“Aliens and strangers in the world” or what makes the seed of the Word of God unfruitful and how to avoid it.

1. Our state in this world and our real home

We find the phrase that is the title of this article in 1 Peter 2:11. There we read:

1 Peter 2:11
“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from fleshly desires, which war against your soul.”

The Word of God tells us that we are aliens and strangers in this world. This means that this world is NOT our home. We do not belong here. To understand this better let’s use an example: let’s say that you board a plane and land in a country foreign to you and you are supposed to stay there. You are a foreigner and an alien to that country. You don’t understand the language of the people. You cannot read their newspapers. You turn on the TV but you soon have to turn it off as you do not understand anything. It is all foreign to you. You are an alien and a stranger to that country. And that’s what the Word of God tells us that we are in this world. If however, using the same example, you start speaking the language of the people, listen to their news, watch their TV programs, speak about what they speak and do what they do, you are no longer a stranger and an
alien, but you are integrated to that country, you are part of it. It is the same for us as Christians. The Word of God tells us that we are strangers and aliens to this world. We are not supposed to be conformed to this world, to share the same interests with the world, behave as the world behaves, watch what they watch, have the same vision and interests as the world has. We are strangers and aliens here and we are not supposed to be integrated or conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) i.e. be shaped together with the world (that’s what co-formed means). We are coming from another world, another home. Where is this home? Here are a couple of passages that answer this:

**Philippians 3:20**

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,..”

And **Colossians 1:12-13**

“He [God] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

We are citizens of heaven brothers and sisters. There, and not in this world, is our home. Indeed, once we were citizens of this world and its kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. But no more. We were delivered from this kingdom and we are now citizens of the Kingdom of the Son of God and therefore aliens and strangers in this world.

**2. The problem**
Sad, but many of us appear that they do not consider themselves like this. Many of us are so much invested in the world and interested in what is happening in the world, that the phrase “aliens and strangers” may seem … strange to us. I am not saying this to condemn anybody but to state what I see as a fact. As the Word of God says in Romans 8:6

Romans 8:6
“For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.”

Following Christ is life and peace. If you are a Christian, yet you do not have the life and peace that accompanies following Christ, if you feel empty and weary, it is because your focus is on the wrong place. You believe that you follow Christ but at the best you do it but not as your top priority. Other things have come your way and they have implicitly or explicitly higher or equal priority to you. Again do not misunderstand me. I do not criticize you. I just state what I see to be the case for many Christians. We need to know the problem and what causes it so that we can apply the respective solution. Ignoring the problem and thinking that “all is fine, since we do what the others do (i.e. go with the flow)” will not make the problem to disappear. Also let me clearly state that God loves all His children regardless of their performance. God loves you as much as He loves His Son Jesus Christ, and this has nothing to do with your performance. I am saying this because many Christians that find themselves weary and empty think that God may be mad at them because they do not “perform well”. God’s love for you brother and sister does not depend on your performance. God loves you no matter what and this will NEVER change. We can never be good enough to earn God’s approval. The only thing we can present to God is the blood of His Son that
was shed for us and which made us righteousness before Him. We are saved by faith and it is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection that we became God’s children. This will never change. On the other hand, it does not mean that there is no problem. It means however that the reason we are fixing the problem is not in order to earn God’s love. God’s love for you is given and it is unshakable. Instead we are fixing the problem so that we can become once again full of life, power and fruit, as God desires for us.

3. The reasons of the problem

Going back to the Word of God, it very clearly describes certain things that make the heart weary and heavy and the seed of the Word barren, unfruitful i.e. though the seed is there, it does not give forth the fruit that it is supposed to give. Here is what the Lord Jesus said in Luke 21:34:

Luke 21:34
"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.

