

Steve Whitacre
**SESSION 1 | WORLDLINESS: WHAT IS
THE PROBLEM?**

I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this class is:

1. To help each of us be more discerning about our temptations to worldliness.
2. To help each of us form convictions from God's Word about how we ought to live.

II. WORLDLINESS: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

"Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas." (Colossians 4:14)

"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers." (Philemon 23–24)

"For Demas, *in love with this present world*, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia." (2 Timothy 4:10)

"A love for the world begins in the soul. It's subtle, not always immediately obvious to others, and often undetected by the people who are slowly succumbing to its lies." CJ Mahaney, *Worldliness*, 20.

III. WHAT IS WORLDLINESS?

"Worldliness, then, is a love for this fallen world. It's loving the values and pursuits of the world that stand opposed to God. More specifically, it is *to gratify and exalt oneself to the exclusion of God*. It rejects God's rule and replaces it with our own. It exalts our opinions above God's truth. It elevates our sinful desires for the things of this fallen world above God's commands and promises." CJ Mahaney, *Worldliness*, 27.

“Worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centered way of thinking: it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man’s fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be ‘fools for Christ’s sake.’ Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God.” Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 255.

IV. PLAYING DEFENSE: DISCERNING & RESISTING WORLDLINESS

This is spiritual warfare: a battle for your mind, your emotions, and your will.

“If you give in to temptation, it will be because desire has overcome reason in the struggle to influence your will.” Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 62–3.

“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. 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. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15–17)

How do we recognize and discern temptations towards worldliness?

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **Do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1–2)

CJ: Ask yourself about your motive and purpose.

- *Why am doing _____?*
- *What do I hope will result from _____?*

Four questions for evaluation:

1. *Is it helpful—physically, spiritually, and mentally?*

“‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful.” (1 Corinthians 6:12a)

2. *Does it bring me under its power?*

“‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12a)

3. *Does it hurt others?*

“Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.” (1 Corinthians 8:13)

4. *Does it glorify God?*

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 88.

“Repeated acts of the consent of the will unto sin may beget a disposition and inclineableness of the will unto a proneness and readiness to consent not sin upon easy solicitation.” John Owen, in Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 131.

V. PLAYING OFFENSE: GROWING IN GODLINESS

Growth in godliness is a deliberate redirecting of your mind, emotions, and will.

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“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:18–20)

VI. CONCLUSION

“‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30–31)