as bound up in covenant relationship, let us look at what John means by the word “world.” In the Greek, the word most often translated by our English word “world” is the word *κόσμος* (*kosmos*). It might be surprising to some to discover that the primary sense of the word in its ancient setting is that of “order.” Note the primary glosses given by *BDAG*.¹

1. that which serves to beautify through decoration, adornment, adorning.
2. condition of orderliness, orderly arrangement, order.
3. the sum total of everything here and now, the world, the (orderly) universe.
4. the sum total of all beings above the level of the animals, the world.
5. planet earth as a place of inhabitation, the world.

All too often when people read the word “world” in their English Bibles, the first picture that comes into view is either number 4 or 5 above. But this could not be what John means in our current text. He is not teaching us to “not love” the physical world, nor all people who live in our world. What then does John mean when he, being superintended by the Ruach, writes “Do not love the world”? By using the world (*kosmos*), John is referring to a system, an identifiable arrangement of living, with certain goals and purposes. In short, the “world” about which John is writing in our text is that system or that view which puts man at the center and denies God. And this is precisely the same meaning that must be attached to the well known verse in John’s Gospel, John 3:16. When the text states that God “loved the world,” it means that He, of His own sovereign will, determined to enter into covenant with those who had rebelled against Him. In short, He chose to redeem an innumerable host of people who were part of a “system” that was categorically contrary to God’s own being.

1 William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, ed. F. D. Danker (Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 561. [hereafter *BDAG*]

Thus, when John instructs us with the words “Do not love the world,” he is describing the core character of our lives. He is telling us not to give ourselves—our time, our assets, our talents, our life energy, nor commit ourselves to that which is, by its very nature, contrary to God and to His righteousness. Rather, as those who are in covenant relationship with Him through His Son, Yeshua, and by the power of the Ruach, we must strive to *love* Him with all our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our strength. And as we do, we will love others as He instructs us to do, and to guard ourselves from anything that would draw us away from Him. John emphasizes this in 5:4–5.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1Jn 4:4–5)

Thus, the words of the *Shema*, to love Adonai with all of one’s heart, soul, and might, simply and succinctly describe one’s entire life and being, as we seek to bring all things into subjection to His will, and thus to serve Him wholly. Thus, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, we work to put away those things that hinder us and to grow in our faithfulness to the One Who has called us to Himself, having redeemed us, and granted us eternal life.

or the things in the world. – As we have seen, to “love the world” means to commit oneself (i.e., as in making a covenant) to that which is contrary to God and to His righteousness. One would think that the phrase “Do not love the world,” is comprehensive, for surely “the world,” that “system” which is man-centered without any thought of God as Sovereign King, includes everything in the world. Why then does John add this additional phrase?

It is because it is the natural tendency of the sinful nature, to think that “just a little” will be okay. We often are drawn into “the world,” not by a full, headlong dive into its decadent ways, but by accepting a little here and a little there. But in doing so we forget that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1Cor 5:6). Note the description James gives to us in his epistle.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (James 1:13–15)

Note how James describes the way in which sin (“the things of the world”) entices through the lust of one’s own sinful nature, and how sin is birthed, giving the picture of what begins in infancy may well grow to dominance. Indeed, in v. 16 John will describe “the things of the world” as that which the sinful nature so much desires.

Clearly John is not teaching us here to seclude ourselves in hopes that the “world,” that system which is contrary to God, would not have any affect upon us. Rather, the Scriptures teach us that we are to be “in the world but not of the world.” Indeed, we are to be a light to the world which we cannot do if we seclude ourselves from the world. Rather, by the strength of the Ruach Who dwells with us and in us, and by the power of the word of God by which we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and His desires for us, we are able to be victorious in living righteously in this world, and thus shining forth the truth of God by our actions as well as by our verbal testimony.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:16)

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. – In this final sentence of v. 15, John is simply reiterating that same core truth that he taught in the previous context of this chapter:

The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; (2:4)

The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. (2:9)

The phrase “the love of the Father” (*ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς*) may be understood in various ways. The genitive could be either subjective or objective. If subjective, then “the Father” is the subject, and the phrase would mean “the love which the Father gives.” If objective, the phrase would mean “the love that one has for the Father.” Since the previous phrase has a person (“anyone,” *τις*) loving the world, it seems most likely that it is also this “person” who does not have within himself “love of (i.e, for) the Father.” Yet, in a broader sense, one who has no love for God is one who has not experienced God’s love in drawing that person to Himself and granting him or her both repentance and faith to confess Yeshua as their Savior.

