

“BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD”

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).



Introduction

1. Not conformed, but transformed.

a. A look at the words “conformed” and “world”.

- 1) The word “conformed” is from the Greek word *suschēmatizō* (G4964), which is formed of two words: *sún*, “together with”, and *schēmatizō*, “to fashion”. To fashion alike, conform to the same pattern outwardly. An expanded rendering might read, “Stop being molded by the external and fleeting fashions of this age...”.¹ The Greek word *suschēmatizō* appears in one other place where it is translated “fashioning yourselves”:

“As obedient children, not *fashioning yourselves* according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Peter 1:14).

“And do not be conformed to this world.”
“The thought is that one is not to be molded or patterned after the age (‘world’) that is in rebellion to God” (Clinton D. Hamilton).

- 2) The word “world” is from the Greek word *aiōn* (G165), which “denotes duration or continuance of time...” (Complete Word Dictionary). The ACV, AMPC (in parenthesis), LITV, and YLT translate it as “age”. “The thought is that one is not to be molded or patterned after the age (‘world’) that is in rebellion to God” (Clinton D. Hamilton). Another way of putting it: “One must not fashion or conform himself according to the principles of this age’s wisdom” (Ibid).

b. In opposition to being conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) and fashioning ourselves according to former lusts (1 Peter 1:14) we must be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

- 1) Transformed (Romans 12:2). The word “transformed” is from the Greek word *metamorphōō*, which is formed of two words: *metá* (G3326), denoting change of place or condition, and *morphōō* (G3445), to form. To transform, transfigure, change one’s form (see Complete Word Dictionary). The same word is used to describe what the disciples witnessed on the mount: “And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured (*metamorphōō*) before them” (Mark 9:2). It is also used to describe a Christian’s transformation: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed (*metamorphōō*) into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18). A Christian must undergo a complete transformation of moral character.

The mind is the source of a person’s behavior, and it is the mind that both the Holy Spirit and Satan seek to influence: The Holy Spirit through the scriptures and Satan through seven avenues by which he maintains his sway over the whole world (1 John 5:19).

- 2) This transformation of moral character is not instantaneous, but is a process that takes place through the “renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). The word “renewing” means “new in the sense of quality or kind, not in relation to time (Vine’s Dictionary). Clinton D. Hamilton says, “The mind is the source of a person’s behavior (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:34-37; 15:16-20). When one is baptized, he is raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4), and the process of bringing about new conduct through the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2)”.

- 3) This whole process may be said to be the pursuit of God’s will – our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3) and holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16; Hebrews 12:14).

¹ See “The Complete Word Study Dictionary”.

2. The question we need to ask ourselves from time-to-time is, “Am I being transformed by the renewing of my mind or am I still, to some degree, conformed to the world?” Or we might ask, “Am I still, to some degree, still worldly?” People give different answers: “No”, “I hope not”, and “What do you mean by worldliness?”
3. In this lesson we shall consider three streams of thought: (i) the avenues through which temptations come, (ii) the danger of worldliness, and (iii) how we can protect ourselves.



I. THREE AVENUES OF TEMPTATION (1 John 2:15-17)

There are three avenues through which Satan tempts us: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

A. All the sinful things of the world come under these three categories.

1. John says:

“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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

2. These are the three avenues through which Satan tempted Eve unto disobedience:

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath Elohim said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, Elohim hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for Elohim doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [**the lust of the flesh**], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [**the lust of the eyes**], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [**the pride of life**], she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:1-6).

3. These are the three avenues through which Jesus was tempted unto disobedience:

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread [**the lust of the flesh**]. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone [**the pride of life**]. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me [**the lust of the eyes**]. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him” (Matthew 4:1-11).

B. Desires are not inherently sinful. The Greek word *epithumia* (“lust”) is a morally neutral word - it takes either a good or a bad connotation depending upon the context of the passage.

1. **The lust of the flesh.** God has given us certain desires that are good within themselves:

a. The desire to eat and drink is both natural and necessary, but to do so to excess is sinful:

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

b. The desire to sleep is both natural and necessary, but laziness and slothfulness is sinful:

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Proverbs 6:6).

“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man” (Proverbs 6:10-11).

