

Three Sins

“For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). The litmus test for Christian conduct could not be more plainly stated. There are no sins that escape at least one of these categories and most fit into more than one. The connection alone, *“in the world,”* is sufficiently descriptive in and of itself – we should not be *“of this world”* (John 18:36).

We are a unique people, we Christians, described as *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, His own special people”* (1 Peter 2:9). Frequently called legalistic (Pharisees), literalists, exclusive, non-conformists, anti-cultural, even odd, we do not cater to the vote of the majority on issues concerning morality or salvation (John 17:17), we do *“not follow the crowd to do evil”* (Exodus 23:2, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33). We are in the world but not *“of the world, ... therefore the world hates us”* (John 15:19) Yet, we cling to the fact that Christ in us *“is greater than he who is in the world”* (1 John 4:4). Because of Christ, we have *“escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Peter 1:4) and, since *“friendship with the world is enmity with God”* (James 4:4), the world is not our friend.

The parameters within which a Christian will operate are clearly articulated by John in the avoidance of these three categories. Therefore, if your words or deeds incite the lust of the flesh, you have put your body before the body of Christ. If what you say or do brings the lust of the eyes into focus, you have taken your eyes off Christ. If your activities or speech presumes a self-importance that feeds the pride of life, then you are not glorifying Christ.

The Christian will reject the evil in these categories categorically, not romanticize or rationalize them, not make excuses for them or point at others but, instead, recognize them for what they are, *“lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Corinthians 2:11). Instead, *“reaching for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13-14), we flee from them, running for our eternal life (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:14).