

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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The Pilgrim's Path

Life is full of changes, some quite disruptive. But these transitions serve as a reminder that we are pilgrims on a journey toward a better home.

“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles . . .” (1 Pet. 2:11-12).

Peter's use of the words “sojourners” and “pilgrims” in this text provides an insight into the nature of the child of God's life in this world. The two words are close synonyms, describing people who are living as aliens in a strange land not their own. Other translations render these words as “strangers and refugees” (Good News), “aliens and exiles” (Goodspeed), or “strangers and temporary residents” (Phillips). The message conveyed by this language is unmistakable: This world is not our home; whatever our circumstances in life, we are just pilgrims passing through on our way to a final resting place.

Of course, Peter uses this idea metaphorically, as a motivation not to get caught up in the vices and distractions of this world. All the worldly enticements that others live for do not appeal to us, because we have our eyes fixed on something of far greater value.

Our conduct reflects our identity as citizens of a different realm, a heavenly country.

However, this spiritual pilgrimage also has implications for the direction that our physical lives may take. Do a quick survey of Bible characters, and notice how unrooted their lives often were. Abraham's faith, for example, led him to leave his home in Ur and go to a new land he was unfamiliar with. During the Babylonian captivity, the Jews were literally exiles in a foreign land, learning valuable lessons that would serve later generations well. Paul's devotion to God took him all over the Roman Empire. Even ordinary believers experienced frequent moves. Think of the early disciples in Jerusalem who were scattered from their homes when persecution arose, or Aquila and Priscilla, humble tentmakers who served God in at least three different cities (that we know of).

The point in this little exercise is to remind us that attachments to our earthly homes are, at best, temporary and fleeting. Any number of factors can arise

that will force us to move to new homes, new jobs, new surroundings. For some people, these moves can be painful. But that's life; it's not reasonable to expect everything to stay the same forever.

As difficult as these transitions may be, there is a bright side to them. Those who have experienced these disruptions in their lives often look back on them in later years with fondness, even gratitude. First, the changes forced them to re-evaluate what was really important in their lives, and what was not all that important after all. Second, the moves introduced them to new experiences, new beauties, new corners of the world they had not seen before. And most importantly, the new homes came with new friends, enriching and expanding their lives in ways they never imagined possible before.

As we say goodbye to Eric—and soon the Gilstraps—we all need to remind ourselves of these simple lessons. We are sojourners and pilgrims in this world, and wherever the paths of life may lead us, we know there is something far better that awaits us all.

— David King