# Every Home a Foundation

## EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINES

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*Every Home a Foundation*



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*This book is dedicated to all the homes and hearts that shaped me, and to all the doors, tables, and affections opened to our family over the years.*

I never thought I'd be raising kids
with the kids I grew up with.
These narrow streets closed me in
and I escaped them: "I won't settle"
turned into "I won't settle down,"
and then I did.
Right back where I started.
TikTok calls it failure,
shows me waterfalls in Bali,
bikini bodies and brunches,
far from my little city and little babies
living my boomerang life.

But what TikTok doesn't show
of the town I grew up in
are narrow streets of people who know me
whose love has closed me in.
An embrace instead of escape,
a place to settle and settle down.
The limits I once tried to break
are my safety,
right back where I started.
Now my babies toddle on tiny legs
beside babies with last names
as familiar as my own.

They mocked us for coming back,
called it settling. I guess it is.
Settling for front porch visits,
the barista's smile (she's my cousin),

the winding roads of youthful risk,
a hollered "hello!" across the park,
knowing the postmaster's name.
To make a home, you have to settle.
And I settled for raising kids
with the kids I grew up with
in the town we grew up in.
Not backwards; full circle.
Like arms in an embrace.

"Home," Phylicia D. Masonheimer

# Contents

Contents

# Introduction

## *Confessions of an Unlikely Homebody*

One would think I always loved being home.

I work from home. My husband works from home.

We have a small farm—a *home*stead.

We *home*school our children.

"Home" is my favorite place to be, but I didn't come to my current view of it by being a homebody. The opposite, actually.

Early in my adulthood, I was a college adviser, recruiting students for my alma mater, traveling around the United States to conferences and other glamorous things. And when I resigned, I continued to travel for my growing ministry (I am the founder of Every Woman a Theologian, an interdenominational ministry teaching theology and apologetics to lay Christians): Texas, California, Virginia, Missouri, Arkansas, Ohio, Massachusetts. I loved the thrill of meeting readers, opening God's Word, and worshiping alongside women of faith. And I still do. But a few years ago, God called me to end my ten-year stint of work travel and focus my attention at home.

Over that decade, I got married, moved three times, and had three babies. Life changed a lot. When I stopped traveling for work, it dawned on me that despite all my home systems, routines, and homeschooling, it was possible to be home *a lot* . . . yet not home

at all. My mind was not content there. Each month had one or two speaking engagements or commitments to pull me out of the house—away from my young children, away from the repetitive work of dishes and laundry for the *real*, *important* work of ministry. I lived in the home, I even loved my home, but ultimately my attitude toward home was one of ingratitude.

Hi, I'm Phylicia. And I'm a woman hemmed in by home in all the best ways.

Before you think I quit ministry, put on a dress, and took up sourdough-bread making: think again! I still work almost forty hours a week leading a team of ten amazing employees—including my wonderful husband, Josh. I still write books and teach (in my living room instead of on a stage). I didn't leave my calling to love home well. I just learned to view it differently. I had to take back the purpose I'd lost—a purpose that does not require a full travel schedule, an outside job, a fancy kitchen, or a big bank account to achieve. I needed a refresh on my *theology* of home.

Home was important to me theoretically; I liked the idea of home, the picture I had in my head of calming routines and strong community, but once I was actually within those four walls my mind lived elsewhere. This wasn't helped by the pressure of social media, which told me to be anywhere *but* home. Travel seemed glamorous (even though it exhausted me). Taking the kids on another outing seemed necessary (even though they thrived on consistent routines). Having a packed schedule away from my living room seemed like the grown-up choice (even though I came home tired). Home was for boring people, and I didn't want to be boring, so I didn't stay home.

My vanity—a desire to be applauded for how busy I was and how exciting my life appeared—drove me out of my house. My theology of home was shaped more by pop culture and unhealthy work ethics than by the Word of God. Sure, I took care of the laundry and dishes, planned meals, and entertained. But when I look back at

my attitude toward home in those early days, I see a person desperate to make herself exciting but ending up unfulfilled. The truth I didn't know then, and know now, is this: a biblical theology of home brings out the deep, abiding joy of a "boring" life. I have long believed the home is a vital place for Christian believers. It is the primary seat of discipleship, where people are most comfortable, safe, and freely themselves. But we are all forgetful sometimes. My years of saying yes without question led to months and weeks of time away from home, not because I always felt called to what I was doing but because I unconsciously believed what I was doing was more meaningful than the unseen work of the kitchen and living rooms. This book lays out a theology of home that is not the rigidly gender-roled model of the "tradwife" movement, nor the anti-domestic diatribe of secular feminism. It is not a book about motherhood (though I am a mother to three); it is not a book about professional work (though I am the CEO of a business and ministry).

