

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expositional Journey Through 1 Peter

### **1 Peter 1:1-2**

### 2 Living as Aliens in This Fallen World

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September 10, 2017

#### **1 Peter 1:1-2**

**1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen<sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.**

To the Glory of God

Now this morning, as we endeavor to worship Jesus Christ in Spirit and in Truth, we live in a nation that is becoming increasingly hostile to God and to the things of God. As of last night, as far as I can tell, there are no less than 125 court cases pending where believers are being put on trial in this country for seeking to stay faithful to the Lord Christ and Scripture. And Christians are now routinely mocked and publicly scorned because they believe the Bible about things like Creation and Marriage and Human Sexuality. Christians are now being fired from their jobs for vocally supporting Biblical Morality, even on their own time.

When the Founding Fathers were used by God to raise this nation up, they thought it wise to limit the Congress of the United States from either making a law that *establishes* a national religion, or to pass any law that prohibits the free and unencumbered exercise of religion according to conscience. And for over 200 years that First Amendment worked just fine. But, in my lifetime, nine unelected black robed justices have so warped that simple and easy to understand Amendment that limited only the Congress, that now school teachers

cannot lead scared little children in prayer after 9/11, Morning Devotions in public schools are carefully managed or banned outright, Mayors and Military Leaders can't pray in Jesus' Name without penalty, and Manger scenes are being prohibited during a time of the year when the Federal Government takes a day off to celebrate the Birth of the Baby Jesus, Who was in the manger. So, while it is true that we are *not* being hunted down and martyred as the saints were back when Peter was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to pen this Letter down, but what he was led to tell those believers then is very appropriate for us today.

So, as I told you last time, the very first verse of **1 Peter** tells us that this inspired Epistle was written to show us what living as "scattered aliens" looks like. This Book is God's Word to believers to teach them *how* to live in a city or a region or a country that is *increasingly* becoming hostile to God and to Jesus and to the people of the Church *because* of their rejection of the Divine Truth of Scripture.

And so, this Book was *very* relevant to the believers who lived in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century in the Middle East and those areas dominated by the Roman Empire, who were undergoing intense persecution. But, this Epistle is also very relevant to believers who live in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in the United States of America, that is rushing as fast as possible to throw away 230 years of history and precedent and adopt a way of life and a world-view that is hostile to the Scriptures, and is pagan in origin. So, in a nutshell, this Epistle was very important 2,000 years ago, and it is very important today.

And we need to remember that this word "aliens" comes from the Greek word that means: *one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; a stranger; sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner; an alien*<sup>1</sup>

Now the King James renders this Greek word as "**pilgrims**" and it is found in only one other place in the entire Bible, **Hebrews 11**, where the writer of **Hebrews** is discussing the great Fathers of the Faith and verse 13 says:

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### **Hebrews 11:13**

**All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

Now right out of the chute, we need to understand that, while the intense persecution against the believers back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century instigated by the Emperor Nero made the believers back then to be “scattered”, it did *not* make them to be “aliens” or “pilgrims” or “strangers” or “exiles” on the earth. Look quickly at **1 Peter 1:3**:

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

The Bible declares here that God the Father has “caused us to be born again”. And that means that it is the radical new nature that we have received from God, through the miracle of the New Birth, that has *caused* us to be “aliens” and “strangers” and “pilgrims” in this world. So, God is the Cause of *why* you don’t fit in with the rest of the world. God is the Reason *why* you are seen as being “odd” and “different”, the biblical word is “peculiar”. What God has chosen to bring you *into* and what God has chosen to bring you *out of* is *why* you are an “alien”. So, God made you an alien, not men. And that tells us two things:

1. Our “alienation” from this present evil world is on purpose.
2. Our lives must reflect who God has made us to be.

### **1. Our “Alienation” From This Present Evil World is On Purpose**

God’s sovereign Decision to save you was *purposeful*. It wasn’t *accidental*. It was *decisive*. God *meant* to save you and *decided* to redeem you, *way before* He made the world, and *way before* you were ever born or did anything “good” or “bad”. And that means that you’re *not* weird or different from any other genuine believer who has lived at any other time in any other nation over the last 2,000 years. What God has done *in* you and *for* you and *to* you is no different than what He has

done to *every other* person who has truly experienced the miracle of the New Birth. The Apostle Paul said this in **Ephesians 1:3-6**:

**3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,**  
**4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love**  
**5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,**  
**6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

Now look closely again at verse 4:

**just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.**

So, before the foundation of the world, God chose you so that *through* Jesus Christ, you would be two things:

- ✓ Holy
- ✓ Blameless

... before God. And so, for those who are graced by God to have both the desire and the power to repent of sin and put their faith and hope and trust in Jesus Personally and in His finished Work, God the Father will take the precious Blood of Jesus that was shed on the Cross and will forgive all of their sins: past, present, and future, and God will take the spotless Righteousness that Jesus earned while living a sinless Life for 33-1/2 years and He will impute that Righteousness to them by the agency of Faith alone. And the result is that these blessed souls will be "blameless" in God's Eyes.

