

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD —WHICH WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Note to the speaker:

Keeping in mind that this is a talk for the public, tactfully show why and how a true Christian should refrain from loving this world or cultivating its friendship. Highlight the eternal blessings of friendship with God

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP ARE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (4 min.)

Creator designed us to need and delight in love and friendship (*g86 9/22 4-7*)

When this need goes unfulfilled, we are unhappy (*g83 4/22 31*)

Bible encourages us to form loving friendships (Pr 17:17; Ec 4:9)

The Bible places a restriction, though, on a different kind of love and friendship

James 4:4 strongly warns against “friendship with the world”

1 John 2:15 tells us not to ‘love the world’

What does this mean? May seem puzzling, especially in view of the fact that both Jehovah and Jesus love mankind (Pr 8:31; Joh 3:16)

WHAT IS THE “WORLD”? (10 min.)

Meaning of Greek word for “world,” *ko'smos*, varies with context (*it-2 1205-7, 1209-10*)

At times it refers to mankind in general: billions of individuals for whom Jehovah wants salvation (2Pe 3:9)

This is “world” referred to at John 3:16 and 6:51

But *ko'smos* may also refer to human society apart from Jehovah’s faithful servants and alienated from Jehovah God, or it may denote the framework, order, or sphere of human life

“World” of alienated human society is ruled by Satan (1Jo 5:19)

Composed of various parts: false religion (Re 17:5); political governments (Re 13:1, 2); commercial system (Re 18:11)

Satan uses each part to mislead people, blinding minds to their greatest need: to cultivate love for and friendship with Jehovah God (Mr 12:29, 30; 2Co 4:4; Re 12:9, 10)

Thus, God’s counsel and standards are widely discarded (2Ti 4:3-5)

Immorality and loose living accepted and promoted (Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

Little wonder, then, that Jehovah tells us neither to love nor to befriend this world!

But how do we heed this warning?

HOW DO WE SHUN FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD? (16 min.)

Of course, not by adopting an aloof, superior attitude

Like Jehovah and Jesus, we love people and view them as potential sheep to whom we owe the very best witness we can give (1Co 9:19-23)

This often involves acts of kindness and neighborliness (Lu 10:30-37; Jas 2:8; *w92 2/15 18, ¶20*)

Humility, not haughtiness, is a mark of true Christianity (Jas 4:6)

To love world or seek its friendship in a way that displeases God means to share in the world’s desires, to harbor its ambitions, to display its prejudices and hatreds, to have the dominant attitude that permeates its decadent society

Shun friendship with the world by resisting “the spirit of the world” (1Co 2:12)

Devil uses this spirit to make the world alluring, to exert subtle influence on our mind and heart

Do you love the things of this world? Are you entertained by things that reflect its complete lack of “moral sense”? (Eph 4:19; *g92 11/8 4-10*)

Such immoral entertainment can lead you to engage in worldly practices and reap the consequences (Ga 6:7)

The world tends to promote materialistic goals, not spiritual ones (Php 2:21; 1Jo 2:16; *w84 10/1 12-13*)

World promotes the goal of climbing the economic ladder

Such ambitions create anxieties, pains (1Ti 6:10)

Jesus cautioned us not to be anxious about even essentials of life (Mt 6:25-34)

‘The deceptive power of riches chokes the word’ (Mt 13:22)

Can happen today as it did in first century (Php 3:18, 19)

World idolizes its celebrities and prominent ones

Overawed by their showy life-styles (1Jo 2:16)

Admire their promiscuous conduct, vulgar speech, grooming

What is your attitude toward such individuals?

The spirit of the world is unloving, merciless, and unforgiving

Imitating that spirit could incur God’s just anger (Pr 16:27)

God rightly condemns “friendship with the world” (Jas 4:4)

One choosing to be a friend of the world is choosing to befriend a very dangerous enemy of God (1Pe 5:8; 1Jo 5:19)

Would a loving parent let a child choose as a close friend one whose habits and way of life would cause the child harm?

Jehovah restricts our associations to protect us (Isa 48:17)

Do we recognize the danger of bad associations? (1Co 15:33)

Friendship with the world is destined to failure, but there is a friendship that endures forever (1Jo 2:17)

CULTIVATE THE FINEST FRIENDSHIP OF ALL—WITH GOD (11 min.)

Imperfect humans can become friends of God, as Abraham was (2Ch 20:7; Jas 2:23)

Jehovah loved Abraham and befriended him (Isa 41:8)

Abraham showed faith and obedience (Heb 11:8-10, 17-19)

Jehovah honored him with privilege of being Jesus’ forefather

Requirements to be a friend of God are outlined at Psalm 15:1-5 (*w89 9/15 26-9*; consider some of the ten points briefly)

Those fitting that description are doing God’s will

They will not totter, for Jehovah, as a true friend, will protect and uphold them

Need to strengthen that friendship now; requires hard work (Jude 3)

What will be our greatest need at time of great tribulation?

Not money, not things of world, but an unbreakable faith

Build faith by persistent prayer, diligent study of the Bible, faithful attendance at meetings, zealous share in field ministry

If we make a gross mistake, we must not yield to any inclination to drop out or quit; that is what Satan wants

Ask elders for help; apply their counsel (Pr 12:15; Heb 13:17)

Can recover from sinful course (Jas 5:13-16)

Jehovah, as a true Friend, will forgive (Isa 55:7)

Follow example of Moses (Heb 11:24-26)

He refused to love the world but kept love for Jehovah strong

Assured of resurrection

FRIENDSHIP WITH JEHOVAH LEADS TO ENDLESS BLESSINGS (4 min.)

Jehovah has taken the initiative in loving us and offering his friendship (1Jo 4:19)

Our hearts move us to show him love and appreciation in response

We show love for God by obeying his laws (1Jo 5:3)

Face persecution rather than violate Jehovah’s laws (Ac 5:29)

We love and uphold his name by our words and actions (Ps 119:132; Isa 43:10-13)

We want to tell others about Jehovah (Ro 10:13-15)

Such friendship leads to present and future blessings (Mr 10:28-30)

God’s friends are guided by his spirit (Ga 5:22, 23)

They have the privilege of becoming “a people for his name” (Ac 15:14)

Our friendship with Jehovah can endure for all time, growing ever closer and more rewarding throughout eternity

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)