

TURN AWAY FROM THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

A Bible teaching by Jack Hartman

June, 2017

This month we will study Scripture that explains the importance that God places for all of His children to turn away from the world. You will learn how to focus on what God wants you to focus on instead of focusing on anything in the world that may seem important, but really isn't from God's perspective. (All of the Scripture references are from *The Amplified Bible* unless otherwise stated.)

JESUS CHRIST CLEARLY INDICATES THAT EVERY PERSON WHO HAS RECEIVED HIM AS HIS OR HER SAVIOR DOES NOT BELONG TO THE WORLD ANY LONGER. Jesus said, "...you are not of the world [no longer one with it], but I have chosen (selected) you out of the world..." (John 15:19)

If Jesus Christ is your Savior, you can be certain that God Himself has drawn you to make this decision. Jesus said, "No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me..." (John 6:44)

If Jesus Christ is your Savior, you can be absolutely certain that God Himself touched your heart and drew you to Him for eternal salvation. When Jesus died on the cross at Calvary He not only paid the price to forgive every sin you have ever committed, but He also made it possible for you to be completely set free from any influence that anything in the world might have on you.

EVERY PERSON WHO HAS RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS HIS OR HER SAVIOR ACTUALLY IS A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN. "...we are citizens of the state (commonwealth, homeland) which is in heaven..." (Philippians 3:20)

If Jesus Christ is your Savior, your home is no longer in this world. You have been given a permanent home in heaven. Throughout your life on earth God wants you to understand that you no longer are a citizen of the world because you became a citizen of heaven when Jesus became your Savior. You are only a temporary resident of this world. Constantly turn

toward God and away from the world. You are passing through this world for a relatively short period of time before you go on to live throughout eternity in your real home in heaven.

THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF YOUR LIFE ON EARTH FOCUS CONTINUALLY ON THE MAGNIFICENT SPIRITUAL TRUTH THAT YOU ARE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN. Jesus Christ said, “He Who comes from above (heaven) is [far] above all [others]; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth, and talks the language of earth [his words are from an earthly standpoint]. He Who comes from heaven is [far] above all others [far superior to all others in prominence and in excellence].” (John 3:31)

Jesus Christ came from heaven when He was born in Bethlehem. Jesus was far and above everything on earth throughout His earthly ministry. He wants you to understand that He has given you the same status. He does not want you to look at yourself as a citizen of the world. If Jesus Christ is your Savior, you no longer “belong to the earth and talk the language of earth.” Jesus wants you to focus so much on His Word that you will consistently look at the remainder of your life on earth from His perspective. He wants you to know how God looks at things in the world. “...this world’s wisdom is foolishness (absurdity and stupidity) with God...” (I Corinthians 3:19)

Your Father wants you to constantly turn away from a worldly perspective in every way. You have just seen how God looks at the wisdom of the world. The Word of God says that the wisdom of the world is “foolishness, absurdity and stupidity.”

THE BIBLE TELLS YOU THAT, IF JESUS CHRIST IS YOUR SAVIOR, YOU ARE AN ALIEN IN THE WORLD IF JESUS CHRIST. The following words that were written by the apostle Peter were anointed by God just as every word in the Bible is anointed by God. Peter said, “...I implore you as aliens and strangers and exiles [in this world] to abstain from the sensual urges (the evil desires, the passions of the flesh, your lower nature) that wage war against the soul.” (I Peter 2:11)

Please note that Peter, writing under the anointing of God, explained that you are an “alien and stranger and exile” in the world if Jesus Christ is your Savior. You are instructed to “abstain” from your lower nature that is anchored upon things in the world.” Your Father wants you to continually

turn away from the influence of anything in the world to constantly turn toward Him (see James 4:8).

Your Father wants you to understand that you are a citizen of heaven and an alien in the world if Jesus Christ is your Savior.

IF YOU ARE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD, YOU ACTUALLY ARE AN ENEMY OF GOD. "...Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

No Christian wants to be an enemy of God, but that is exactly what Christians are whose lives primarily revolve around the things of the world. People who are worldly in their thinking actually are enemies of God. You cannot be a friend of the world and live your life the way that God wants you to live. No Christian wants to be an enemy of God, but the truth is that you *are* an enemy of God if your life is centered around the things of the world instead of constantly being centered around God. You cannot please God if you constantly live a life that is centered around the world.

YOU DO NOT LOVE GOD IF YOU LOVE THE THINGS OF THE WORLD. "Do not love *or* cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]." (I John 2:15-16)

Every Christian makes a constant choice to either love God or to love the ways of the world. If you love the ways of the world, you actually are turning toward Satan who is the god of the world. (see II Corinthians 4:4 and I John 5:19).

The world today is largely dominated by selfishness and self-centeredness. Your Father wants you to put Him ahead of anything in the world. He wants you to trust Him far above any type of worldly security. Turn within yourself for the greatest security in the universe – the indwelling presence of Almighty God (see Ephesians 4:6, I John 4:15 and Galatians 3:26).

Your Father wants you to trust Him completely instead of trusting in your limited human abilities and worldly sources of security. God's ways and the

ways of the world are very different (see Isaiah 55:8-9). The ways of the world are primarily externally oriented. Your Father wants your life to focus around your absolute certainty of His indwelling presence. Keep God in first place in every aspect of your life ahead of anyone and anything else (see Matthew 6:33).

