

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS Like Us

ABRAHAM

“Am I Living Like a Tourist or an Alien?”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

ABRAHAM

“*Am I Living Like a Tourist or an Alien?*”

A **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – How I see myself in relation to the world I live in is perhaps the single most influential factor in every aspect of my life as a Christian. I need to make a conscious decision what my *self*-identity and role in relation to this world will be: an alien or a tourist?

“The world is a bridge. The wise man will pass over it but will not build his house upon it.”
– William Barclay

Nearly 4,000 years ago, a man left his home near the Persian Gulf and traveled hundreds of miles simply because a God he did not know told him to. Then, this God told him to move *again*, hundreds of miles in the opposite direction! Abraham was seventy-five years old when he began this second journey, a journey to the land of Canaan. A hundred years later, Abraham died without ever seeing God's promises fulfilled, except one: God had given him a son named Isaac when it seemed like Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were far too old to conceive a child. Through that son came the lineage of Israel.

The name Abraham has become synonymous with the word "faith." To both Jew and Christian alike, he is the epitome of one who knew and trusted God. In fact, he is mentioned by name over 300 times in the Bible, nearly 75 of which appear in the New Testament! However, Abraham's life is not merely an example of what it means to be in a right relationship with God, but moreover a portrait of what that relationship should look like to the watching world.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Genesis 11:27- 12:8; Hebrews 11:1-17

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Look at how Abraham describes himself in Genesis 23:1-4, and is described by others in Acts 7:5 and Hebrews 11:9. In your own words, write out what these descriptions might mean in practical terms.
2. How is what Peter is saying in the following verses dependent upon his readers seeing themselves as "resident-strangers"?
 - a. 1 Peter 1:17
 - b. 1 Peter 2:11
3. Hebrews 11:13-16 is an excellent passage for seeing *ourselves* as "resident-strangers." We are transients on this earth because we are on a unique kind of spiritual journey. Here, the writer

introduces a word that means "refugees" or "non-members." Read this passage over a couple of times. What additional insight does this add to what you saw in the questions above about how you should "see" yourself as a believer in this world, and why?

4. The word "admitted" or "confessed" in Hebrews 11:13 means to declare openly and speak out freely. What *was it* that these believers were apparently "declaring," and do you think it's important to do so, in some fashion?

5. One of Jesus' most powerful teaching sessions centered on this "alien" idea. After the Last Supper, He spoke to his disciples about the reality and cost of being a resident-stranger on earth. Look at each of the following verses and write out your insights about what Jesus is saying, that sheds light on this subject. Begin each or your entire with the phrase, "*Resident-strangers...*"
 - a. John 15:19 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - b. John 15:20 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - c. John 15:21 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - d. John 17:14,16 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - e. John 17:15 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - f. John 17:17 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - g. John 17:18 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

 - h. John 17:23 - "*Resident-strangers...*"

6. Keeping the "resident-stranger" perspective in mind, what do you think is the main point of each of the following verses?

- a. Hebrews 11:15
- b. Hebrews 11:14,16
- c. Hebrews 11:13
- d. Romans 12:2
- e. 2 Corinthians 5:20
- f. Philippians 3:20

7. By contrast, "tourist Christians" are those who want to maximize their personal enjoyment of this life, forgetting that it is a *temporary* visit and that their real home is someplace else. Ponder the following ten key areas of your life, and put a check for which of the two phrases best captures your current thinking in that area.

	“Tourist”	“Resident-Stranger”
My intimacy with God	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obedience to God’s Word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nurturing my inner life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accumulating “stuff”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How I use my possessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How I use my time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How I use my money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How I view my relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What I want to “leave behind”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My perspective on my body and/or my health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. God placed Abraham in a situation where *becoming* a resident-stranger was a result of obeying Him. God's will for those who want to follow Him has not changed. Jesus made that clear in His comments to His followers before He died. Look over your responses above and circle one or two areas where your perspective needs to change. What’s a good first step? Write it down.

9. Take some time soon—maybe right now if you can—and get on your knees before God. Confess to Him the areas in which you have been a "tourist." Ask Him to make you into a resident-stranger. Also, ask Him to provide you with at least one fellow resident-stranger to travel with you through life. If possible, try to share with a close friend your desire, and ask for prayer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- The resident-stranger perspective – Hebrews 11:13-16
- The resident-stranger imperative – I John 2:15-17

OPTIONAL

Hebrews 11 draws a straight line between genuine biblical faith and possessing a resident-stranger perspective. For some additional help on what it means to see yourself as a resident-stranger and live as one, read slowly through Hebrews 11 and wherever the phrase "*by faith*" appears, substitute "*as a resident-stranger.*"