This is a book about seeing home as a place of purpose.

This is a book about living with purpose in the home.

Forming a theology of home doesn't require homeschooling, working from home, wearing certain clothes, or baking bread without yeast. Theology is the study of God: His nature and how He interacts with us. A theology of home teaches us God's *desire for* and *purpose within* the places we live. If you're reading this, you probably have a home: a shared apartment, an old duplex, a parent's renovated basement, or a cul-de-sac craftsman. All homes require labor, usually the kind we like to put off because it's not exciting—but it's work that matters immensely to God.

I wonder if some of us fear mundanity. We resent our homes because they represent all the "not yets" of our lives. We wake up each day seeing things that need fixing and redoing, or we're reminded of the lifestyle we're told we should afford. Home makes us feel like failures, so we close our eyes to it and don't invest much

effort. I don't know about you, but I don't want to waste years of my life resenting the place I live, the place where most of my memories are stored. I want to do the work of home with joy, and I want to remember it just that way—*as a joy*. Not that I will ever choose matching socks over going out on the town, but that when matching socks comes around, I know there's an eternal purpose in the mundane tasks of my daily life.

Dishes, laundry, raking, cleaning: culture tells us they don't matter, but life can't run without them. Like it or not, daily tasks are part of living, *evidence* of living. I would rather see God in them, a glimpse of eternity in everything I put my hand to, than miss out on what He might be saying because I thought this work was below my attention.

As you read through this book, you'll encounter stories from my own life, peeks into the homes of friends and family, jaunts through history and literature, practical tips for creating routines and rhythms, poems and liturgies. Our homes reflect our values in diverse ways, and this book reflects the theology of home via several different media. All the poems and liturgies included in this book are written by me, unless otherwise noted.

Whether you're single and a college student, newly married and climbing the corporate ladder, an empty nester with a big house that feels far too silent, a mama to a fresh little babe: I hope this book leads you to appreciate the work of your hands at home because God certainly does.

PART I

# A Theology of Home

CHAPTER 1

# A Peaceful Habitation

In a tender place the dawn glows blue
dousing snow in cobalt swathes
until wings beat sun above the woods
and all that lived in dark is lost.

The music of this breaking morning
is scraping stools and stumbling feet;
the croak, reluctant coffeepot;
the sizzle, iron over heat.

We make the day while sun is shining
our work below, it journeys lonely
observing on its steady path
what we call normal—God calls holy.

"Normal," *PDM*

Grandma's house was an hour and a half away, a winding drive past shivering hardwoods and old Michigan farms. We'd turn right at the river and see the house she grew up in, white with black shutters, its surprised eyes looking past Wooden Shoe Lake. We'd pull into Grandma's driveway and pile into her house—a place filled with the scent of Maxwell House coffee, roast beef, and apple pie. We'd lie on the floor vents to feel the heat and skate down the linoleum floor while Grandma piled our plates with more food: "You're hardly eating anything! Eat up so you don't blow away!"

Grandma's house was *comfort*. It was warm, squishy, filling, sweet, and safe.

But what if I told you that Grandma's house was a single-wide trailer with paneled walls, cheap vinyl floors, an ancient yellow bathtub, and a galley kitchen?

*That's right*. The trailer was a formative part of my childhood and eventual view of the home. No fancy tile kitchen or quaint cottage facade. No stretching acreage or attached garage. Just a place to

feel safe and loved, to be fed and attended to—to chase toads, dig holes, and make cookies. The smell of Maxwell House still takes me back.

My grandma was divorced, never remarried, and made her money running garage sales and cleaning houses. Her existence was as humble as her home. Though she no longer lives there, I drive by her trailer from time to time. It looks so much smaller than it did when I was ten, running up the porch stairs, swinging wide the door as she yelled, "Ohhhh, hello!" Whether hunting for toads in the backyard, sifting through the bin of garage-sale toys in the spare bedroom, or sneakily watching *Power Rangers* on the bedroom TV, Grandma's house was familiar and safe, not because of what it looked like but because of the person who lived there. Grandma loved us. Her trailer might have been small, but it was impeccably clean, and there was always food on the table and a loud welcome at the door. Grandma loved us in the way she knew best: by cooking, cleaning, mending, giving.

