How far should a Christian go regarding worldliness?

1Peter 2v11 **Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;** 2 Timothy 2v4 **No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.**

Living in this world, and not being of the world, can often be a hard task at times. We war against the flesh constantly on a daily basis and our old man wants to keep getting off the cross (Gal 2v20, Rom 8v13, Col 3v5) and wants to return to the former sins and pleasures it once pursued.

Being new creatures in Christ is truly a eat blessing, we can forget the sins of the past and start a clean slate and a new chapter… *old things are passed away* (2 Cor 5v17). With this said however, living in our vile sinful flesh, we still must undergo a continual process of sanctification and set ourselves apart from the world – an easy thing to write and talk about but a hard thing to truly live by!

Sin is pleasurable (and if it wasn't we wouldn't have most of the problems we see today). The devil has been watching mankind for thousands of years now and has gripped the whole world with attractions and distractions from the Lord Jesus Christ, His word and what is really important in life. As the verse above in 2 Timothy says, when we are fighting in a battle out on the front lines the least we are concerned about are the affairs of this life, and as we wrestle and fight with the flesh, the devil and the world this verse really puts things into perspective.

As C.T. Studd once famously said, *"Only one life, 'twill soon be past only what's done for Christ will last"* which to me sums up how futile the temporal cares of this world are.

2 Corinthians 5v1-2 says **For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven**:

The Scriptures constantly say that this world is not our own; as we have read we are strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land, living in a temporal dwelling awaiting our eternal home in heaven, and with that said this again stresses the fact that a Christian should stick out like a sore thumb when it comes to conforming to the world (Rom 12v2).

We live in a place that is contrary to all that we stand for and represent; the Scriptures say that all that is in this world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (I John 2v16) and as Christians Christ *is* our life (Col 3v4) who is full of holiness, purity and righteousness. Never the twain shall meet!

If we continuously assessed the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and _really _sought to be like Him in our daily lives, looking to the example He left for us, we would certainly find ourselves changing many things in our lives, making different decisions and judgements and embracing a more resilient uncompromising attitude. The Bible warns us in I John 2v15 to **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.** Additionally it says the following in both John 19v15 and James 4v4 respectively…

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

It is very clear from Scripture that the Christian and the carnal, secular man are different; you cannot serve two masters (Matt 6v24) and simultaneously be a friend of the world and a friend of God. When people see you, make contact with you or spend time with you does your Christ-like attitude shine through or do you just look like one of the rest? Do people notice a difference in you or are you happy to compromise to fit in and please the crowd?

With regards to worldliness and how far a Christian should go, there should be two standards used; the Lord and the word of God (John 17v17). It is imperative for a Christian to keep his testimony as a witness to both unbelievers and backsliding Christians and just generally anyone and everyone around him. We should not seek to place ourselves in a situation that would damage or harm this witness in any way and likewise should not be seen to be condoning the very things we stand against. We are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5v21) and it is our testimony and stand for the Lord that can often prove the very existence of the Living God working in your life… Acts 9v22 **But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.**

Both creation and the Scriptures are full of God's design and fingerprints, and our consciences also tell us of God's existence. Similarly our testimonies are evidence of the existence of an Almighty God and if we lose this how can the unsaved see the existence of God if we seem to deny and compromise our beliefs?

We must look to the Lord in every area of our lives and seek to please Him above all else, keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus and asking for His help and guidance. He was totally committed to us through His life here on earth and we should do and be the same. Sanctification is a continual process and one that certainly takes a lot of work in this untoward generation but let us not take this lightly and draw some comfort in the following Scriptures…

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1v2-4