The obvious import of John’s words here is clear: If one’s life is

characterized by attachment to the “world,” to that which is clearly contrary to God’s self-revelation and the pattern of righteousness demonstrated by Yeshua and taught by the prophets and apostles, then it is clear that the love of God, that is, the redeeming love of the Almighty which draws His chosen ones to Himself in covenant relationship, is not in that life. Thus, there is no real desire to “love God,” that is, to seek a saving covenant relationship with Him.

Here we see, once again, that John offers an either/or scenario. Either one’s life is being more and more conformed to God’s righteous ways, and thus shows genuine fruit of being redeemed by God’s grace, or, if such fruit is absent, and the general character of one’s life is attachment to the world, then there is no assurance that such a person has experienced the life-changing reality that inevitably accompanies true saving faith.

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.

Verse 16 begins with the Greek word *ὅτι* (*hoti*) which gives the primary support for John’s admonition in v. 15, namely, “Do not love the world...” and the reason is “because (*hoti*) all that is in the world...is not from the Father...” The “world” (*kosmos*) is used by John in this context to describe the fallen world, i.e., the world marked by sin and thus as contrary to the righteousness of God Himself.

By this, John does not mean that everything in our universe is without value, or somehow is to be shunned as unholy and therefore contrary to a right exercise of our faith in God. Even in this fallen world, the “fingerprint” of God is seen through the wonders of His creative activity.

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. (Ps 19:1)

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. (Ps 139:14)

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Rom 1:20)

Indeed, the world in which we live is, in one sense, the Father’s

domain, for it was created through the agency of His Son, Yeshua (Jn 1:10). And even as Yeshua regularly confessed that He had come into the world to do “the will of My Father” (Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 7:17), so He taught His disciples to pray “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10). Even as Yeshua submitted to the will of the Father as the incarnate One, so we seek to live out that which is pleasing to the Father and thus giving glory to His Son, Yeshua, as we walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh (cf. Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16).

John’s message is clear as to what he means by “all that is in the world,” for he immediately defines this phrase by the following three phrases, “the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eyes,” and “the boastful pride of life.” It is the bitter fruit of these three categories that represent “all that is in the world,” and which is therefore “not from the Father.”

the lust of the flesh (ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς) – The Greek word *epithumia*, translated here and in the next phrase by the English word “lust,” has as its primary sense “desire, longing, craving,” and can therefore be used to describe a desire for that which is good and holy, as well as being used to speak of sinful and unholy desires. Note these examples of *epithumia* which describe a righteous and holy desire.

And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; (Lk 22:15)

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while — in person, not in spirit — were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. (1Thess 2:17)

In our verse, *epithumia* clearly describes sinful desires, that pull of the sinful nature which is clearly “not from the Father.” Note how different English versions translate *epithumia* in our text:

because all that is in the world (the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the arrogance produced by material possessions) is not from the Father, but is from the world. (NET)

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (ESV)

For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. (NIV)

For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world. (HCSB)

Very often in the Johannine corpus, John uses the word “flesh” (σάρξ, *sarks*) simply to describe a human being. When he writes that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14) he is using “flesh” to describe the incarnation of our Messiah, Yeshua. But John also records Yeshua’s use of the word “flesh” to describe that which is contrary to the Spirit:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. (Jn 6:63)

Thus, we must be careful not to fall prey to the notion that when the Scriptures speak of “flesh,” they speak of that which is ungodly and to be avoided. Such a wrong understanding could easily lead to the false dualism exemplified by Gnosticism, that all material substances are evil. John is intent on guarding us from such error.