A home holds up the people within it.

If you were to close your eyes and imagine, I am confident you could think of a place—a home—where you felt like I did: safe, loved, attended to. Maybe it was the home your parents built; maybe it was the home of a friend. That home was more than a house to you—it was a place of refuge. More than the four walls holding it up, a home holds up the people within it, covering them with grace and peace.

*Homes* and *houses* are not the same. You can have a beautiful mansion empty of true purpose and affection. You can have a tiny trailer full of love and safety. "Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" (Proverbs 17:1 NIV). A home can be built with the sparest materials as long as the heart behind it is unified with God's mission.

In her trailer my grandma loved us through a humble home

and mundane tasks—primarily cooking and cleaning. If Grandma showed up, you knew there would be an entire three-course meal and a perfectly cleaned kitchen by noontime! She attributed a greater value, a meaning or blessing, to humble things. And she taught—mostly by accident—that an eternal purpose is woven into the fabric of home and all its tasks.

Looking back, my grandma's home and her actions there weren't the only ones that impacted me. There were others:

- The small cottage of my friend's parents, where the house always smelled like baked goods, and we sat in inflatable chairs and giggled over American Girl books for hours.
- The sprawling house of my college Bible study leader, an empty nester with a lovely kitchen she used to bless the women she led.
- The second-floor apartment of my single friend who invited me for coffee when I was a young mom with babies in tow.
- The historic home of our small-group host couple, who opened their door to eight adults and fourteen children every week—while their home was under massive renovation.
- The home I grew up in, built with my father's own hands and filled with beauty and goodness by my mother.

None of these homes were perfect. Some were small. Some were under construction. All of the families had pain, loss, and brokenness somewhere in their history. But the people in these homes had something in common: they saw home, and the mundane tasks within it, as something worthy of their best. They gave their best at home and invited others (me!) to participate in the blessing of their faithfulness. They saw the daily routines of making food, cleaning up, and opening their door as a way to love. And I was loved because of them. I mourn to think of the loss experienced

if these people had waited for a bigger home or less to do before inviting me in.

Though I grew up in a home full of love, my parents worked hard to provide it for us. They allowed Christ to redeem their histories and tried to build something completely new. Chances are you, too, have been affected by the brokenness of home in a sinful world. Even the word *home* may be a trigger for you—not a word of comfort and peace but a reminder of anxiety, fear, and isolation. Maybe you didn't grow up in a home that felt safe. In fact, home was the opposite of safe. You spent as much time away from it as you could. Maybe you grew up in a home that was distant, cold, and lonely. No one was invited in; sometimes you felt like you didn't even belong. Maybe you had a parent who did not care well for the home, so you had no example and now feel like you're drowning. There is room for all our stories here, because God does not leave us homeless in heart, wandering without communion, unseen in our pain. God is in the business of redemption, and the homes He builds cannot be undermined.

Home matters to God. It is the center of true discipleship.

## THE HISTORY OF HOME

The very first home was a garden. In Genesis 1–2 God builds a home for His people. It has food, provision, work to be done, rest to be had, and most of all, community! God Himself walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). God's desire was to dwell in perfect unity with His people so they could experience a free and fulfilling relationship with Him and the world He created. But as we discover in Genesis 3, sin invaded the first home. The unity, safety, and love God intended for home were all shattered in a moment. God could not dwell with His people in their rebellious state, the labor of earth was exhausting and resistant, and

the labor of life-giving—fertility, childbirth, and parenthood—was now full of pain. The perfect home was broken.

The fall of humanity broke what God created, but God wasn't done. In Genesis 3, He promised to send the seed of the woman to crush the Enemy for good. He promised a Messiah, a Savior, to reconcile all things to Himself and redeem the painful choice of mankind. In the meantime, God did not leave; He revealed Himself in Old Testament history, dwelling among His people in a tabernacle and a temple until Jesus Christ, the Messiah, arrived. God's mission is to build a home for His people. He began the story with a home in a garden and He ends it with a home in a heavenly city. Hebrews 13:14 tells us, "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (NIV). God's heart is for His people to find the kind of belonging a home should provide—and to create that belonging for others. Home matters immensely to God.

> The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
> but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.
> (Proverbs 3:33)

The revelation of God's character through Scripture was first passed down orally. It was communicated to families in their homes—not in church buildings—as they lived, worked, and worshiped together. After the exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people were gathered at Mount Sinai to receive God's law: a law outlining how to live well in communion with God and in community with other people. During the wandering years, Israel's "home" was in tents and God's story was passed down through the generations in anticipation of the homes they would one day possess in the promised land. Home throughout these decades (and before) was the center of discipleship.

