



NEW LIFE: Out Of This World

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Do you ever feel like you don't belong? We all have that from time to time. We are trying to figure out where we fit and have a place. In 1 Peter 2:9 we read that God calls us a "royal priesthood" that we discussed a couple weeks ago. Then he says this in verse 10: "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

We are a people. We belong. What's interesting about these people we are part of? They are out of this world!

The next verse in 1 Peter says this: "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11 NIV)." We are like a people in a foreign land! The amplified version of this verse says, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers [in this world] to abstain from the sensual urges [those dishonorable desires] that wage war against the soul" (AMP).

Aliens? We are like aliens, foreigners, and strangers here? No wonder we have trouble knowing how we fit in!

In John, Jesus is praying for his disciples and says this, "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." (John 17:14-16)

This is where we get the idea that we are IN the world, but we are not OF it.

- 1. In what ways are we like aliens here?**
- 2. What do you think it means that we are IN the world, but are not OF it?**

Notice that Jesus says that we are not of the world any more than he is of this world. That's a powerful statement. When we become followers of Jesus, we become citizens of the kingdom of God. We are "of heaven" now! Wow! Talk about a new identity!

If you woke up today and you knew nothing about who you were, how would you go about finding out? Where do we get our identity from? As 'foreigners' here we have to look to our 'homeland' to know who we are. That means we have to look to Jesus and the Bible.

Some would say the world is bad and we need to run away and hide from it—but is that what Jesus is saying? In verse 15 Jesus said, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” (vs. 15) He doesn’t want us to leave the world but stay and be faithful. Like we learned in last week’s study, we want to be salt in the world, to preserve and enhance it!

3. What are some of the challenges to staying in the world and being faithful? Are there times when we do need to run away from it?

A good lesson that can help us here is to look at what the bible says about handling money. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). Notice it’s the *love* of money that we should avoid. The point: **we draw our identity from what we love**. Love can have many different meanings. In this case, it seems to refer to misplaced desire. It might be more accurate to say, we draw our identity from what we are *bound and attached to*.

4. Have you ever heard that money is an excellent servant and a terrible master? What is an appropriate perspective on money?

5. How can we translate this to how we live in the world but of heaven?

Paul would often introduce himself as a “bondservant.” Slavery was common in the Roman world. However, in Jewish law, all the slaves were to be set free every seventh year. If a slave liked his master, he could decide to remain a bondservant by choice after that. Paul has willingly decided he would be bound to Jesus. Just like Paul, at some point we must make a decision about what we are bound and attached to. As we become citizens of heaven, we also begin to live from our new identity as children of God.

How do we do this? For one, we need to live by the Spirit! We cannot do this without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Notice in our verse above from 1 Peter that we are told “to abstain from sinful desires.” In other words- we need to live like we are from a different world, *and it’s possible*. Through the Spirit we *can* abstain from sinful desires! That’s good news! Let’s see what Paul says about it:

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want” (Galatians 5:16-17 NIV).

6. Based on this verse and what Jesus has said, what are some steps that we can take to make sure we are in the world but not of it.

7. What are some places where you find this the most difficult? How have you grown in this in your walk with Jesus?

GOING DEEPER>> READ John 15:1-17. Pray and consider the analogy that Jesus is presenting here. How do we do this and how does it help us live from our true identity in the kingdom of God?