

Session 4: Deal or No Deal

Overview: 1 John 2:12-29

As you study 1 John, you'll notice the Apostle describes God-ness versus Not-God-ness. His desire is to create a clear distinction between the Truth of the Gospel and the lies being told by those who are trying to influence the church. In 1 John, the Apostle sets up opposites - truth versus lie, sin versus faithfulness, light versus darkness, Christ versus antichrist, etc.

In this section, John is characterizing that distinction by comparing what "the world" offers against what God offers. We can think of it in terms of a deal one may choose to accept or reject. In this text, John describes the deal both explicitly, "Don't love the world and *what it offers...*" and implicitly, "The person *who rejects* the Father and the Son is an antichrist."

To embrace the world was to stand opposed to the revelation of God in Christ. The world, due to its alien spirit toward God and all that is holy, creates opportunities for temptations that appeal to normal appetites... ..Valuing the things of the world disproportionately or illegally is to love things above God. This is idolatry in anticipation of the warning that ends 1 John: 'Dear Children, keep yourselves from idols.' (5:21)
Williamson, R., 1, 2, & 3 John.

You'll also note in this session's text that John refers directly to those "antichrists" who have left the church and fallen from the faith and who are now tormenting the church: "You've heard that an antichrist is coming. Certainly, many antichrists are already here. That's how we know it's the end of time. They left us. However, they were never really part of us. If they had been, they would have stayed with us. But by leaving they made it clear that none of them were part of us." (2:18-21). Many scholars refer to this group of people who abandoned the faith as the "Secessionists." Their presence (and their untruths) are implied throughout 1 John.

Bad Motives, Bad Deals

In the 1 John text for this session, John describes the bad deal that the world offers - *Not everything that the world offers—physical gratification, greed, and extravagant lifestyles—comes from the Father.* Why is it that so many take that deal, to their ultimate, in fact eternal, dismay? What's at the root of the bad deal?

Bernie Madoff promised his family and his investors wealth beyond their dreams. His Ponzi scheme left him in prison and led to multiple suicides, including his son Mark's. In 1925 Victor Lustig became famous as the man who sold the Eiffel Tower in Paris to a scrap metal dealer who believed Lustig's forged government documents and false promises. Lustig walked away with a suitcase full of cash while the conned buyer, in shame, kept silent.

In 1975, a French lawyer, Andre-Francois Raffray, coveted an apartment being occupied by a 90-year old woman, Jeanne Calment. So, Raffray offered the elderly woman a deal he thought he couldn't lose. He would pay her 2,500 francs (\$500) a month for the rest of her life if, when she died, he could take over the apartment regardless of how much money had been paid in total. He thought the woman would live a few more months, perhaps a year, and he would have a luxurious apartment ripped-off for 10 cents on the dollar.

That name Jeanne Calment may be familiar to you because, after signing the deal with Raffray, she lived to be the oldest person in history, finally passing away at the age of 122. Raffray himself died before Calment did. Under the contract, Raffray's wife was forced to continue the payments. By the time Calment died, she had been paid almost three times what the apartment was worth! What's at the root of these kinds of deals?

Gathering

Members of the groups should be placed in pairs (but should not be paired with a family member). In their pairs, both members should agree on three adjectives that definitely describe both of them, as well as three adjectives that definitely do not describe either of them.

They should write the two lists down under "Do Describe" and "Don't Describe" and give them to the leader.

After all lists have been submitted, the leader reads them and the group must guess which pair each list refers to.

Session Text: 1 John 2:12-29

Read the text for this session:

I'm writing to you, dear children, because your sins are forgiven through Christ. I'm writing to you, fathers, because you know Christ who has existed from the beginning. I'm writing to you, young people, because you have won the victory over the evil one. I've written to you, children, because you know the Father. I've written to you, fathers, because you know Christ, who has existed from the beginning. I've written to you, young people, because you are strong and God's word lives in you. You have won the victory over the evil one. Don't love the world and what it offers. Those who love the world don't have the Father's love in them. Not everything that the world offers—physical gratification, greed, and extravagant lifestyles—comes from the Father. It comes from the world, and the world and its evil desires are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever. Children, it's the end of time. You've heard that an antichrist is coming. Certainly, many antichrists are already here. That's how we know it's the end of time. They left us. However, they were never really part of us. If they had been, they would have stayed with us. But by leaving they made it clear that none of them were part of us. The Holy One has anointed you, so all of you have knowledge. I'm writing to you because you know the truth, not because you don't know the truth. You know that no lie ever comes from the truth. Who is a liar? Who else but the person who rejects Jesus as the Messiah? The person who rejects the Father and the Son is an antichrist. Everyone who rejects the Son doesn't have the Father either. The person who acknowledges the Son also has the Father. Make sure that the message you heard from the beginning lives in you. If that message lives in you, you will also live in the Son and in the Father. Christ has given us the promise of eternal life. I'm writing to you about those who are trying to deceive you. The anointing you received from Christ lives in you. You don't need anyone to teach you something else. Instead, Christ's anointing teaches you about everything. His anointing is true and contains no lie. So live in Christ as he taught you to do. Now, dear children, live in Christ. Then, when he appears we will have confidence, and when he comes we won't turn from him in shame. If you know that Christ has God's approval, you also know that everyone who does what God approves of has been born from God. (*emphasis added*)



Unpacking the Text

After reading the text, write the different deals being discussed in terms of what is being offered.



The world offers

Participants may consider:

- Physical gratification
- Greed
- Materialism
- Evil desires
- Shame

God offers

Participants may consider:

- The Father's Love
- Completer of faith
- Eternal life
- Anointing
- Understanding

Has there been a time in your life when you took the world's deal or were tempted to? What caused that? Why do so many people take the world's deal? Or, reject God's?

Video

The video for this session may be accessed here:

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=9MEMFJNU>

In the video, the Switchfoot song declares - “we were meant to live for so much more, but we lost ourselves...” With all that we know about the right direction, the Right Way, how is it that we get lost?



The View from Holiness

The Apostle John is concerned not just that we know the Truth, but that we *live* it. In this session’s text, he implores:

Christ’s anointing teaches you about everything. His anointing is true and contains no lie. So live in Christ as he taught you to do. Now, dear children, live in Christ. Then, when he appears we will have confidence, and when he comes we won’t turn from him in shame. (1 John 2:27-28)

Perhaps our greatest error is in thinking that living in the Light is somehow arduous, tedious, boring, or painful. It’s just the opposite, the Light is where the life is!

What’s the most joyful you’ve ever been in your life? When have you sensed true peace, happiness and fulfillment? That feeling you had then will be multiplied many times over when, in your final moment, you realize that your life lived in the Light will give you confidence (Imagine it!) when He comes.

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