When Israel settled in Canaan and built homes, they were

commanded to choose whether they would make God the center of their homes or not. They were entering a wild and untamed land filled with people who hated God. To live well in such a land, Israel had to be clear about their purpose, starting at home. Joshua spoke to this in his challenge to the people: "If it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (24:15).

Joshua, the Israelite leader after Moses, set an example of leadership in his home. His household (his family, servants, and everyone who lived under his roof) was touched by his commitment to God, which set the tone for the entire home.

In the nomadic world of ancient Israel, home and work life were not separate. They were united in every possible way (and in some cultures this unity continues today). When Joshua stated that his household would serve the Lord, he meant everyone who lived under his roof would do so in *all of their ways*. Deuteronomy further supports this when Moses spoke to parents about their discipleship responsibility in the home: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (6:6–9 NIV).

Ancient Israelites lived with the home at the center of life and godliness. During the wandering years, the camps of each tribe encircled the tabernacle, God's dwelling place. Each tribe of Israel, and each family tent within the tribe, lived life with God at the center. This was further reflected by the Levitical law. Personal actions affected every other person in the home community and, on a larger scale, their neighbors and friends. Those "abstract" laws in Leviticus were intended to create a community based on love,

honor, justice, and welcome—beginning first at home in interpersonal relationships and extending outward to the foreigner and alien (25:35). Joshua's allegiance to the Lord was a prototype of how every Israelite house was to function: healthy relationships with others stemming from an intimate relationship with God, beginning with those under your own roof (or your tent).

If we read further into the Old Testament, we see that Joshua's devotion to God at home was not imitated by Israel at large. Instead of choosing the righteousness God offered through His law, Israel chose the brokenness of sin. They adopted the identity of the nations around them, along with their sinful practices, instead of the goodness and unity of life with God. And God, who had chosen Israel as His "home" (a light to the nations), gave them the consequences of their own evil choices. Israel lost the promised land, their home with God, to live in exile among the Assyrians and Babylonians. But even in this place, even after grievous sin, God called Israel to make themselves a home:

> Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:4–7)

According to God, *home* is possible even in broken places. *Home* is possible even when we've sinned, or when our parents paved a path we never would have chosen. God is in the business of home-building, and when He is the foundation, we will always build well.

Coming out of the medieval era, European homelife was surprisingly similar to ancient Israel's. People worked near or in their living space. Agriculture was the central, if not primary, industry, and if you worked the land, you probably lived on or near it. In homes, bedrooms were not a reality for any but the extremely wealthy (and even the rich did not always adopt them). Families slept together in a main "hall" and, in the lower classes, worked together to survive. If you were self-employed or a skilled laborer, your place of business was often attached to your home in some way (think: *Johnny Tremain*'s silver shop, *Great Expectations*'s blacksmithing forge, and in the twentieth century, Corrie ten Boom's apartment above her father's watchmaking storefront). From mothers to daughters to fathers to sons, everyone in the lower and middle class worked to survive: laundry, cooking, gardening, tending animals, sewing, mending, knitting, woodworking—the things we think of as hobbies today were essential to simply live.

Everyone labored together in the home. This continued through the eighteenth century both in Europe and in the newly settled New World. Settlers like the Separatist Pilgrims lived in communities where home, work, and faith were integrated and inseparable. Puritan settlements in New England emphasized the impact of faith on both work life and homelife. Living well at home was an act of stewardship, and the ethic one brought to their professional sphere carried over to things like laundry, cooking, cleaning, and caring for animals. "Do all things as unto the Lord," in the Puritan mind, was more than a concept; it was a lifestyle.

Everything changed for the American home during the Industrial Revolution. Machines made man-made items more inefficient and, eventually, obsolete. With inventions like the steam engine, cotton gin, and electricity, "better, faster, stronger" took priority. As factories took over the work landscape, a divide began to form between work and home. People left their farms and personal businesses to work in cities; they left the home to head to

the factory, bank, or railroad. The work of the home, once done in an almost-egalitarian fashion by both men and women, was now mostly relegated to wives and daughters. With husbands and sons working long hours to provide, the bulk of home tasks fell to female members of the family. With the Industrial Revolution, it was possible to make more money than ever before. Perhaps because of the value placed on financial success, the work of the home—non-income producing—came to be seen as less valuable.