But the "holiness" that the Apostle speaks about here is this "difference", this "uniqueness", this "otherness", this "alienation" that we become, as saved people, that *distinguishes* us from the lost people of the world. So, it is our desire to honor God and be holy that rises up from the new nature, that *causes* us to be "aliens" in the earth. So, to be "holy" is just another way of understanding what it means to be an

"alien" in this world. And to be a "stranger" and a "pilgrim" and an "alien" in this world is just another way of understanding what it means to be "holy".

And the Apostle Peter is *especially* helpful to give us insight into what this "holiness" or this "alienation" looks like when he wrote the second Chapter of this Epistle, so, let's get a sneak preview of what we're going to go deeply into when we get there by going to **1 Peter 2:9-10:**

**9** But you are **A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION**, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

**10** for you once were **NOT A PEOPLE**, but now you are **THE PEOPLE OF GOD**; you had **NOT RECEIVED MERCY**, but now you have **RECEIVED MERCY**.

This is the great Doctrine of Christian Separation that is so grossly neglected in our day. And while this Doctrine does *not* teach that believers are "better" than others, it *does* teach that Who we love and Who we serve, and Who bought and paid for us, is "better" than *anyone* or *anything* in this life, *including* ourselves.

So, we are "set aside", we are "made holy", we are "alienated", we are "different and distinct" from the lost world, precisely because of the Call of God on our lives that has sovereignly and effectively and decisively called us out of darkness, and has called us into His marvelous Light!

Peter says here that we have been called *out of* something called "darkness", and we have been called *into* something called "His marvelous Light". So, the "holiness" or the "alienation" that we are experiencing, the reason we don't fit in with the others, is all owing to God's sovereign Determination to save us. The only way we will *not* be aliens in this world is if we are *not* "called" by God *out of* darkness and *not* "called" *into* His marvelous Light. So, being an "alien" and a "stranger" and a "pilgrim" in this earth is the *natural* and *normal* position for all genuine believers. In other words, it is *correct* and *proper* for all genuine believers to be an alien as far as this world is concerned. In fact, for anyone to *not* be an alien is to doubt that the

conversion they lay claim to, is real. And here is why I say that. Read what the Apostle John said in **1John 2:15-17**:

**15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

**16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

**17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.**

Now John wasn't talking about the dirt or the trees or the oceans or the grass when he used the word "**world**" here. And, he wasn't even talking about *people* here, not even the *sinful* people, because Jesus said in **John 3:16**:

**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

No, the Apostle John was talking about the "world system" that operates in the earth in direct opposition to God and His Ways. This system was *originated* by satan, and is carried out and propagated by lost, sinful people who live their entire lives in the chains of darkness, as captives to satan. And we know this by what he said in verse **1 John 2:16**:

**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

So, these three things:

- A. The Lust of the Flesh
- B. The Lust of the Eyes
- C. The Boastful Pride of Life

... represent the world that John is talking about. Now these are certainly *not* all that is in the world. The world that we live in contains many more aspects than just these three things. But these three attributes *represent* the fallen, rebellious "world system" that John says

is *anathema* to genuine believers. So, for anyone to genuinely love the world system that is typified by these three characteristics proves beyond any doubt that the Love of the Father is not in him, or in other words, he is lost-, no matter what he says his relationship with God is. And this is why James said this in **James 4:4**:

**You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Here is how the Apostle Paul illustrated what "Christian Separation" looked like from **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**:

**14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?**

**15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?**

**16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**

**17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.**

**18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.**

This is what it looks like for a human being to be an "alien" or a "pilgrim" or a "stranger", or one whom God has *caused* to be born again.

## **2. Our Lives Must Reflect Who God has Made Us to Be**

Now since God has *called* us *out of* darkness and *into* His marvelous Light, Since God has *chosen* us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless, Since it is God Who has purposefully *made* us to be aliens, Since it is God Who has *caused* us to be born again, we must now live our lives as aliens and not as those who have

not experienced these Divine Impositions onto our lives. We cannot live like those who are comfortable with the fallenness of this broken world.

