

Stranger Obligation

Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:19

The Book of Deuteronomy contains many instructions and warnings for the Israelites as they are on the precipice of entering the Promised Land. The book reiterates the Ten Commandments as well as guidelines for refuge cities, marriage, and installing kings. The Israelites were to be separate from other nations. Today's text instructs the Israelites to love those who will be strangers to their community in the Promised Land remembering that they were once strangers in the land of Egypt.

In some ways the Christian community is very similar to the Israelites who were delivered from bondage in Egypt and later settled in a new land. Every believer is in spiritual bondage before coming to Christ for salvation, and once converted they are a new creation. Though Christians are not taken to heaven the moment they believe, they do find themselves to be citizens of a new community. The old worldly lifestyle, the trademark of the unconverted, is transformed into a new life as they follow the Savior. *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. (Ephesians 2:18-20)* All true Christians have the same foundation, the same hope, and the same purpose uniting them as a body. The Christian culture often seems strange to people of the world, as do the ways of the world seem strange to the Christian.

As the ways of the world continue to decline and as evil men wax worse and worse, Christians may find themselves tempted to condemn not only the corrupt culture, but also the people associated with it. No matter how long we have been saved and growing stronger and deeper in our faith, we must never forget we were once without God in the world and alienated from His promises. Remembering that we were strangers, we have an obligation to those who are engulfed in the consuming trap of the world's system. One of our main purposes as believers is to help those overwhelmed by spiritual darkness. By God's grace and anchored by His word we can make a difference in a stranger's life by loving them, befriending them, and showing them a better life filled with true purpose. Every lost person of this world is an example of where we could be had it not been for God's mercy.

Our obligation today is to love the stranger and to pray for them. May our hearts weep for them and see them as Jesus did. *When He saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.* Let us do what we can as we remember His words: *I was a stranger, and ye took me in.*

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