

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 1:17 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Live Spiritually As A Temporary Foreign Resident

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever gone to a foreign country or an area that was comprised of a completely different culture and ethnic group? Can you remember what you experienced in your mind when you first arrived in that environment? Initially, was everything very strange to you? And after being there for a while, did you start to mentally adjust and get more acclimated the longer you stayed there? Hold on to the memories of that experience as we now study our next verse because they will help you relate to what the Word of God is saying.

READ: 1 Peter 1:17, with vv.13-16 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - God intends that we believers maintain a mindset in which we greatly rejoice about the present and future blessings that God gives us, which will sustain us as we endure persecution, trials, suffering, and sacrifices for the faith during this life. (vv.6,8-9)
 - - Through the proving of our faith within the enduring of persecution, trials, suffering, and sacrifices for the faith, we true believers will be prepared, equipped, and motivated to give tremendous praise, glory, and honor to God and to Jesus Christ, especially when Jesus is revealed at His second coming. (v.7)
 - - Essentially, these adversities in our life are designed and intended by God to develop and strengthen our faith, which will produce the outcomes that God will bless us for greatly. (vv.8-9)
 - - During this time in human history, God has now provided completed revelation about the grace and salvation that has come through Jesus Christ. (v.10-12)
 - - Through the preaching of the gospel to us humans, God supplies completed revelation about how each of us humans can acquire "the salvation of our soul" through Jesus Christ. (vv.10-12)
 - - In response to the salvation that we true believers have been given from God, we are to change, establish, and orient our thinking and our life in all the ways that God wants for us. (v.13)
 - - In obedience to God, we true believers are to deliberately and diametrically change what we desire, pursue, and conform to. (v.14)
 - - In response to a calling from God, we true believers are to be comprehensively holy in the same way that God who called us is comprehensively holy. (v.15)
 - - Because of the character of God, we true believers are to be strongly motivated to pursue extreme personal holiness like how extremely holy God is. (v.16)
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v.17 - READ

[Lesson Question: How does the first phrase in verse 17 fit with previous verses 14-16? Discuss, analyze, determine, and describe.]

SECTION POINT: God will hold each true believer accountable to live according to the new informed standard that we now possess.

"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially,"

- - Because God is holy, we true believers are to "be holy in all [that we] do". (v.15)
 - - God is also our "judge", one day holding each person accountable to Him for how they have lived their life.
 - - A particular reality that we need to keep in mind is that God will judge us from the basis of His holiness and the other virtues that He possesses, which includes "impartiality".
 - - God will not be partial or biased or prejudiced in His judgment of each person. (from *AHD* - 'impartial')
 - - By implication then, in His judgment, God will hold us true believers accountable for all of this time that we now have spiritual knowledge, which replaced our former "ignorance" about "conforming to evil desires". (v.14; Note: this principle is supported by the conjunction word "and" in v.17 - Strong's #2532)
 - - Thereby, with increased knowledge about God's holiness comes increased accountability to be holy.
 - - God mandates that because He has enlightened each of us true believers out of our former spiritual ignorance, we are to "obediently" live in comprehensive holiness - the new informed standard by which He will judge us one day. (vv.14,15)
 - - "If" we "call on the Father" as the One who has given us undeserved salvation, then along with this great blessing of salvation comes our exposure to increased accountability under the jurisdiction of this new informed standard that we now possess. (Strong's #1487; v.13)
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[Lesson Question: Determine and describe the ramifications of "live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear". Include a practical overview glimpse of what that kind of lifestyle would be like for believers living in your culture.]

SECTION POINT: God will also hold each true believer accountable to live like we are temporary foreign residents in this world.

"live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear."

- - A warranted and wise response to this imminent judgment with increased accountability is to live in anticipation and preparation of its coming.
- - Each moment of each day should be carefully considered and influenced by this coming reality of judgment by the Father.
- - We true believers are to "live" and "busy ourselves" accordingly, during our "time" "here" on this earth. (Strong's #0390, #5550)
- - When compared to the length of time we will spend in eternity in the next life, this life is exceedingly temporary.
- - So our perspective should be that we view our presence and role in this life as "temporary foreign residents - sojourners". (Strong's #3940)

- - In consideration of our impending eternal future in heaven, in this life we true believers are indeed "strangers" in a place that is not our native home long-term.
- - Because of our new spiritual nature and the new spiritual knowledge that we have acquired (v.14), by design we do not fit in to the kind of life that unbelievers live here during this time on the Earth.
- - We are commanded to live each day in a manner that properly reflects our foreign resident status here, while maintaining a "reverent fear" and profound respect for the impending accountability that we will experience one day, as implemented by the One who has given us salvation.
- - We are to think, speak, and act in ways that always remain cognizant and respecting of all that is coming for us in the eternal future.
- - We are to continuously respond accordingly to the correlation between 'consider the future' and 'let that consideration of the future determine how you behave in the present'.