And so, holiness or living in this world as an “alien” is to live our lives *free* from the grip from this sinful, evil world system that exists for no other reason than to defy God. So, we, who are saved, look at issues *differently* than those who are lost. We strive to see things “biblically” or “in accord with” Scripture. We want to look at life and money and politics and nations and government and marriage and love and children and business in the way that God has spoken in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible.

And the only way we can do that *effectively* is to read and study and ponder what God has revealed in the Bible, and then strive against the lusts of our flesh, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, to live in humble and joyful *submission* in our daily life to what God has revealed in Scripture, all to the Glory of God. And that is what I mean when I say that we walk *counter-intuitively* from those who know not Christ. And that means that we put:

- ✓ God over Government
- ✓ Christ over Country
- ✓ Scripture over Politics
- ✓ Divine Truth over Money, Power and Success

Aliens value being faithful, fruitful, and busy in the Work of the Lord over being safe, secure and temporarily happy. And that means that our very *first* and our *primary* citizenship is in Heaven, and *not* in the United States. Our first and primary constitution is the Bible, *not* the U.S. Constitution. And our first and primary King and Commander in Chief is Jesus Christ, *not* the President of our country or the Governor of our State or the Mayor of our city. And that also means that the dominant cravings of our heart are *not* for the treasures and tributes of the world, but for the Kingdom of God.

We are aliens, who have been purposefully “made” to be aliens by God. And the result is that the language and the values and the customs and the expectations and the logic and the joys of this world feel foreign to us. We simply don't fit in. And I call this not fitting in a “Divine Displacement”.



Something really radical and eternal has happened to us. Peter says in verse 3: God has caused us to be born again to a living hope—for another world, another, greater kind of existence. Paul put it this way:

**Colossians 3:3-4**

**3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

**4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

Jesus called us to live like aliens, and to fix our minds on radically different priorities than the nations. For example, **Matthew 6:31-33** says:

**31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'**

**32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

**33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

We are aliens. And living like aliens is utterly necessary. O, what a tragedy when someone lays claim to be an alien, but then falls in love with the world. In **Colossians** and **Philemon**, Paul called Demas “**his fellow worker**”, along with Dr. Luke and John Mark. But, in the last letter he ever wrote, Paul made this frightening statement:

**2 Timothy 4:10a**

**for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica ...**

What a tragedy when a professing believer throws away his faith and hope in the future world, rejects the Treasure of the Universe, Jesus Christ, renounces his heavenly citizenship, and begins to “love this present world.”

When professing aliens are absorbed into the world and give up walking by the Constitution of the Kingdom, and give up loving the King, and give up pursuing the cravings and goals of the Kingdom, they have no warrant for thinking that they will then inherit the very Kingdom they have scorned. John said:

## **1 John 2:19**

**They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.**

One of the biggest reasons why I reject the "Self-determinism of Man" or "Human Free Will" is because of this very issue of alienation. If I simply exercised my own fallen prerogative and "made a decision" to become an alien, my "choice" is only as certain as my own human will-power will allow. So, my Salvation would then depend first on me exercising my own free will that has somehow managed to escape being destroyed by the Fall (when everything else about me was destroyed). But then, my Salvation would be totally up to me to maintain and keep. And that fallacy *guarantees* that at some point in the future, all the reasons and purposes for which I made that choice in the first place will fade from my mind and I will return to the world from where I came.

But if I have been sovereignly "made" to be an alien by the eternal decisive Choice of an Immutable God, Who "caused" me to be born again, my perseverance is no longer based in my own will-power, but in the Power of the Promise of God Who said:

## **John 10:27-29**

**27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;**

**28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.**

**29 "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.**

So, I want everyone to hear this clearly. I'm not talking about losing some heavenly rewards here. I'm talking about going to heaven or losing Heaven altogether. The Bible is crystal clear about this, dear friends, the only people who will see God in Heaven are those who have pursued Holiness on Purpose by living in this world as aliens, as a *response* to God *causing* them to be born again. Nobody else will enter into Heaven.

Living as aliens in this world is the *only* pathway to Heaven. If you are at home in this world and you love the things of the world and

you befriend this world, and fit in with this world, you will perish with the world.

So, the issue is *not*, “*Are we Aliens?*”, because manifestly the Bible says we are. The issue is not that *some*, who are born again, live as aliens, while *others*, who are equally saved, simply choose *not* to live as aliens. That is *not* the issue here. The issue is since we *are* aliens, since God has purposefully *made* us to be aliens by *causing* us to be born again, how do we keep our alien identity? And this is not a silly or idle question because our eternal destiny hangs on it.