What does “the lust of the flesh” mean in this context? In a broad sense, the phrase describes one’s actions—the working out of one’s inner desires. But by this phrase John does not mean any desire we have as human beings. Surely it is not sinful to desire food when one is hungry, or to seek restful sleep when one is physically weary. These “desires” and the activities associated with them are given to us for our good and for God’s glory, for Paul wrote:

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1Cor 10:31)

Rather, in our text, John is describing the desires of our sinful nature which draw us to disobey God’s commandments and to engage in unrighteous behavior. Thus, any desire which would move us to do that which God forbids may be summed up in “the lust of the flesh.” In one sense, all evil cravings can be summed up in disobeying God’s explicit command, “You shall not covet” (Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21), for the fruit of covetousness seeks to fulfill one’s own desires by any means rather than entrusting oneself to God as the source of all that is good, and thus trusting Him to meet one’s true needs. Whether sinful sexual desires, or selfish desire for fame or authority, for wealth or popularity, all sinful desires partake in one way or another in the sin of covetousness.

the lust of the eyes (ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν) – “The lust of the eyes”

emphasizes the inward thought which gives rise to the sinful action itself, stressed in the previous phrase, “the lust of the flesh.”

The eyes are the channel of man’s soul. When man is enticed by lust, his eyes serve as instruments that cause him to transgress and sin.¹

It is interesting to note that in the Scriptures, “blindness” is often associated with spiritual deadness.

Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.’

You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold?

You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering?

You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!
You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. (Matt 23:16, 23:17, 19, 24, 26)

In another place, Yeshua appeals to Is 6:9–10 to explain why He taught in parables, contrasting the blindness of the Jewish leaders with the “eyes” of the disciples that are able to “see” the truth.

Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’
But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. (Matt 13:13–16)

The “lust of the eyes” is the first step toward engaging in sinful behavior. And the sinful nature is never satisfied but wants more and more. This is the import of the wisdom given to us in Prov 27:20. “Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.”

1 Kistemaker, *1John*, p. 272.

Thus Yeshua taught that adultery begins in the heart and leads to the physical act itself. To allow such lust to remain in one's thoughts is thus the sin that leads to more sin.

but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
(Matt 5:28)

In our modern world, so engulfed in visual media, we must take very seriously John's warning. We should never think that what we spend our time watching and focusing our attention upon will have no real effect upon our lives. We must admit that the sinful nature is encouraged whenever we allow ourselves to give attention to, and thus to desire, that which is contrary to God's righteous ways.

the boastful pride of life (ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου) – This third phrase, by which John describes “all that is in the world,” is not so easily translated, as can be seen by comparing various English translations.

“the pride of life” (KJV, NKJV, RSV, ESV)
 “the boastful pride of life” (NASB)
 “the arrogance produced by material possessions” (NET)
 “the boasting of what he has and does” (NIV)
 “the pride in one's lifestyle” (HCSB)
 “the pretensions of life” (CJB)
 “the boasting of life” (TLV)

The ambiguity demonstrated by comparing these English translations results from the fact that the Greek word ἀλαζονεία (*alazoneia*) is found only here and one other time, in James 4:16, “But as it is, in your arrogance you boast. All such boasting is evil.” But in our text, what does John intend to convey by the phrase “the pride/arrogance/boasting of life”? When combined with “the lust of the flesh” and “the lust of the eyes,” it may have the sense of a lust for advantage and status.¹ Yarbrough, quoting Schnackenburg, suggests that the phrase “refers to external expressions of braggart overconfidence and not the hidden root of interior self-satisfaction.”² The Greek word for “life” is βίος (*bios*), which can denote common, everyday life, but it can also describe one's livelihood, as well as one's property or wealth.

for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on (ἔλον τὸν βίον

1 So Güting & Brown, “Pride” in *NIDNTT*, 3.32.

2 Yarbrough, *1John*, p. 133.

αὐτῆς, literally “her whole life”). Mk 12:44

The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth (βίος) between them. (Lk 15:12)

It seems most likely, then, that what John is describing is a focus upon one’s wealth, property, or grasping for a position in life by which these may be obtained. Taking this a step further, Brown suggests that Greek *bios* emphasizes “biological life” as distinct from Greek ζωή (*zōē*) which is used in the expression “eternal life,” and that “the pride of life” is contentment with this material [temporal] life and not reaching out for God’s own life (*zōē*),¹ i.e., eternal life.

