

GOD IN OUR HOME

We usually feel that we are most comfortable, most relaxed, and most at our true selves in our own home. With the pressures to conform to social etiquette gone, we "let our hair down" and expose who we really are to those who live with us. This can take on many forms—the hidden humor of the publicly shy can shine, and dark bitterness can explode from an unchecked temper. We sometimes think, "no one is looking", and participate in activities that would shame us if they became public knowledge. Opposite from this, the home is also a place where we live out our commitment to Christ.

How would life in our homes change if God came to live with us today? No doubt all of us would take on new form with the Lord of Hosts just down the hall in the guest room. Interestingly, the Old Testament contains a story like this. Almost three thousand years ago, the home of Obed-edom had an unexpected visitor to come and stay with them for three months.

Second Samuel chapter six tells the story David's decision to move the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The story is often told of Uzzah reaching out to steady the Ark and losing his life as a consequence of disobeying God's command. The part of the story we don't often hear is how David decided to not carry the Ark any further the city, but he *"carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom"* (vs. 10). *"And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household."* (2 Sam 6:11) *"And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had."* (1 Ch 13:14)

We don't have a lot of information about how life changed for this family, but it stands to reason that a few things must have happened. First, because of what had just happened to Uzzah, this family knew that the Lord made no exceptions for the laws that pertained to the Ark. Second, they must have not only obeyed the commands regarding the Ark, they also lived appropriately before the Lord. These things are evident because the "Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom"—receiving the blessing of the Lord during the time of the Old Testament was a symbol of righteous living.

Just imagine what it must have been like for the Ark of the Covenant to be in their home. The Ark was the most precious object of their religious system. It was crafted some 400 years earlier, covered fully on the inside and out with gold. Two golden cherubims with wings outstretched toward each other made up the mercy seat on top of the Ark—it was from this place that the Lord himself communed with the High Priest's only once each year. Moses, Joshua, and many other historical heroes had seen the Ark and communed with the Lord before it. The Ark had gone with the priests into the Jordan River and the waters parted allowing all twelve tribes of Israel to pass over into Canaan. And how many more stories about the Ark that this family would have known that we do not have recorded! Imagine how important the Declaration of Independence is to the USA—what if it came to stay in your home unexpectedly? This probably doesn't begin to equal the impact the Ark coming to this family's home had.

Living righteously with the Ark in their home probably was not difficult. Naturally, with such a ready reminder of God being in their home, living in a way that was pleasing to God would have been easy. Each time they passed the room or the place in the home where the Ark was kept, it would have been a reminder of God and His power. He would have been on their minds often—more often perhaps than if they had always kept the Law fully. This increased awareness of God would have shaped their conduct at home privately, within their close relationships among family, and likely would have spread out into their public lives with friends and co-workers.

Putting ourselves into this story is easy. We can feel the significance of having the Ark of God in our homes, of having a reminder of God close to us. With this in mind, let's consider a few things that might change in our lives today if this story did come true. From a personal standpoint, praying "without ceasing" would become natural (I Thes 5:17), as would regular devotion to God's word and meditation upon His truths. We would no longer struggle with being "conformed to this world" (Rom 12:2), and we would truly live "after the spirit" at all times (Rom 8). Our personality and character would develop in ways that displayed the Fruits of the Spirit openly in all situations (Gal 5:22-23).

With God in our homes, our personal relationships within our homes would be affected positively. The marriage relationship will naturally take on the image of Christ and the Church with the husband giving himself and of himself for the wife, and the wife respecting and reverencing the husband (Eph 5). There will

be a spiritual focus and support given (Heb 3:13, 10:24; Gal 6:2), and unnecessary bitterness and envy will depart (Gal 5:15, 26). The importance of correct parenting will be a priority, and each opportunity to teach will be realized (Deut 6:7, Pr 22:6, 1 Cor 7:14).

As these things develop, living righteously outside of the home will become easier. Our connection to our brothers and sisters in Christ will be stronger (Heb 10:24-25), and our light will shine brightly to the lost (Matt 5:16).

It is easy to see how all of these things can happen with God in our home. Obed-edom and his family experienced God's blessings because of righteous living when the Ark visited them for three months.

Fortunately for us today, the time of the Old Law has passed. No longer is there an object made with hands that holds the significance of the Ark (Acts 17:24). Now the Holy Spirit is in us—we are *the temple!*—when we have obeyed the gospel of Christ and live faithfully (1 Cor 3:16-17).

The question then remains—if God was pleased with the family of Obed-edom when the Ark was in their home for three months, would he be pleased with us? It is my prayer that we will always remember to keep God first in our lives—personally, among our families, and in our public lives.