-- Thereby, this form of living is like moving to a foreign country, staying there under a temporary worker legal status, renting an uncomfortable apartment that is too small, never buying a house, never adapting to the culture, and never learning any of the language there.

- - - - As believers, we do not think like our neighbors.
- - - - We do not behave like our neighbors.
- - - - And consequently, we have difficulty relating to our neighbors.
- - - - In stark and diametric contrast to the lifestyles of our neighbors, we spend our time preoccupied with, devoted to, and engaged in serving the Father who loves us dearly, but who will also hold us accountable one day.
- - - - And consequently, our neighbors think that we are weird and that we have some kind of mental disorder.
- - - - Our friends and relatives think we have joined some fanatic religious cult and have fallen under its mind control and brainwashing.
- - - - When we try to talk about spiritual matters with our neighbors, they flee quickly and thereafter avoid us like we have a contagious plague.
- - - - When we try to talk about spiritual matters with our friends and relatives, they politely listen in silence, with a blank stare.
- - - - When our neighbors invite us to a party that will involve some inappropriate behaviors, we awkwardly decline and fumble to generate some kind of excuse for why we will not be able to attend their party.
- - - - When our relatives invite us to a family social event that will involve some inappropriate behaviors, we arrive late to the event, exchange personal greetings with everyone, sit quietly off to the side by ourselves, eat the food, and then silently leave early.
- - - - In various ways, we pay a price for living in holiness as "strangers" or temporary foreign residents, estranged and isolated from the people around us.
- - - - Indeed, we are called to endure suffering for our faith - the topic of the Book of 1 Peter.
- - - - But, we find refuge and solace in our heavenly Father. (cf. Hebrews 11:9-10,13-16)
- - - - And, we seek social interaction, acceptance, and community among our brothers and sisters in Christ in our local church.

BIG IDEA: Each of us true believers possesses a new informed standard for how to live in holiness, which God will hold us accountable to implement, as a temporary foreign resident in this world.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - For those of us who are true believers, what kind of regard do you have for this impending accountability judgment that you certainly will face one day in the near future?
- - Do you hold a firm and profound reverent respect for the inevitable accountability judgment from God that awaits you?
- - Or do you assume you will glide through it, receiving only abundant praises and accolades from God for how you have lived your life on earth?
- - Or do you assume God will make an exception for you, granting you great eternal blessings and rewards for living a life that was frequently dominated by sinfulness?
- - Or do you assume God will award you the maximum amount of eternal blessings and rewards while completely ignoring the great harm that you perpetrated while you were a believer during this life?
- - Do you have an answer prepared if God asks you during His judgment of you, "How did you live your life on the earth while you were a believer?"?
- - Can you honestly report to God that you have lived as a "stranger here" on the earth, as if you were a temporary foreign resident?
- - Can you honestly report to God that you have endured numerous and substantial sacrifices for His kingdom and perhaps some suffering for the faith during your life?
- - Does the reality of this coming accountability judgment pervade your awareness throughout each day, influencing your thinking, speaking, and behaviors?
- - Or instead, do you proceed through each day essentially oblivious to this coming accountability judgment from God that awaits you?

- - For those of you who are not a true believer, the fact is you do indeed proceed through each day essentially oblivious to what God has awaiting you.
- - Each day you strive to acquire as much as you can in this life.
- - And, 100 years from now, what will you have?
- - You will be standing before God, empty-handed, guilty, and facing judgment by your Creator.
- - The judgment from God for you who die as an unbeliever will be to determine the intensity of pain you will endure for eternity, for every sin that you have committed during your life on the earth.
- - You lived your life as a friend of the world, totally immersed in pursuing that which the world entices you to pursue.
- - For whatever reasons, you allowed your life as a friend of the world to prevent you from becoming an actual permanent legal friend of God.

- - So as such, your life as a friend of the world will thereupon result in you spending eternity locked in as a permanent legal stranger to God.
 - - Think about this deeply for a few moments: Do you really want to be spending eternity locked in as a permanent legal stranger to God?
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