

Strangers in the world

1 Peter 2:11-25

Introduction

Do you have any friends who come from a different cultural background to you? What have been the differences that you have noticed about the way they live compared to the way that you live?

As aliens and strangers in the world Christians will live significantly different lives to those around them. These differences ought to be significant enough to be noticeable too. Please read chapter 2 verses 11 to 25 to discover how believers ought to live in the world.

Live as strangers

Before the apostles looked at some specific examples of how his readers were to conduct themselves he gave them the basic guidelines for living in this world. Please read 2:11-12.

1. How were the believers to live in the world?
2. Why were they to conduct themselves in this way?

Think about it

Would people living this way be noticeably different to others? Why?

What results when believers live as aliens and strangers in the world?

How noticeably different do you think we are to those around us?

Living under authority

As people living in this world we are confronted by all kinds of human authorities. In this section Peter explores what it means to live and respond to these authorities in a way that is pleasing to God. Please read 2:13-15 for some general words on living with authorities.

3. What is to be our attitude to human authority?

4. How ought human authority to be exercised?

5. What is the believer's motivation for relating to authority in this way?

Think about it

What sorts of things are involved in submitting to authorities here in Australia? In what way do you submit to authorities?

Are there any times when we ought not to submit to authorities as believers?

Living as free men

Having outlined the general principle for relating to authorities. Peter has a word to those who were free and a word to those who were slaves. Please read 2:16-17 to learn what he said to those who were free.

6. What limits are placed on our freedom?

Honour

In verse 17 the word “honour” is used twice but unfortunately in some translations it is translated differently. The NIV for example, instead of using “honour” has “show proper respect”.

7. How are those who are free but servants of God to relate to others?

Think about it

Peter has mentioned four different types of relationships. Please explain the difference between relating to other believers compared to the way we relate to everyone? Please explain the difference in the way we relate to God compared to the way we relate to the king?

Living as slaves

Many believers in NT time were obviously slaves. Slaves are not only mentioned in this letter but also in many of Paul's letters. Please read verses 18 to 20 to understand how they were to live as strangers.

8. Who were slaves to submit to and why?

9. When is it commendable to suffer and when is it not?

Think about it

Doing what is "right" is not always rewarded appropriately in this world. There are times that the person who does "good" can be overlooked or even mistreated and abused. How do these words encourage us to keep on doing good in the face of such responses?

In what way might we sometimes suffer for doing good today?

The example of Christ

The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of one who endured suffering for doing good. He is the example that we are to follow. Please read 2:21-25.

10. How did Jesus respond to suffering?

11. The sufferings of Christ were more than just an example for us. What else did they achieve?

Think about it

Why do the sufferings of Christ encourage us to keep on doing good in the face of suffering? What learn from his sufferings?

Conclusion

Living as strangers isn't always an easy thing to do. You often stand out as someone who is different.

Think about it

What way ought we to stand out as different?