

Read: 1 John 2:15-17

Love what Lasts

1 John 2:17

The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A picture of the family from a Christmas long past popped up on Samantha's phone. She could tell it was an old picture because the clothes looked dated—bright colors with bold checkered patterns, flared pants, polyester materials. Samantha was glad that fashions had changed, but at the same time she sighed, "nothing lasts."

It is true about the things of this world. Cars break down and houses need remodeling. Roads seem constantly in repair and cities grow or shrink. The toys you received as gifts last Christmas are either broken or don't seem as shiny. But it is bigger than that. People change. Kids get bigger while the elderly slow down. A job is lost, and another is gained. People move from house to house, state to state, even country to country. New relationships are formed, and others fade. But it is even bigger than that. People do more than change; people pass away. Our very life on this earth will not last forever. It's true, nothing lasts.

The problem comes when we set our hearts on the things that do not last. It does not take much effort to fall in love with the things of this world. A fancy car is fun to drive. Relaxing with family and friends is enjoyable. Who doesn't want the upgraded gadget that does ten more things ten times better than the old model? But none of them last. And none of them unlock the key to eternity.

The apostle John offered a solution to our eternity problem, "whoever does the will of God lives forever." There is something—or better, someone—that lasts forever. God does! He has no beginning and no end. He does not change but is always the same. And he *is* love! God's love shines brightest from the cross of Jesus where forgiveness for all sins was unlocked. Jesus' forgiveness opens heaven to us, a place that will last forever.

A crowd once asked Jesus what they ought to do to carry out God's will. Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: *to believe* in the One He has sent" (John 6:29). Now listen again to John's solution for eternity, "whoever does the will of God lives forever." Trust in Jesus is the key to eternity. "Do not love the world"; love what lasts. Love Jesus!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name three things that you love.
- Where do you want to live forever?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why don't the things of this world last?
- How did God prove his love for us?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why would God choose to love us when we are sinful rebels?
- Why is it important for our spiritual lives that the things of this world wear out?

Closing Prayer:

Love in Christ abides forever, fainting not when ills attend; love, forgiving and forgiven, shall endure until life's end. Amen. (*Christian Worship* 723:3)