“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. Matthew 7:26, 27

The world, the flesh and the devil are often cited as the enemies of God’s people. Regarding the world, Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Thus, the world’s hatred will not destroy God’s people. Regarding Satan, Jesus prayed, “keep them from the evil (one)” (John 17:15). Thanks to Christ’s intercession, Satan cannot take God’s people from His protection (John 10:28, 29; Luke 22:32; Romans 8:33-39). By Christ’s obedience and resurrection, He overcame the world and the devil, so that His people are more than conquerors.

The greatest battle is with our flesh. Peter warned, “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (I Peter 2:11). Paul lamented, “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing . . . how to perform that which is good I find not” (Romans 7:18). John warned, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15, 16).

Herein John shows that “the world” is simply the combined lust of mankind, packaged for mass participation. It is exhibited in culture at large—“the course of this world” (Ephesians 2:2). Satan is its god, having blinded mankind regarding the judgment to which it delivers its admirers (II Corinthians 4: 3, 4). Its counterpart is individual lusts, which inhabit every human mind. They answer to it and identify with it, for it matches their own identity. It is revealed in their zeal to fit in with the prevailing culture. Against this world-system, and the desire to fit into it, Paul, Peter and John warn.

Christ also exhorts, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (16:24). “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). He described the person whose life is built upon anything other than His word, as being like a man who built his house upon the sand. When the storm raged, that house fell.

Love of this world-system is the greatest foe of professed Christians and of the church. Like termites that eat away the strength of a building, but leave the failing structure in tact until its collapse, worldliness eats away at God’s people and at Christ’s church. Whereas Peter warns that lusts war against the soul, John admonishes that love for this world-system reveals that the
person does not possess God’s love. He warns that this world-system will pass away, leaving its lovers with nothing. This is Christ’s message when He advised against building upon sand. He describes those who do so as coming to judgment with great confidence of their acceptance, but only to be rejected when He tells them, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:18-29). Worldliness is the church’s greatest foe, and the lusts that fuel it are the Christian’s greatest foe.

Individual lusts war against the soul, their enlarged counterpart in the world moreso.

inventions of individual lusts; the combined corruptions of humanity packaged to be marketed profitably amalgamation

When buying a car, do you ask, what will transport me best, or what will make me look best?

You can name the Orioles’ starting lineup, but struggle to name Jacob’s sons or Jesus’ disciples.

What is the latest in pop culture and fashion, and how may I acquire it?

Is my home better than so-in-so’s

How can I be esteemed?

Do I contemplate how other people perceive me, in order to elevate my status?

In selecting attire, what drives me most: fashion or modesty.

Do I ask myself how I might best represent Christ, or self?

Do I chose my possessions and actions based upon what will make me look best? Upon how I might best fit in?

Do I accept the reproach of Christ, or desire to be perceived as “with it” among my peers?

Am I governed in my desires and tastes by Php 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Do I desire prayer meeting more than sports gatherings? Which wins my time and presence?
4:5, 1Jo 5:4-5, 1Jo 5:10; Joh 15:19; Rom 12:2; Gal 1:10; Eph 2:2; Col 3:1-2; 1Ti 6:10
If: Mat 6:24; Luk 16:13; Jam 4:4

the love: 1Jo 3:17