- c. The desire for marriage and intimacy is necessary for propagation, but such intimacy outside of marriage is sinful (**Hebrews 13:4**).

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (**1 Corinthians 7:1-2**).

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (**Hebrews 13:4**).

2. **The lust of the eyes.** This certainly refers to coveting what one sees with the physical eye, “but also what is encompassed and embraced by the mind and the imagination” (Daniel H. King, Sr). Simply put, the lust of the eyes is the sinful desire to possess what we see or to have those things which have visual appeal. Moses and Jesus warned against covetousness:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's” (**Exodus 20:17**).

“And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (**Luke 12:15**).

3. **The pride of life.** This refers to anything that causes one to feel proud.

- a. Quotes that help us to understand pride:

“The word here used means, properly, ostentation or boasting, and then arrogance or pride. - Robinson. It refers to whatever there is that tends to promote pride, or that is an index of pride, such as the ostentatious display of dress, equipage, furniture, etc.” (Albert Barnes).

“The pride of life: by which seems to be meant, ambition of honour, of chief places and high titles, as in the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:6), or of grand living, for the word signifies not so much life as living; living in a sumptuous, gay, luxurious, and pompous manner, in rich diet, costly apparel, having fine seats, palaces, and stately buildings, and numerous attendance” (John Gill).

“... wanting to impress people, to be noticed, admired by others” (David J. Riggs).

- b. Warnings against pride:

“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Yahweh alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of Yahweh of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low” (**Isaiah 2:11-12**).

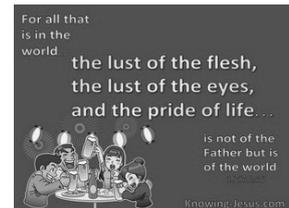
“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (**Proverbs 16:18**).

“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (**Proverbs 29:23**).

- c. Three kings that succumbed to pride:

- 1) Darius (**Daniel 6:1-9**).
- 2) Nebuchadnezzar (**Daniel 4:28-33**).
- 3) Uzziah (**2 Chronicles 26:1-21**).

- C. Regardless of how we are tempted, it is important to always keep in mind God's promise: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (**1 Corinthians 10:13**).



Psalms 73:1-23

Some become discouraged when they see the prosperity, peace, and pride of the wicked and begin to wonder if there is any advantage in religion. Yet consider: what is the end of the wicked? And what is the end of the righteous? This is enough to prevent our feet from slipping and continue in our faithfulness to God.

II. WORLDLINESS CHOKES OUT THE WORD (Luke 8:4-15)

God has promised that if we seek first His kingdom, then He will supply all our physical needs. It is when we “forget” this truth that the concerns of the world choke out His word and we end up falling away.

A. Why did Jesus speak in parables (Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10)?

1. The disciples could not figure out what the parable meant and so they asked Jesus what it meant, and why He spoke in parables. Jesus answered saying...

“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:11-15).

2. Jesus spoke in parables that the secrets of the kingdom might be revealed to the spiritually minded and hidden from the carnally minded.
3. Paul said something similar: “However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:6-11). The idea, then, was to teach without changing important upcoming events.

B. The parable of the sower: told and explained.

1. The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-9). Jesus left Capernaum and came to the shore of Lake Galilee, and a great multitude soon gathered. So Jesus entered a boat, using it as a platform to address the multitude on the shore; speaking to them in parables. The first is the parable of the sower:

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, **some seeds fell by the way side**, and the fowls came and devoured them up: **some fell upon stony places**, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And **some fell among thorns**; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but **other fell into good ground**, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 13:3-9).

2. Jesus’ explanation of the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15).

“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:18-23).

3. Understanding this Parable is important because it serves as the foundation for understanding other parables. The key to understanding parables is to identify the symbols: the seed is the word of God being sown. The ground represents four types of people.

- The hard ground represent people who hear the teachings of God, but it doesn't enter them – that is, it makes no impact in their lives. What little they receive is quickly taken away.
- The stony ground represents people who gladly receive the word of God, but they have no root in themselves: their faith is shallow, not founded on a deep personal conviction.
- The thorny ground represents people who receive the word, but they do not leave the world behind. While trying to hold on to both, the cares and distractions of the world eventually chokes out their faith in God (**Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13**).
- The good ground represents those who with noble and good hearts both hear the word and understand it. They have a personal conviction that it is right and they find strength in its teachings to carry them through both the good and bad times. These ones bear much fruit.