There are certain things that make our hearts to be weighed down i.e. they make it heavy and weary, hard, indifferent and cold. And though many of us may not have a problem with “dissipation and drunkenness” (anyway these are condemned as obvious sins by most Christians and many times by non-Christians too) what about “cares of this life”? What the Lord is telling us here is that cares of the everyday life, cares of making it, “surviving” in this life can make your heart heavy and hard, if you are preoccupied with them; if all your effort is about making it today; if you are too busy with this life and its cares.
Moreover, the Lord said in the parable of the sower concerning the third category of people that hear the Word:

Mark 4:18-19

“And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

As the Lord makes it clear: preoccupation with the cares of this world, the cares of this life, plus the deception of riches and the lust of other things are enemies to the seed of the Word so much so that if they take place in our heart they will choke the seed of the Word and make it barren and unfruitful. In other words, the cares of this life, the riches and the desires of other things CANNOT co-exist in our heart with the Word of God. One of the two will have to go. It is either the one or the other. Not both. This fits also with what the Lord said concerning money:

Matthew 6:24

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

You cannot serve two masters at the same time. If you want to follow God, if you want life and peace, if you want the seed of the Word to grow and give fruit then you have to give up your pre-occupation with cares, with money and other things as the Word cannot grow together with these things. You cannot be an alien and stranger in this world and at the same time be part of the world’s
system. It is not possible! If you somehow believe that you can manage both together then you deceive yourself. You may say: “Oh brother you do not understand my situation.” I do! I’m also having a job and a family with 3 small kids. And what I’m writing I write it out of experience. It is not just head knowledge to me. I cannot work daily for 12 hours and expect to grow with a 10 minutes devotional in the morning and a Sunday morning sermon. It will just not happen. We do not need just quality time with the Lord (and let’s face it you cannot have a 10 minutes “quality” time with the Lord when the remaining 16-18 hours that you are awake your mind is constantly busy with other things). We also need quantity time. We need teachings of the Word to be fed. We need to shift our interest from the world to the Word. Then growth will come just like growth comes to newborn babies when they drink their milk. As the Word says:

1 Peter 2:2

“As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”

If you do not drink the milk of the Word but instead you feed yourself with the garbage of the world, do not wonder that you are not growing but you feel weak and weary. Only the Word of God can bring increase.

4. The solution

Now the good news is that all this can change and you can start growing and giving fruit again. All that is needed is that you stop being preoccupied with cares, money and desires of other things and instead focus your attention to God
and His Word. In fact I believe it is the other way around: as you make space for God and His Word you will lose interest about money, worldly desires, ambitions and cares. This interest will fade away as you start drinking from the milk of the Word and focus on God as your first and foremost priority. And as you do this, growth, life and peace is going to come back again. You need to **indulge** therefore yourself in the Word and to teaching of the Word. To “desire the milk of the Word” instead of “the desire of other things”. Now to be able to do this you may need to do some adjustments. For example you may need to slow down at work and put limits. Now let me make clear here: I’m not saying that work is bad. In contrast as the Word says: “if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). To work therefore as a mean to earn your bread is no problem at all. In fact it something that it is very blessed. What I believe however it is a problem - apart from not working - is to over-work and by this I mean to work far and above from what you need to earn your bread and to the point that apart from work there is no space for anything else in your life i.e. work is a blessing but to be workaholic is a problem. You may also need to manage your time better, removing time devoted in watching TV, surfing to worldly sites or overindulgence with hobbies. If you commute to work, you need to find good teachings of the Word (and not religious teaching that are served as being “Christian”, yet they are just religious, lifeless teachings) and listen to them (here is a website that has fed me tremendously: [http://www.awmi.net/](http://www.awmi.net/) and has hundreds of MP3s for free). You need to change. And again what I am saying I went through too. It is not just head knowledge. The last 2 years I was so busy that all my time for God was a 10 minutes “devotional” in the morning between doing things. When somebody was asking me, how are you I would say “busy”. Usually the other side would also say the same. This is not good brother and sister. Being busy with cares and other things is not good! No wonder that after
my contract finished I felt so dried out. Then I got a couple of months off before starting searching for another job. During this time I discovered the site of Andrew Wommack that I gave above and was so happy to see that it contained many great teachings of the Word of God plus all the material was for free (as it should be for a Christian site). Many of the things taught there I knew them myself but due to busy-ness they had faded away. I indulged then myself with the Word. This really changed my life. The dryness went away and instead life, peace and power came. In between, God supernaturally arrange for me a job that is 60 miles from the place I live. I took it on faith because He said that this job was for me. I was wondering however about the commuting time as I would need 4 hours every day to go and come back from work (my previous job was just a mile away and was going on foot!). But guess what: the greatest time of the day is the commuting time. I board half empty trains, put up my netbook and working on articles like this or my site in general and at the same time I continue indulging myself to the milk of the Word through reading the Word and listening to teachings from the Word. By indulging in the Word any desire of other things that ate up my little free time I had before, went away too. I am really a different man than a year ago and this is only due to God and His Word. Such a change I want to see in you too and that’s why I’m writing this article.

