

I Surrender My



“Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in,” Poet Robert Frost wrote. Just mentioning the word *home* seems to welcome us in and wrap its arms around us. Home is our haven, our refuge, and our retreat. One stay at home rejuvenates us.

Home can also be our lair, our den, and the burrow where we hide away to recover from the wounds inflicted by the world. It is a hospital for the physically and spiritually sick and weary. Recuperated, we venture forth to reenter the battleground.

We want to make home into the cozy nest from which we need not leave except for a refreshing breath of recreation. But, in our attempts to create perfect solace, can we create instead an object of passionate devotion that needs to be surrendered for God’s use?

SURRENDERING OUR HOME FOR GOD'S USE

Abraham and Sarah illustrate many spiritual lessons of faith and belief in the impossible through the birth of Isaac. They also characterize God's servants who have surrendered their home for His purposes. They truly show us awe-inspiring instant hospitality. Recall when 99-year-old Abraham runs to meet three heavenly visitors and promises them water to wash their feet, rest under a shady tree, and a morsel of bread. Those items seem easy enough today. For instance, we can invite the missionary speakers home after morning church service. It is easy to tell them to wash up in the bathroom, sit in the air-conditioned family room, and nibble on some chips.

While Sarah is kneading bread to let rise upon the hearth, untiring Abraham runs to the herd of cattle for a young tender animal that a servant prepares. They milk a cow, churn butter, and set the entire meal before the visitors. How could we accomplish that today? Even running the bread maker and Crockpot on high, a full meal from scratch is a daunting task on Sundays. Between morning worship and evening service (especially with a Sunday afternoon nap included) time seems too short for hospitality.

Hospitality can be overwhelm-

ing, but the Holy Spirit can help you add this as a virtue to your spiritual life according to 2 Peter 1:7. In this passage, Peter instructed the believer to add charity to brotherly kindness. Here, charity refers to affection or benevolence. While not every believer has the gift of hospitality to help in his or her local church, it is possible to add this virtue to one's spiritual life.

Romans 12:1-2 explain that our bodies must be living sacrifices, transformed to the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Perhaps some gifts don't seem to be ours or our gifts lie dormant because we have not surrendered ourselves as living sacrifices on the altar of God's will. Thankfully, prayer for God's mercy and power will initiate the transformation from worldly conformation to a renewed mind.



Reflective Questions

Do some women seem to extend hospitality effortlessly? Give an example of someone with such a beautiful gift.

Are you one who enjoys opening your home to guests, or do you struggle with the details?

How can we make hospitality a pleasure instead of a burden?

Titus 2:5 instructs that women are to be “keepers at home.” What is involved with the responsibility of keeping the home?

SURRENDERING OUR PHYSICAL HOME

In the grand scheme of life, often a woman's physical surrender of home occurs when she marries and moves from her parents' home to a home created by her new husband and her. Although the reference is to a daughter-in-law leaving her mother-in-law, a scriptural vow so appropriate for marriage is found in Ruth 1:16-17.

While the move to marriage is a willful surrender, tragedies occur where homes are lost through fire, flood, and even government's exerting the right of eminent domain. Physical surrender is wrest away, but acceptance of that involuntary surrender involves a spiritual wrestling match between our shattered dreams and God's reality. The whys will not be fully known until we reach our heavenly home, but our battles must end on Earth with raising the white flag of surrender to God's will.

Perhaps for some, the battle will be short. One young mother

of six soon realized that a house fire while they were at church was a blessing in many ways. They had outgrown the old house and God blessed them to rebuild a home with sufficient space.

Yet, after decades other women still sigh wistfully with memories of the childhood home place. Scarlet O'Hara always had Tara. However, in the real world, even the family farmland can vanish when covered by a lake.

Where then is our real home? Our bodies may be on planet Earth, but our spiritual positions are already in our new home situated in heavenly places. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

These heavenly places are sources of peace and happiness: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). We can raise the flag of victory because we are not homeless!

Reflective Questions

Think back to all the places you have lived. Which one is where your heart still dwells? Why?

How many of *your* homes are still in physical existence? What Scriptures give you comfort for any sense of loss?

What may be involved in surrendering our homes to God?

SURRENDERING TO OUR ETERNAL HOME

The home that we long for exists both spiritually and physically. David sang of receiving his inheritance and living in a home of spiritual rest, "I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings... For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name" (Psalm 61:4-5).

The thought of leaving our earthly homes can be unsettling; however, Christians "are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we

are absent from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6). Our physical bodies are temporary tents that will be folded for the final journey to our permanent home.

Because the process of dying may include years of pain and agony, we desperately need God's grace, mercy, and comfort. At the actual point of death, Jesus' loving hand grasps the Christian's hand and guides her step from the darkness of the physical home into the glorious light of the heavenly home.

More is involved than physical dying, however. The body may be glad to lay down its burden, but what of the soul? The soul needs

to surrender its autonomy and come home to Jesus, the Lord and Savior. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). God promises eternal, spiritual life, the authentic form of life, to those who believe (John 3:16, 1 John 2:25).

Jesus promised, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). When we throw open the door and invite Jesus to share in the hospitality of our intertwined lives, we confidently expect that the heavenly "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Reflective Questions

How can we comfort and console those who are in the physical process of dying? List physical and spiritual helps.

What does it take to build an earthly home? What does it take to build a heavenly home?

What three hopes do you anticipate fulfilled in your heavenly home?

About the Writer: Susan Burgess, a WNAC board member, has been an active member of WNAC on the local, district, and state levels, and is currently president of Illinois WAC. She attends Pleasant View FWB Church, where her husband David pastors.