It seems clear, then, that what John is describing by the phrase “the boastful pride of life” are those who give their life-energy to gaining wealth, prestige, and security in their social position and material possessions, having no interest in ordering their lives to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

It is interesting to compare, by way of parallel to our text, how Moses describes that which drew Chavah to disobey the command of God.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:6)

“good for food” – lust of the flesh

“delight to the eyes” – lust of the eyes

“desirable to make one wise” – pride of life

...is not from the Father, but is from the world. Verse 16 concludes with this pointed assessment, that the things of the world, characterized by these three evident vices of mankind’s fallen nature, are not something that could ever please God but that the very source of these things is from that which opposes God, even the devil. In so doing, John seeks to remind us who we are, and this may well be why He emphasizes the Father, for we are children of His family having been adopted into His household by His grace (cf. Jn 1:12; 11:52).

Once again, this brings to mind the words of Yeshua when He addresses those who oppose Him and His teachings.

1 Brown, *1John*, p. 430. See also I. Howard Marshall, *1John*, p. 144.

He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God. (Jn 8:47)

When John speaks of being “of God” (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, literally “out of God”) he is emphasizing that true life, life that is eternal, is that which comes from God and cannot be obtained elsewhere. Once again, John presents us with an either/or reality: either we are “of God” or we are “of the world.” Surely we all are in the progress of growing in our understanding of who we are in Messiah Yeshua, and thus in our faith and ability to become more and more like Yeshua. But John, through these inspired words, calls us to measure our commitment to Yeshua and to measure it according to God’s standards, not man’s.

17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

John ends this paragraph by contrasting the futility of living life only for this world’s passing pleasures with the unending value and joy of life lived out by faith in God, in fellowship with His Son, Yeshua, and through the power of the indwelling Spirit, seeking to glorify God and thus to enjoy Him forever.

Here, once again, the word “world” means “that worldly system that is contrary to God and His righteousness.” John has already spoken of “the darkness passing away” (2:8), for the victory over sin and death has already been secured by Yeshua for all who are His.

Not only is the world system doomed to extinction, but so are “its lusts.” This means that the very things of the “world” that are so attractive to the fallen nature of man will also vanish. For in the world to come, all will be righteousness and light—no spiritual darkness will be there at all.

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Rev 21:23)

And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 22:5)

... but the one who does the will of God lives forever. – Note how John describes the person who possesses eternal life: “the one who does the will of God.” This echoes the words of Yeshua:

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. (Matt 7:21)

Once again, the litmus test of genuine, saving faith, is a life characterized by obedience to God, walking in His righteous ways. This is not “sinless perfectionism!” For, as John has already taught us, to walk in God’s ways means to confess one’s sin, to acknowledge the forgiveness God has promised and made secure through the work of His Son, Yeshua. It is in the process of repentance and forgiveness that we grow in our faith and ability to stand against sin and to walk in this world in such a way as to give glory to God in all aspects of our lives.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:40)

The reality of eternal life for all who are believers in Yeshua is an important topic for John in this epistle, for he will speak to it five times in the remainder of the book: 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20.

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

Once again, John addresses the community of believers to whom he is writing as “children.” In 2:1, 12, however, he uses the Greek *τεκνιον* (*teknion*) which usually refers to “young children” or “little children.” Here, in v. 18, he uses the Greek word *παιδιον* (*paidion*) as he did in v. 13 [Greek, 14] which can refer to infants but is also used of children at the age to be educated.¹ Whether John was intentionally indicating a difference in meaning when he used one term or the other is not certain. It may well be that he refers to his readers both as “little children” and “children” simply as terms of endearment. This perspective is reflected in the NIV translation which opens verse 18 with “Dear children....” But if there is a nuance of difference between the two Greek words, it would make sense that he would address his readers in this pericope as *paidion* since he states that they know the truth, and thus are those who have attained some level of maturity in the spiritual education of the truth.

But there is another emphasis that John may be making in referring

1 See the comments above on 2:1.