Back to our topic, a seed of the Word that is barren, an unfruitful Christian is exactly the opposite to the declared desire of the Lord. As He said:

**John 15:16**

“I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain”
We are chosen to bring fruit. Yet as we said this will not happen if we allow the seed of the Word to be choked by the thorns of the riches, the desires of other things and the cares of this life. The Lord dealt with the issue of cares and riches in more passages than the ones we have seen up to now. Here is another revealing passage:

**Luke 12:15-31**

“Therefore I say to you, **do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.** Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? "**And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.**"

Do not worry about your life what you will eat and your body what you will put on. God is going to take care of you brother and sister. You do not need to worry about such things nor do you need to care about riches and other things. The people in the world care about such things. Their attention is how to make it today and once this is past then how to become rich and how to acquire more
things. But we are not the same. We belong in a different kingdom. We have our wonderful God and Father that takes care of us. To us the top and foremost priority is not how to make it in this world, how to survive, how to be made rich or how to get a more luxurious house or car. Instead our top priority is, and ought to be, God and His Kingdom. “Seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you” says the Word. If however instead of being preoccupied with the Word you are preoccupied with the cares of this world, the riches and desires of other things, throwing some crumbs to God (5 minutes devotionals and Sunday morning church going plus some dollar bills to pacify your consciousness) then the seed that once was sown to your heart is going to dry and together with it you will dry too. And this should not happen.

As we have already said, the same effect to cares of this life have also the deceit of riches and the desire of other things. I do not really understand why so many go after riches calling it “prosperity” when the Word says:

1 Timothy 6:7-10

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Brother and sister: do you have food and clothing? If you do then be content!! You do not need anything more!! But if you desire to be rich, if you covet after things, then you are heading to a snare. You do need to accumulate wealth and riches. You do not belong here and you are not going to take it with
you. You just need your needs covered and for this you don’t need to worry at all. God has given you a promise: seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and what you need will be added to you.

5. Conclusion

To summarize: we are aliens and strangers in this world. This world is not our home as a hymn says. We are citizens of heaven, called by God to go forth and bring fruit. Yet the Word of God that was sown into our hearts has a deadly subtle enemy that can make it barren. It is called “cares of this life, deceitfulness of riches and desires of other things”. Many of us are preoccupied with these things and despite the dryness and weakness we see as a result we do not really attribute the issue to our preoccupation with the wrong things. Also the church does not seem to explicitly condemn these either (especially the load with cares). Thus many of the Christians that fill the churches on Sundays are actually weak and dried out as the problem is not revealed openly and the solution to it is not given. But this does not have to stay like this. Christian life means peace and life. Please remember the joy, the peace, the life you had when you first believed in the Lord. This is supposed to be with you forever! And if it is not there it can come back again. All that you need to do is to change priorities and seek God as your top and foremost priority. God and His joy have not changed. You have changed and that is why the joy has disappeared. **God is not the variable. We are the variable.** You need to be fed with the Word, daily, with big doses, indulging yourself to it instead of “indulging” in cares, riches and desires of other things. Then the change will come and will be very rapid.

Now to close this article, let’s go to Hebrews 11:13. There, after the Word speaking about some Old Testament saints that walked in faith, it says:
Hebrews 11:13-16

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were aliens and strangers on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. ”

We, like them, are aliens and strangers on the earth. For us, as for them, there is a homeland different than the country of our passport. There is a mansion built up for us in heaven. Let us make as much fruit as possible in our life, for the time is short (our life - be it 70, 80 or 90 years – passes very quickly. If you are above 40 you perhaps understand better what I mean). Let the end of our life find us like Paul saying:

2 Timothy 4:7

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

And John 14:2-3

“In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”