

Settle Down and Be Comfortable

Making your life a home where Jesus is truly at home

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height.

EPHESIANS 3:17-18

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	The Holy Spirit strengthens us so that Jesus can settle down and be completely at home in our lives. As we obey Him, make room for Him, and pray in His name, we come to know God and His love in a real, experienced way.
SCRIPTURE	Ephesians 3:16-19 · Colossians 1:27 · John 15:1-11 · 2 Corinthians 5:17 · Ephesians 4:22-24 · Colossians 3:5-17 · John 14:13-14
LENGTH	About 30 minutes, or three sessions (one per section)
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles, paper, and pens. Recommended: Robert Munger's booklet <i>My Heart, Christ's Home</i> .

Start here: guest or family?

Ask: "How do you act when a guest comes over, compared to when your family is home?" With guests, we clean up, put on our best behavior, and keep them in the living room. Family goes everywhere: the kitchen, the messy bedroom, the junk drawer. They're truly at home.

Paul prays that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:17). The word "dwell" means to settle down and be at home, not just to visit. Jesus doesn't want to be a guest in your life. He wants to be completely at home.

1 Christ in you, the hope of glory

Paul calls it a "mystery" that God revealed: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The night before He died, Jesus talked about the same thing: "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). He wants to abide, dwell, remain, and live with you every day, every minute.

Notice in Ephesians 3:16-19 that the Holy Spirit uses His power to strengthen you so that Jesus can settle in. Why do we need *power* and not just more information? Because we come to understand God by letting Him work through our lives. As we use His power to help others, we learn what He is like and experience His presence. That is what knowing God is really about.

And there's a link with obedience: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (John 15:10). When we do what someone wants, we begin to understand them, and their reasons become our reasons.

REFLECT

- a) Are you yielding to the Holy Spirit's power? Are you doing what you know is right?
- b) What areas of your life might make Jesus uncomfortable? What can you do to remove or reduce them?
- c) Where does Jesus feel comfortable and "at home" in your life? How can you add more of that?
- d) How have you used His power to help others, and what did you learn about God?

2 Prepare your life for change

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**

When someone trusts and follows Jesus, they change in a real, fundamental way. Adam's disobedience brought spiritual death to the human race. But when we believe, God makes our spirit alive and gives us a new birth, so that we will eventually resemble His Son.

Still, old habits, emotions, and ways of thinking need to be changed from the inside out. God's plan is simple: "put off... the old man," "be renewed in the spirit of your mind," and "put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:22-24). Read Ephesians 4:25-5:21 and Colossians 3:5-17. Notice how Paul always pairs what to remove with what to replace it with: stop lying, speak truth; stop stealing, work and give; stop tearing down, build up.

REFLECT

- a) What inappropriate things do you need to remove from your life? List them.
- b) Next to each one, list what you will replace it with.

3 Pray for change, in Jesus' name

Prayer is the most basic tool God gives us for both changing and understanding Him. Prayer is much more than "asking for what I want." It's asking for what Jesus would ask for if He were in your shoes, and since He lives in you, He is in your shoes. Jesus prayed for us that we would be one with Him and the Father (John 17:20-21), and He promised, "whatever you ask in My name, that I will do" (John 14:13).

ILLUSTRATION: "STEVE SAID YOU WOULD GIVE ME ONE"

The late pastor Ron Dunn once took his three children to a fair and bought a roll of ride tickets. At each ride he handed tickets to his kids. Then a fourth hand reached up. Not wanting to give his children's tickets to a stranger, he pulled back, until the boy said, "Steve said you would give me one." His son Steve, who never met a stranger, had told his new friend that his dad would give him a ticket. So Ron did. The boy asked in Steve's name, and the father honored it. That's a picture of praying in Jesus' name: we come to the Father on the strength of His Son's relationship, asking what the Son wants.

REFLECT

- a) List things in your life that don't resemble Jesus.
- b) List things in your life that do resemble Jesus.
- c) List ways to grow the "do resemble" list, and pray over it in Jesus' name.

RECOMMENDED READING

Robert Boyd Munger's classic booklet *My Heart, Christ's Home* (first published in 1951) pictures the Christian life as inviting Jesus into every room of your house: the library (mind), dining room (appetites), living room (time with God), and even the hall closet with its hidden junk. It's a perfect companion to this talk.

TALK IT OVER

- 1. What is the difference between Jesus being a guest in your life and being at home there?
- 2. Why does Paul pray for power, not just information, so we can know God's love?
- 3. Why does obeying Jesus help us understand Him better?
- 4. Why is it important to replace old habits with new ones, not just remove them?
- 5. What does praying "in Jesus' name" really mean, based on the Ron Dunn story?

TAKE IT HOME

Work through the three "Reflect" boxes this week, one section every couple of days. Pick one "room" of your life where Jesus doesn't feel at home yet, and invite Him in by making one specific change. If you can, read *My Heart, Christ's Home*.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Let Him settle down and be at home.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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