

## Just Passing Through

In the preface to his book Roughing It, Mark Twain writes: “This book is merely a personal narrative, ... a record of several years of variegated vagabondizing...” He then goes on for about 500 pages telling of his travels and occupations throughout Nevada, California, and Hawaii during the 1860’s. It’s a great read! He spent time as a newspaperman, a silver miner, a millionaire (at least for 10 days) and a pauper so poor he couldn’t afford his next meal. His stories give us a clear picture of what it meant to live in the old west. More than that, the stories make clear in their telling, that while Mark Twain may have been a keen observer, and at times, an active participant, he never meant to settle down.

This week’s study allows us to see what it means to live in a world to which we don’t belong, also. And we will catch a glimpse of our true home.

### Monday – Not of this world

*“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”* C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”

1. Please read John 17:13-19 (part of Jesus’ prayer to the Father). What do verses 14 and 16 say about the place where we belong?
2. In verse 14, Jesus refers to “your word” and “the world.” Why does the world hate Jesus’ followers? Now take a look at 1 Corinthians 2:13-14. How does this help you understand what Jesus meant by “the world” and “your word” in John 17:14?

**Digging Deeper:** Read John 1:1-18 for more insight into the nature of the Word. What does verse 5 tell you about the relationship between the Word and the world?

### Tuesday – Placed here in the world God made

*“This is my Father’s world. O let me ne’er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet”.*

Maltbie D. Babcock, “This is my Father’s World”

1. Read John 17:13-19 again, this time, paying particular attention to verses 15 and 18. What do they tell you about the place where you belong right now? Who put you here? What does that mean to you?
2. Verse 15 speaks of protection. From whom?
3. Paul recognized the need for protection in Ephesians 6:10-18. What sort of protection does he recommend?

**Making it Personal:** A close relationship with God brings not only blessings, but struggles as well. Spend some time in prayer asking God, the Father, to guide you by the light of his word (Psalm 119:105), through the world he has made (Acts 17:24).

### Wednesday – Sanctified

*“The Bible is far more than a doctrinal guidebook. God’s Word generates life, creates faith, produces change, frightens the Devil, causes miracles, heals hurts, builds character, transforms circumstances, imparts joy, overcomes adversity, defeats temptation, infuses hope...”* Rick Warren, “The Purpose Driven Life”

1. John 17:17 is a brief, but powerful, statement. What does it tell you about God’s word and what it can do? How does this encourage you as you consider what it means to be in this world but not of it?

**Text Insight:** The word “sanctify” (like the word “holy”) means to be set apart for a special use.

2. See Hebrews 4:12-13 for another short powerful statement about the nature of scripture. What does this verse say about the role of God’s Word in your life? How is “God’s sight” related to his Word?

**Making it Personal:** How can this two-edged sword operate in your life to sanctify you for God?

### Thursday – A stranger in a strange land

*“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”* Heb. 11:8-10

1. The Old Testament has a gripping story that is a signpost for our spiritual journey today. You can read about the life of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37 through 50. But for our purposes, read Genesis 37 and 45:4-8. What do these verses tell you about how God can work in a person who follows him even in a strange land?
2. Now look at Genesis 50:24-25. Even though Joseph rose to great power and wealth in Egypt, he never forgot where he came from. How does Joseph’s example encourage you in keeping your mind on the promises of God?

### Friday – Where you belong

1. The prophet Isaiah had a lot to say about our present relationship to God and the authority God has over us. Take a look at Isaiah 29:16, 41:25, 45:9 and 64:8. What does Isaiah suggest as an appropriate response to God’s work in our lives?
2. Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelations 21:1-4 speak about our future with God in eternity. What do Isaiah and John say it will be like? How does this encourage you in your present walk with God?

**Making it Personal:** How do you see the Potter at work in your life? In what areas of your life do you need to trust him and his workmanship?

**For the Weekend:** Spend some time in Philippians 1:21-24. Pray through Paul’s insights about staying in the world as opposed to leaving and being with Jesus. Ask God to show you like he showed the prisoner Paul.