As World War I and World War II crashed onto the national scene, more women left homes to work in factories. Poor women had always worked, but with the war effort there was a new note of admiration for working women—they were helping win the war! Perhaps this moved more women of wealthier classes to the workforce. American culture realized women were not just stand-ins for men; women were effective, efficient, and intelligent workers. When WWII ended and women returned to the home (now in the 1950s), a rising discontent began to pervade the women of America. Their experience working in a place where their contribution was measurable, observable, and impactful, coupled with the invention of time-saving home-management machines like the microwave, refrigerator, dishwasher, and vacuum, made home tasks both less time-consuming and less appealing. By the time of the sexual revolution in the 1960s, no one needed to tell American women that tending the home was boring, obsolete, and fake. They felt it. The *Leave It to Beaver* ideal proved hollow, and feminism promised something more: *women could have it all*. They could join the workforce, work as well as men, and enjoy all the rights that men did. The work of the home came to be seen as oppressive and limiting.

Before the sexual revolution, habits of the home (how to clean, plan, make meals, grow your own food, mend what was broken) were handed down generation to generation. We were taught how to peel potatoes in the same way we were taught to walk. My own grandmother taught me how to scrub a baseboard, clean

as I cooked, and fold fitted sheets. Her mother, a rural Michigan farmwife and mother of eight, taught *her*. And Great-Grandma Pearl's mother was off the boat from the Netherlands, never spoke a "lick of English" (as my grandma put it), but probably knew how to scrub tile and get all the food out of the oven at the same time. My point is: before the sexual revolution, the shattering impact of the world wars, and the Industrial Revolution, the family handed down an *appreciation* for the home. Though by no means idyllic or even moral, without even thinking about it, parents and grandparents (who not uncommonly lived all together) handed down the knowledge of home and its purpose. Most of the time they did this out of sheer necessity; they wanted to survive. But even in necessity, this handing down of home legacy built a sense of purpose and identity in the home.

There are many other factors I don't have time to address: latchkey kids left at home while both parents worked; the scattering of family units as children moved far away from their city of origin; the evolution of essential life skills to hobbies; the promise that women really *could* have it all: a successful career, an awesome marriage, a family, community, and home; the differences ethnicity and culture play in family dynamics (for example, metropolitan white Americans are less likely to live near or with family than Black, Hispanic, or rurally located white Americans are[1]). Through a combination of many factors, the Western home became a place to crash, a place to recover from the world—not a place to serve or prepare for it. Home lost its purpose, and the work of the home lost its meaning. The generations who believed domestic arts to be oppressive did not hand them down to their daughters and sons (a *Good Housekeeping* survey in 2018 found that millennials only know how to do eleven out of eighteen once-essential household skills[2]). When those daughters decided they wanted *more* than the workaholism of the generation before, they

were left overwhelmed and empty-handed, trying to learn home skills they were never taught while *still* working a full-time job.

This brings us to today. Extended families are scattered across long distances, leaving young parents with little support. Home is something to show off on Instagram or HGTV, not something to share with people across a table. Our schedules are so jam-packed, our perfectionism so suffocating, we can't open our doors to the family across the street. Domestic tasks are seen as unnecessary and yet when we abandon them, we feel claustrophobic, overwhelmed, cluttered, and sad.

This isn't to say that life was better, or perfect, in the 1700s. I enjoy my conveniences as much as the next person! Even when Western culture had a stronger centralized family and an appreciation for homelife and industry, many homes were just as broken as they are today. Without a Christian theology of home, the most purposeful homelife can become abusive. The most intimate homelife can become codependent and controlling. Observing history shows us how we got here, but it doesn't mean that homelife in the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth centuries in America was innately better. There were different challenges in a different time. What we *can* do is identify what has changed across the last four centuries and ask ourselves: *Has our view of home really progressed as a society and church, or have we gone too far?* We don't have to return to the nineteenth century, but we should critique and question a view of home that sees "real life" as everything outside the door.

## HOME AS THE CENTER OF DISCIPLESHIP

The home has changed a lot since Israel's day and not just because of air-conditioning! How did we get from that original vision—home

as a place of intimacy, purpose, and industry—to seeing home as boring, overwhelming, and suited only to loungewear? At times in history, home was considered more central to society; people worked to survive and the home-work divide was not as wide as it is today. While home in history is by no means perfect, we can turn to the past to understand the changes to our perception of it.