DO NOT BE LIKE SOME CHRISTIANS WHO HONOR JESUS CHRIST WITH THEIR MOUTHS BUT ACTUALLY ARE NOT CLOSE TO HIM. The following words that Jesus Christ spoke about the Pharisees apply to some Christians today. Jesus said, “These people draw near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off and are far away from Me.” (Matthew 15:8)

Do not be a person who goes through the motions of being a Christian without being completely focused on the indwelling presence of Father God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (see Colossians 2:10). Your heart is what God’s looks at. “...The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (II Samuel 16:7)

MAKE THE QUALITY DECISION THAT YOU WILL TURN COMPLETELY AWAY FROM THE WAYS OF THE WORLD. “If then you have died with Christ to material ways of looking at things and have escaped from the world’s crude and elemental notions and teachings of externalism, why do you live as if you still belong to the world?...” (Colossians 2:20)

Please focus on the words “died with Christ to material ways of looking at things” in this verse. If Jesus Christ is your Savior, He wants you to die from focusing on the ways of the world just as He died for you. He wants your life to revolve around heavenly principles instead of focusing on the ways of the world.

Jesus Christ has set every person who has received Him as his or her Savior free from the external ways of the world. If you consistently surrender your life to Christ, you will not live as if you still belong to the world. Every aspect of your life will revolve around God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit Who live in your heart.

Some Christians who want to live good and moral lives still live as though they belong to the world. They do not understand the scriptural instructions that we are studying in this teaching. Some Christians have no concept of the spiritual damage that is caused by what they allow to come into their

eyes and their ears from television, movies, radio and other worldly methods of communication. They allow their eyes and the ears to be filled with worldly concepts instead of consistently filling their eyes and their ears with the Word of God.

REFUSE TO BE CONTAMINATED BY THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.

God instructs each of His children to "...keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world." (James 1:27)

If your life truly revolves around the indwelling presence of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you will not be contaminated by anything in the world. Your priorities will be the way that God wants them to be. Andrew Murray, a South African writer, teacher and pastor, once said, "Shut the world out, withdraw from all worldly thoughts and occupations and shut yourself in alone with God."

What Andrew Murray said lines up perfectly with the Word of God. Absolutely refuse to put anyone or anything in the world ahead of God in your life. "...abide in (live in, never depart from) Him [being rooted in Him, knit to Him]..." (I John 2:27)

Do these words describe your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Is He the solid foundation of your life? Does every aspect of your life revolve around Him?

YOUR FATHER WANTS YOU TO MAKE THE QUALITY DECISION TO CONSTANTLY TURN AWAY FROM THE SUPERFICIAL WAYS OF THE WORLD. "...Turn away from the irreverent babble *and* godless chatter, with the vain and empty and worldly phrases, and the subtleties and the contradictions in what is falsely called knowledge and spiritual illumination." (I Timothy 6:20)

Please note the words "the irreverent babble and godless chatter" near the beginning of this verse. Many people in the world talk about things that have absolutely nothing to do with God. You will only be able to walk in the victory that Jesus Christ won for you when he victoriously rose from death to the degree that you consistently turn away from the ways of the world and turn toward Christ. Many people in the world today waste their God-given right to speak constructive words by continually speaking meaningless words about things in the world that have absolutely no

eternal significance. God has given each Christian the ability to think different thoughts and to speak a different language than unbelievers.

You cannot understand the Bible until Jesus Christ is your Savior. Once you receive this understanding, take full advantage of it and consistently focus on the teachings of the Word of God instead of things in the world.

FOCUS CONTINUALLY ON WHAT GOD INSTRUCTS YOU TO FOCUS ON INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON ANYTHING IN THE WORLD. "...set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth." (Colossians 3:2)

The amplification in this verse instructs you to keep your mind set on the "higher things" of God. Absolutely refuse to allow the temporal things of the world to consume your thinking. Consistently separate yourself from the way that unbelievers live. Learn to live from the inside out, not from the outside in. Focus every aspect of your life around the indwelling presence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with a mind and a heart that is filled with the Word of God if you faithfully obey your Father's instructions in this area.

If you faithfully renew your mind by studying God's Word each day, you will turn more and more away from the world. "Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude]..." (Romans 12:2)

The second amplification in this verse instructs you to turn completely away from the "external, superficial customs" of the world. How do you accomplish this goal? If you consistently obey God's instructions to renew your mind in His Word, your life will be transformed. You will look at life more and more from God's perspective instead of the ways of the world. Obey God's instructions to study His Word each day (see II Corinthians 4:16) and meditate on His Word day and night (see Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2-3).

Make the decision that you will transform your mind to think more and more the way that God thinks by renewing your mind in God's Word each day. "...you have stripped off the old (unregenerate) self with its evil practices, and have clothed yourselves with the new [spiritual self], which is [ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect

knowledge upon] knowledge after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it.” (Colossians 3:9-10)

Please note the words “stripped off” at the beginning of this passage of Scripture. Your Father wants you to completely cleanse from the external focus that you had before you were saved (and that many Christians still have.)

Please note the words “ever in the process of being renewed and remolded” in this passage of Scripture. The more that you make the quality decision to continually renew your mind in God’s Word, the more you will think the way that God thinks. “...Though our outer man is [progressively] decaying and wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day after day.” (II Corinthians 4:16).

We all are growing older. God instructs you to offset the decay that takes place in your body as you grow older by consistently renewing your mind in His Word “day after day.”

I pray that the scriptural contents in this month’s teaching will be very helpful to you. I pray that these great truths from God’s Word will enable you to consistently turn more and more away from the world to live the way that your Father instructs you to live.