When Loves Comes to Town
PT 4 Who Sits on the Throne of Your Heart
David Caplan
Key Scripture:

1 John 2:12–17 (NIV)
14 I write to you, dear children,
because you know the Father. I write to
you, fathers, because you know him
who is from the beginning. I write to
you, young men, because you are
strong, and the word of God lives in
you, and you have overcome the evil
one.15 Do not love the world or
anything in the world. If anyone loves
the world, love for the Father is not in
them. 16 For everything in the world—
the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,
and the pride of life—comes not from
the Father but from the world. 17 The
world and its desires pass away, but
whoever does the will of God lives
forever.

Genesis 3:6–7 (NIV)
6 When the woman saw that the fruit of
the tree was good for food and pleasing
to the eye, and also desirable for
gaining wisdom, she took some and ate
it. She also gave some to her husband,
who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then
the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized they were naked; so
they sewed fig leaves together and
made coverings for themselves.

Matthew 6:24 (NIV)
24 "No one can serve two masters.
Either you will hate the one and love
the other, or you will be devoted to the
one and despise the other. You cannot
serve both God and money.

1 John 1:3–4 (NIV)
3 We proclaim to you what we have
seen and heard, so that you also may
have fellowship with us. And our
fellowship is with the Father and with
his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to
make our joy complete.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What is something you enjoy, value or take pleasure in? Why?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read 1 John 2:14.** Why does John address children, fathers and young men? What does this tell us about spiritual maturity and growth?
- **Read 1 John 2:15-17.** What does it mean to love the Father versus loving the world? Why are they mutually exclusive?
- What is meant by "the world" in **John 3:16** and **1 John 2:15-17**? Discuss the differences.
- **Read Matthew 6:24** and **Genesis 3:6-7.** God's love draws us closer while the world seeks to separate us from Him. What draws us to the world and its temptations?
- **Read 1 John 2:16.** Of the three, l*ust of the flesh*, *lust of the eyes* and *pride of life*, which of these most impacts your life? And how do you guard against it?
- In **1 John 2:17,** what is the promise given to us?
- If the wisest and richest man who ever lived could not find joy in worldly pursuit, what hope is there for us? See **1 John 1:3-4.**

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- ***Think about:*** How do you spend your time? How do you spend your money? On what or whom do you focus your thoughts? What brings you joy?

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Heavenly Father, help us to remember that we were not created for this world, but help us to focus on who You are and Your Love for us.

Question: "What is the pride of life?"

Answer: The phrase "pride of life" is found only once in the Bible, in 1 John 2:16, but the concept of the pride of life, especially as it is linked with the "lust of the eyes" and the "lust of the flesh," appears in two more significant passages of Scripture—the temptation of Eve in the Garden and the temptation of Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4:8-10). The pride of life can be defined as anything that is "of the world," meaning anything that leads to arrogance, ostentation, pride in self, presumption, and boasting. John makes it clear that anything that produces the pride of life comes from a love of the world and "if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

The first example of the temptation of the pride of life occurs in the Garden of Eden, where Eve was tempted by the serpent to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve perceived that the fruit was "good for food," "pleasing to the eye," and "desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6). She coveted the fruit in three ways. First, it was appealing to her appetite. This John refers to as the "lust of the flesh," the desire for that which satisfies any of the physical needs. The fruit was also pleasing or delightful to the eye, that which we see and desire to own or possess. Here is the "lust of the eyes" John refers to. Finally, Eve somehow perceived that the fruit would make her wise, giving her a wisdom beyond her own. Part of Satan's lie was that eating the fruit would make her "like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

Here is the essence of the pride of life—anything that exalts us above our station and offers the illusion of God-like qualities, wherein we boast in arrogance and worldly wisdom. Eve wanted to be like God in her knowledge, not content to live in a perfect world under His perfect grace and care for her. Satan tried these same three temptations on Christ during His 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). He tempted Jesus with the lust of the flesh, bread for His hunger (vv. 2-3), the lust of the eyes, "all the kingdoms of the world with their splendor" (vv. 8-9), and the pride of life, daring Him to cast Himself from the roof of the Temple in order to prove that He was the Messiah by an ostentatious display of power that was not in the will of God or His plan for the redemption of mankind (vv. 5-6). But Jesus, though He was "tempted in every way, just as we are" (Hebrews 4:15), resisted the devil and used the Word of God to ensure victory over him.

Christians have always been, and will always be, lured by the same three temptations Eve and Jesus experienced. Satan doesn't change his methods; he doesn't have to because they continue to be successful. He tempts us with the lust of the flesh—sexual gratification, gluttony, excessive alcohol consumption, and drugs, both legal and illegal, as well as the "deeds of the flesh" about which Paul warned the Galatians, "sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these" (Galatians 5:19-21). He tempts us with the lust of the eyes—the endless accumulation of "stuff" with which we fill our homes and garages and the insatiable desire for more, better, and newer possessions, which ensnares us and hardens our hearts to the things of God.

But perhaps his most evil temptation is the pride of life, the very sin that resulted in Satan's expulsion from heaven. He desired to be God, not to be a servant of God (Isaiah 14:12-15). The arrogant boasting which constitutes the pride of life motivates the other two lusts as it seeks to elevate itself above all others and fulfill all personal desires. It is the root cause of strife in families, churches, and nations. It exalts the self in direct contradiction to Jesus' statement that those who would follow Him must take up their cross (an instrument of death) and deny themselves. The pride of life stands in our way if we truly seek to be servants of God. It is the arrogance that separates us from others and limits our effectiveness in the kingdom. The pride of life "comes not from the Father, but from the world." And, as such, it is passing away with the world, but those who resist and overcome the temptation of the pride of life do the will of God, and "the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17).

© Copyright 2002-2024 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved.
www.GotQuestions.org