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WHAT TYPE OF PATTERN ARE YOU SETTING?

In Titus 2:7, Paul said, *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works..."* We are all examples to someone regardless if we want to be or not. However, a pattern is more than just a single example; it is a pattern of examples over a period of time which shows the type of person we truly are inside.

Are you setting a pattern of honesty? In 2 Corinthians 4:2, Paul said, *"But renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully..."* When a telemarketer calls right before the big game or your favorite show is starting, do you tell a family member to tell them we

are not at home? In Luke 6:31, Jesus said *"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise"*. We should treat people the way we would like to be treated regardless of how they might treat us.

Are you setting a pattern of hypocrisy? Do you cheat on your income tax and then are surprised when you get a call from the school that your child has been caught cheating on test? Where could they have gotten the idea that cheating was acceptable to get what they want or think they deserve? In Matthew 7:5, Jesus said, *"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."* Jesus was teaching that one should remove one's own obvious faults before attempting to correct others. The world is just waiting for a member of the church to "mess up" to confirm their theory of hypocrisy in the church. As Christians, we should not give them any material to work with.

Are you setting a pattern that cannot be condemned? In 1 Peter 2:15, Peter said, *"For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."* When someone makes a general accusation that a member of the church is a sinful person, one might ask for examples of the sinful activity. Then, if you have set the type of pattern that cannot be condemned, the person might respond that they could not remember any specific examples or that maybe it was someone else that they were thinking of. People in the community may even defend you stating they could never recall you acting in a sinful way. On the other hand, if you have set a pattern that can be condemned, the person might give an account of an exact recent event. For example, the accused person was heard by many cursing at the ball field last Saturday at 2:00 P.M. Peter also said in 1 Peter 3:16, *"Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."* Conversation here means not only our speech but also our manner of life.

Are you setting a pattern of good works? In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul told Timothy, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."* Do other people see these good works in your life? In Titus 2:11-14, Paul wrote *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself*

for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.". Do we live a Christian life that exhibit's a pattern of good works?

Do you set a pattern of repentance? When you do sin, do others see you as a person who is willing to admit that wrong and do all you call to make things right? Pride sometimes keeps us from true repentance. In Luke 15:10, Jesus said, "*Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented.*" If there is joy in Heaven over our actions, we should not worry about what anyone on earth thinks about us.

Someone is watching the pattern you are setting in your life. Where will it lead them if they follow you and your pattern? Let us all strive to live a life that is a pattern of: honesty, without hypocrisy, a lifestyle that cannot be condemned, good works, and repentance.

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
June 3 - 5 Topic: Divorce and Remarriage	Brushy Creek Church of Christ Lucedale, MS	Dana Chandler (Wedowee, AL)
June 5 - 10	Taylor's Cross Roads Church Roanoke, AL	Bill Prince, Jr. (Oxford, AL)
June 6 - 10	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 6 - 10	Owens Road Church Prattville, AL	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 8 - 12	Dowell Hill Church of Christ Columbus, IN	Mike Daniel (Douglasville, GA)
June 12 - 17 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday	Mount Carmel Church Woodland, AL	Carley Conner (Cookeville, TN)

10:30 a.m.&6:00 p.m. Sunday

June 17 - 19	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
June 19 - 24	Ephesus Church Roopville, GA	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 19 - 24	Hokes Bluff Church Hokes Bluff, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 27 - July 1	Camp Meeting 2005 Fall Creek Falls State Park	Various Speakers
June 29 - July 1	Summer Fellowship Conference DeSoto Park, Fort Payne, AL	Various Speakers

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Abram complained to God that he had no heir. Who did Abram say would be his heir because he had no son?
2. In the land shown to Ezekiel in a vision, how often do the fruit trees bear fruit?
3. After what event did Judas go and offer to betray Jesus?
4. What two crimes had Barabbas committed?
5. What reward was given to Daniel for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's first dream?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What did Moses do to camouflage his face when it shined after meeting with the Lord? HE PUT A VEIL OVER HIS FACE (Exodus 34:33)
2. How far should you go when someone wants you to go one mile? TWO MILES (Matt. 5:41)
3. How must one worship God according to John 4? IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (John 4:24)
4. Andrew and Philip were from what city? BETHSAIDA (John 1:44)

5. In the test of unfaithfulness with bitter water, what happened to the woman if she had been found unfaithful?
AFTER DRINKING THE BITTER WATER, HER THIGHS ROTTED AWAY AND
HER BELLY SWELLED (Num. 5:21)