C. It is the seed that fell among thorny ground that is relevant to our lesson.

1. Jesus describes a person who hears the word but that word is soon choked out by...

a. Cares. The Greek word is *mérimna* (G3308); “Anxiety, care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind” (Complete Word Dictionary). This is the same Greek word Paul used when he said, “Be *anxious* (G3308) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (**Philippians 4:6**). This doesn't mean we shouldn't exercise no care at all about worldly matters – providing for our families (**cp. 1 Timothy 5:8**); preserving our property, etc., “but that there is to be such confidence in God as to free the mind from anxiety, and such a sense of dependence on him as to keep it calm (cp. Matthew 6:25-34)” (Albert Barnes). Anxiety about such worldly things is indicative of a lack of trust in God: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (**Matthew 6:33**).

b. Riches. This refers to money and all that money can buy. They are described as “deceitful” because people tend to believe that the acquisition of such things will bring them happiness, security, peace, and even status among their peers, but wealth and possessions do not keep their promises. True happiness (**Matthew 5:2-12**), security (**Romans 8:35-39**), and peace (**Philippians 4:6-7**) are only found in Christ Jesus (**Ephesians 1:3**).

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

c. Pleasures of life. This phrase refers to “the fleeting enjoyment of that which is tied to one's earthly existence as opposed to eternal spiritual blessings. Here, it is focused upon base, covetous, and/or licentious gratification which takes us away from God (1 John 2:15-17)” (Colly Caldwell). Serving lusts and pleasures are characteristics of the unregenerate (**Titus 3:3**). We all need to follow the example of Moses:

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (**Hebrews 11:24-26**).

2. These “thorny people” seem to advance farther in faith than the first two groups, but they allow worldly concerns to choke out the word. It is important to understand that each one is ultimately responsible for growing his own faith, and accountable when he falls away.

3. All these things – anxiety, covetousness, and pleasure seeking – reveal one's lack of trust in God, a lack of appreciation for all the spiritual blessings in Christ, and a carnal or worldly mind.

III. PROTECT YOURSELF (Ephesians 6:10-18; Proverbs 4:23; 1 Corinthians 10:13)

There are three ways to protect yourself against worldliness: put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23), and believe God's promises (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Many are content to know the Lord's will, but few want to know *how* to perform it because they know it would take them beyond the borders of their comfort zone. Though some will venture to image a *how* that keeps them within the boundaries of their comfort zone.

A. Paul makes it clear that we are in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:12), and God has provided the armor we need to fight on the battlefield. The enemy, of course, is Satan: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). It is essential to put on the whole armor of God "that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). The armor²:

1. "... having girded your waist with truth" (6:14a). The girdle or belt was the foundation among the items of armor. It tied the soldiers clothing in place to the body. It held in place his sword and other parts of his regalia. A Christian's belt is truth and we must put it on. This "truth" is that which is revealed in the scriptures (John 17:17).
2. "... having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (6:14b). The breastplate covered the torso from the neck to the thighs; protecting all the vital organs. A Christian's breastplate is righteousness, which is moral uprightness, virtuous goodness in character and practice. It is one's commitment to such a life that serves to protect the heart and mind from danger. "When godliness and integrity are woven into one's being, he has wrapped around himself an iron vest which cannot be penetrated" (Colly Caldwell).
3. "... having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (6:15). Roman soldiers wore sandals with hobnail spikes to assure good footing. So their feet were shod and they were prepared to go into battle. A Christian must be prepared to go into battle, and this preparedness originates with God. "It can only be effective through dependence upon the gospel... The preparation attained through the application of the good news of peace to the willing heart wins the battle. Being ready always to answer the call of the gospel doing what it says, bearing it to the lost, and filling our hearts with its instructions prepare us. The good news facilitates our movement by preparing us to stand valiantly in battle" (Colly Caldwell).
4. "... above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (6:16). The soldier's shield was a solid, full-body covering. It was sometimes lined with metal and was able to repel fiery darts, lances, and spears. A Christian is to take the shield of faith, and, provided it is founded in the word, will be able to repel temptations, doubts, fears, human reasoning, anxiety, lust, greed, envy, and all other pernicious, wicked attempts by Satan to bring one to ruin.
5. "... And take the helmet of salvation" (6:17a). The soldier's helmet was sometimes made of leather and sometimes made of metal. Such gave the soldier protection to the head from the enemy's missiles. A Christian is to wear the helmet of salvation, which is likely the salvation one experienced upon obeying the gospel (Mark 16:16; Colossians 1:13-14) and the hope of future glory (1 Thessalonians 5:8). "A clear remembrance of one's deliverance (2 Peter 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:13-15) is a powerful weapon and defense against evil. The Christian who has 'heaven' on their mind, will not trade such eternal wealth for some short-lived earthly pleasure (Hebrews 11:25-26)" (Mark Dunagan).
6. "... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:17b). The soldier's weapon was a short sword that was most effective in close-quarter combat. A Christian's sword is the word of God that we use to expose falsehood (Ephesians 5:11; Titus 1:9) and fight off temptation. The great example of this was Jesus combating the temptation of Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).