And I can't think of another person who is more qualified to teach us just how we can live like this than the Apostle Peter himself. So, please turn in your Bibles to **1 Peter 4:7-10**:

**7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.**

**8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**

**9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.**

**10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

Here Peter teaches us some indispensable strategies of how we can *maintain* our alien identity in this world. Now there are at least five strategies for how we can maintain our alien identity in these four verses. And what I want to suggest is that in each of these five cases, the strategy that Peter gives works best when done together, rather than apart individually. Let's look:

1. Exercising Sound Judgment
2. Possessing a Sober Spirit for the Purpose of Prayer
3. Keeping Fervent in Our Love For One Another
4. Being Hospitable Without Complaint
5. Serving One Another

## **1. Exercising Sound Judgment**

### **1 Peter 4:7a**

**The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment...**

The first strategy is for us to develop and “be of” sound judgment. Now the word translated here as “sound” comes from the Greek word that means: *to be in ones right mind; to exercise self-control; to think of oneself soberly; and to curb ones passions.* This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said:

**Ephesians 5:15**

**Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,**

So, to be of “sound judgment” is to be careful to live in such a way as to *not* get absorbed into the world system, especially since the end of this world has already begun with the coming of the Messiah. But this first strategy is tied in with the second one.

**2. Possessing a Sober Spirit for the Purpose of Prayer**

**The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.**

The reason aliens are to live in such a way as to *not* get absorbed into the world system is because that is the way for them to stay in close contact with the King, Who is back in the Homeland. Prayer is the “Means of Grace” that God gave to the aliens so that they can stay in this close contact with their King. Prayer is the path to communication with God, and for us to stay in close contact with God allows us to maintain our alienation with the world.

You see, there is something about the world system that tends to intoxicate us and make us drunk. Its false promises and glitter are dazzling to our eyes and ears. Now if you have ever tried to reason with a drunk man, one thing is crystal clear. Barring a miracle, it is *impossible* to connect them with reality. And that is the way it is when people put aside the Divine Reality that God has made them to be aliens and they drink in the liquor of this world. It puts them completely out of touch with the reality of spiritual and true things.

And so, dear friends, there is only one thing that will make you a person of prayer, a person who is connected with Divine Reality. There is only one thing that has the ability to sober people *away* from the

addictive, inebriating power of worldliness. You must possess a radical and all-consuming love for Jesus. You must delight in Him. You must Treasure Him. At some point in your life, you must behold the Glory of God in the very Face of Jesus Christ, and when that happens, then the Holy Bible declares that you will be changed into that same Image, from one realm of Glory to the next, even as by the Lord, Who is that Spirit. It is "beholding" Christ in His risen Glory that creates this Hunger and thirst for Righteousness. It is "seeing" Jesus in His magnificent splendor that causes you to pant after God as the deer pants after the water brooks. It is having the veil removed from your eyes by a sovereign Act of God, Who originally spoke Light into Darkness that causes you to crave the Presence of God. And until that happens to you, all you are operating on is frail, weak, unstable human will-power.

When your mind is intoxicated with worldliness, and can only think of the pleasures of the world, then you will have no taste for Heaven and no desire for prayer, and God's Commandments will be burdensome to you.

So, I ask you, what can be done for a person about to give up the sound judgment of spiritual mindedness, and give himself over to the stupor of worldliness? The answer is intervention. It's what you do with an alcoholic in a deteriorating family. You gather around him and you say: *"No! You are destroying yourself and us. We see it, even if you don't, and we love you too much to let it happen. You have to seek help."*

So, what is that help? Do they send the alcoholic off to the wilderness by himself for a year? No. They put him in a group of people just like him, people who have known what it means to be possessed and destroyed by sin. People who know that there is no good thing in themselves. People who know that they need Jesus, and without Him, they can't live. And that group is the Church. And my point is simply to illustrate that we need each other if we are going to escape the intoxicating effects of the world and be sober aliens in a world that is drunk and oblivious and uncaring about the things of God.