A quick scroll through social media for the search term "home" tells me that it is both a place that overwhelms us ("The key to a clean house is to clean it twenty-four hours a day") and also a place we never want to leave ("I love canceled plans!"). We long for community ("The real miracle is that Jesus had twelve close friends in His thirties") but we don't invite others in ("My house is a mess"). Let's talk more about these feelings.

Home as a place of overwhelm: Unlike a desk at work, which we tidy upon leaving and find the same upon return, our homes devolve into chaos just by being used. My mom called it the "lived-in look." Homes require maintenance to counteract the mess of daily use. All of us have to organize, scrub, and pick up the living room. Unfortunately, many people are not taught *how* to care for their living space. As the days unfold, tasks pile one on top the other until the chore list is so long, we don't even know where to start.

Home as a place of isolation: As a social introvert, I like canceled plans as much as the next person. But I also know the importance of community and friendship. Some days I make myself leave the house because I know it's the best thing for me; other times I head to a coffee date or a meetup because it's the best thing for the other person. Homes are not hermitages. To thrive as a place of discipleship and growth, our homes must be centered on more than just our own pleasures and comforts. We have to leave our homes to form relationships that will fill our homes with goodness.

Home as a place of community: I've already said home is the seat of discipleship, and discipleship is an active form of community. I

like to think of discipleship as intentional, focused spiritual friendship. I'm a member of the millennial generation, and millennials love to *talk* about community, but living it out is a lot harder to do. Godly community is not just "hangout time." It is deeper, broader, and more gracious than that. Godly community (discipleship in action) faces down the hard questions, invites a broad range of people, and gives grace for imperfection and failure. The home is where such depth, breadth, and growth are facilitated.

Home as a place of welcome: We've been sold a lie that true connection can only happen in perfect houses. We've been sold another lie: homes are only for *our* pleasure and comfort—no one else's. These two lies together keep us from opening our doors. We will have an entire chapter about this later on.

There is an unrecognized inner conflict regarding the home that is pulling at men and women, Christian and non-Christian alike. We want to enjoy the places we live, but we feel ill-equipped to care for them. We want a thriving, deep community, but we want other people to do the inviting. We think of home as a safe place, a refuge, but see its tasks as boring and mundane. We still have to fold laundry, make meals, clean floors, and wash dishes. Christians are spiritually *divided* from their homes. The things done in church, Bible study, or on a stage are seen as ministry and spiritually valuable; the things done in the home (whether cleaning tasks, discipleship of children, or hospitality) are seen as extra physical tasks that have no real spiritual impact. This could not be further from the truth.

We've been trained not to see the value of home; we've been taught that home is a burden and its care an impediment to real life. But God said all work matters (1 Corinthians 10:31), and our homes, the place where we should be free and vulnerable, matter immensely to Him.

A biblical theology of home is the answer to all home problems across all centuries. It frees us to not just *enjoy* the place we live but to live with purpose and dignity. What if we can recapture what was lost to the rugged individualism of the American dream? What if we could worship God through dishes, laundry, mopping, cooking, mending, and hospitality; and what if there was truly a way to show up to our homes from a place of peace?

I say "what if," but I can make you a promise: there is a way. *And it's God's way home.* It's grace-based, rest-filled, adaptable, and free. And it's more than just physical—it's a spiritual practice! The Christian home is an image of both a *coming* spiritual reality and the *existing* spiritual reality of our family, the church. We are part of something bigger than ourselves. Our homes should reflect the priorities of Christ, our foundation and cornerstone of the church.

John Tweeddale says this: "The home is not a neutral zone for acting upon baseless desires, nor is it simply a bastion for maintaining traditional values. One of the primary purposes of the home is to cultivate Christlike virtues that animate who we are in private and facilitate what we do in public."[3]

The home is where it all begins, where it all dwells, and where it all ends. Through Christ we can heal a home experience that was hurtful, chaotic, or unsafe. Through Christ we can build a home for ourselves and others that is everything our childhood home was not. Through Christ we have a cornerstone for every beautiful thing we build. And on such a rock, that house will stand.

The home is where it all begins, where it all dwells, and where it all ends.

Grandma's trailer wasn't much to look at, but it was much to my ten-year-old heart. Her table was brown and bland and, to be honest, sometimes her mashed potatoes were too (she didn't believe in salt). But she handed me a set of skills I still use today. Grandma handed me her heart, though it looked a lot like a

mop and a roasting pan. What if love looks like that? Can we see the home and all it entails as not just a place to be loved but as a *way* to love? I think we can.

> My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in
> secure dwellings,
> and in quiet resting places. (Isaiah 32:18)