² The armor and its description are based on Colly Caldwell's and Mark Dunagan's comments.

7. "... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (6:18). A soldier does not plan and direct battles, but depends on his superior for such. A Christian cannot fight the good fight alone; one must wholly depend on the Lord, and this is done through prayer. Indeed, we are commanded to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- B. If we are to guard against worldliness, then it is essential to guard the heart. Solomon wrote: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). There are seven ways to guard the heart, but we will just mention three:
- 1. Guards at the portals.** Whatever finds its way into the mind does so through two portals: the eyes and the ears. In regards to the many negative images, words, and ideas that enter the mind through the portals each day, we have no control (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). However, there are some things over which we do have control. So where we do have a choice, let us be sure to exercise it.

"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalms 101:2-3).

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way" (Psalms 119:37).
 - 2. Good company.** We associate with people every day, and don't have much of a choice (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). However, there are times when we do have a choice and we ought to keep company with those that encourage good habits (Proverbs 13:20) and avoid the sort of company that would corrupt good habits (1 Corinthians 15:33).

"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26).
 - 3. Keep your focus.** While we do not have control over everything that enters into our mind, we do have a choice on that which we focus our thoughts and affections:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

"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" (Philippians 4:8).

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).
- C. Standing on the promises of God. Satan has many wiles or strategies (Ephesians 6:11) and devices or schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11). Peter warns: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Yet he is limited in His power; God has promised that he cannot tempt us beyond that which we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13), and that if we resist him he will flee from us (James 4:7). So we can never claim that a temptation was too strong for us – it is to call God a liar!
- "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Conclusion

1. Writing to the Christians at Rome, Paul says, “And **be not conformed** to this world: **but be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (**Romans 12:2**). Whether one has just recently obeyed the gospel or been a Christian for some time, there is always the danger of being conformed to this world once again. As Paul said, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (**1 Corinthians 10:12**).
2. If we are to prevent ourselves being drawn back into the world and once again being governed by its principles, it is essential to understand how Satan tempts us - how the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out the word, and how we can protect ourselves.
 - a. John identifies three avenues through which Satan tempts us: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (**1 John 2:15-17**). Knowing the avenues through which we are tempted allows us to prepare ourselves for such attacks. For example, knowing we are tempted through the lust of the flesh, we can follow Paul’s advice: “But clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and make no provision for [indulging] the flesh [put a stop to thinking about the evil cravings of your physical nature] to [gratify its] desires (lusts)” (**Romans 13:14** ^{AMPC}).
 - b. If we lack trust in the promises of God (e.g., **Matthew 6:31-34**), then the world will begin to make inroads and gradually choke out the word from our hearts and minds. Jesus lists the top three concerns likely to choke the word: anxiety, covetousness, pleasure seeking.
 - c. It is essential that we learn to protect ourselves against worldliness, and we have considered three of the main ways to do so (i) Put on the armor of God, (ii) Guard your heart, and (iii) Stand on the promises of God.
3. It is not enough to be aware of the wiles and schemes of the devil to choke the word in our lives and draw us back into the world, we must also be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (**Romans 12:2b**). We will discuss what this means and how to be renewed in another lesson.

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