Now, if this Passage is going to be more than a simply nice Sermon on Sunday morning, that we need to actually obey it. And that means that we all need to make certain plans to gather together to pray and to confess faults and to actually do what the writer of **Hebrews** said in **Hebrews 10:23-25**:

**23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;**

**24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,**

**25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

... and we simply cannot do that unless we gather together. So, what steps are you going to take to keep your mind sound and your heart sober so that you don't gradually slide into the intoxicating delusion of this world? Because doing so, will cause you to *lose* your alien identity. If you slowly show the signs of dabbling with the mind-altering pleasures of the world, who is going to be close enough to spot it? You will be alone and you will fall into sin unless you have a group around you that knows you and that loves you and that prays for you and hold you accountable, a group of people called "The Alien Church" that is also walking soberly in this wicked age.

The Bible Studies and Prayer meetings and times of fellowship in this Church are designed to help you combat the creeping, deluding effects of this God-ignoring world. They are meant to be recurrent jolts of Divine Reality. Repeated sessions where we come into close contact with the King Who is back in the Kingdom through the study of His Word and communing with Him in Prayer.

Being an integral part of the Church is where the first stages of addiction to the world can be detected and lovingly confronted and remedied with the Word of God and the Power of the Spirit. And that's the strategy of verse 7 for not losing your alien identity.

### **3. Keeping Fervent in Our Love For One Another**

**Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**

Aliens are not perfect. And the stress of living in a foreign land can cause us to say things and do things that we regret. Things that hurt and can even destroy the precious relationships that we need so badly as aliens. These things need to be covered and forgiven if life is to be livable together as aliens in a hostile world.

So, Peter calls us to love each other. And to let love cover the offenses that can *ruin* the camaraderie that holds the alien community together. Now it's true that we are to love our enemies, and all the people of the world. But it is also true that we are to love our fellow-alien in a very *special* way. Peter said:

### **keep fervent in your love for one another**

So, here is a special degree of love. A tenacity. An unwillingness to let our guard down and coast. This is a fervent, earnest, strong, ardent, and strongly felt love. And, it is ongoing. So, this is *not* the "obligatory love" that people *manufacture* for those they really don't like. This is a genuine heartfelt affection for those you have come to trust and cherish as fellow-alien.

Again, what is your plan for following through on this? How will you grow fervent in your love for the other pilgrims on the way through this foreign world? The answer I want to suggest is: plan to get together on a regular basis to fan the flame of your love with intentional care and attention, and in the relationships that grow out of that assembling.

We must know that love does not become fervent and earnest *accidentally*. Nobody is going to trip and fall into this kind of love. And it surely will not come through neglect and distance. Love will only grow as we *purposefully* gather together and spend time together before the Lord. Time together weaves our lives together so that what hurts the one hurts us all. What causes one to rejoice will also cause a collective rejoicing.

## **4. Being Hospitable Without Complaint**

### **1 Peter 4:9**

**Be hospitable to one another without complaint.**

Isn't it remarkable that in a Book as weighty and spiritual as **1Peter**, that was written under such terrible conditions, that we read the very simple and yet very practical command to open our homes to each other, and then are told not to grumble about the hassle. But don't let the simplicity of this Command cause you to just pass by it because,

evidently, this is a crucial part of surviving as aliens in a hostile environment. Something marvelous happens when you get into someone's home. It's as though the home is a doorway to the heart. And I have never been in a home environment where the Word of God was examined or Prayers were made that anybody noticed that the dishes were dirty or there was dust on the table.

So, once again, what is your plan to make your home a place where aliens can find refreshment and encouragement along the pilgrim way in this world? Please find a way to make this happen.

## 5. Serving One Another

### 1 Peter 4:10

**As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God**

The strategy of verse 10 for maintaining your "alien identity" is the use of your gifts to minister God's Grace to others. Christianity is the only religion in the history of the world that teaches that the only way to keep it is by giving it away. To live your life in sacrificial giving to others, in the Grace of God, is truly the pathway to your own joy.

This verse says that "each one"; note that "each one" has received a *special* gift. And the function of that special gift is very simple: it is meant for service, to pour out to others that which God has wondrously poured into you.

This is why our gathering together is so crucial. The major ministry of the Church of Jesus is brokering Grace between God and His people. Don't miss this. It is utterly crucial and so plain in this text. You all have special gifts. And the only reason God gave you that special gift is because you are also called to serve others with those gifts. And that means letting the Grace of God come through your unique or special gift. So, what is your plan to allow the Grace of God to pour through you into the lives of your fellow-alien in the remainder of this year?

So, there they are. Five strategies to keep your "alien identity" intact:

#### 1. Exercising Sound Judgment



2. Possessing a Sober Spirit for the Purpose of Prayer
3. Keeping Fervent in Our Love For One Another
4. Being Hospitable Without Complaint
5. Serving One Another

... because God has caused you to be born again and called us to be aliens in this world.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.