

CAROL MCLEOD

INVITING CHRIST INTO
EVERY ROOM

AT HOME IN
Heart
YOUR



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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AT HOME IN YOUR HEART

Inviting Christ into Every Room

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ISBN: 978-1-64123-803-8
eBook ISBN: 978-1-64123-804-5
Printed in the United States of America

© 2022 by Carol Burton McLeod

Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (Pending)

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Introduction: Welcome Home!

By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

—Proverbs 24:3–4

You might suppose that your home is 83 East Academy Street...or 6555 Alleghany Road...or 16 Willow Lane. But it's not. You can frantically inspect every printed map and strategically pore over every listing in an address book, but you will never discover your actual home at a zip code, on a street, or in a city.

You may presume that your particular home consists of three bedrooms and a bathroom...or a massive family room...or a farmhouse kitchen. But again, your actual home has nothing to do with the floor plan that lies under the roof of the home in which you live.

Perhaps when you think of home, you remember the childhood house in which you hung stockings along the mantle on Christmas Eve, blew out candles on eighteen birthday cakes, and colored Easter eggs every spring! But even that home, where you began your journey and where you were shaped as an individual, is not your true home either. The home of your earliest memories will never be the home of your adult realities.

Your real home—this side of heaven, of course—is your heart. Your heart is where you live day in and day out. Your heart is the hidden but obvious home in which you live.

Your heart is where you collect clutter, but it is also where you receive company, fill up trash cans, and then remodel. The wonderful, miraculous part of you that is *vibrantly alive* lives within the canyons of your heart.

Your heart is home to your soul, which is the birthplace of your emotions. It is also where your thought life is framed. Many people are deceived into believing that their thought life begins in their minds, but this is not the case. Your thoughts and attitudes make themselves at home in your heart.

What about your habits? Where do *they* live? It is easy to discern that both good habits and bad habits, which efficiently determine the exact floor plan of your life, can easily be found residing in your heart. Even your dreams, which are often beyond your wildest imagination, can be found hanging out unassumingly in your heart.

Your heart is the part of you that sometimes longs to escape from its earthly address. Your heart feels constrained by the white picket fence that you so lovingly built around the parameters of your life. Your heart is the part of you that is never content with who you are or what you are becoming.

Your heart is your *real* home. It is the place where the “you” that *vitaly* matters lives and breathes. This “you,” who no one else knows, lives life with reckless abandon, glorious intensity, and holy intention in your heart.

Your heart is the most sacred part of your life because it is there that Christ has lovingly taken up residence. If you have invited Him in, He lives in your heart, and you should honor His presence day after day after day.

But perhaps an important question for you and me to answer is, “*What else is living in my heart with Christ?*”

Have you allowed attitudes, habits, and dreams that should not be a part of your life to live side by side with Christ? Maybe some of our hearts need a deep and detailed housecleaning due to the clutter that has accumulated, the trash that has yet to be taken out, and the out-of-date décor that we foolishly insist doesn’t look all that bad!

Jesus will live in your heart no matter what condition it is in. However, once Jesus takes residence in one’s heart and shares that personal address, He wants to clean until His hands bleed.

Jesus wants to paint your heart the color of freshly fallen snow.

Jesus longs to redecorate the house that you call home into a sanctuary of hope and peace.

He will gently move around priorities, set out the trash, and replace every outdated attitude with His unconditional love and inexpressible joy.

Jesus can take a dilapidated shack that has been built with rotten wood and miraculously turn it into a glorious temple! He can transform

an unstable and cracked foundation into one that is steady and secure. He can take a home that has been literally demolished by the storms of life and rebuild it into a palace fit only for a King.

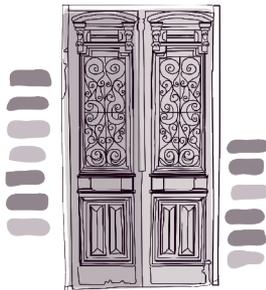
My friend, not only will He be more at home in your sparkling, restored, and renewed heart, but the greatest miracle of all is that so will you! You will love what He does with your heart and you will gulp in the splendid atmosphere that only His dear presence provides. His goal, as the Divine Builder, is to fashion your heart into His home.

As you walk through the front door of your heart, holding His hand, you will find the place where you were always meant to belong and the place that wondrously calls your name. At last—you are home with Him!

You will find contentment in the heart that you call home when He holds the keys. As you examine the masterpiece that He has created, you will be amazed by the wonder and wisdom that His lordship has brought. Most of all, you will find that His presence has filled your home with joy!

I'd love to invite you to come with me on this restorative journey that will transform your heart into a home of comfort, stability, and peace. We will discover nooks and crannies in your heart that have been wonderfully designed for learning and growing. We will dispose of every outdated appliance and replace each one with eternal truth; we will repurpose every dream into a masterpiece of prayer. As we allow the Lord to be the Architect, the Builder, and our sure Foundation, our hearts will become a place of divine residence. And we will each utter with a whisper of worship, "Welcome home, Jesus. Welcome home!"

Imagine yourself as a living house.
 God comes in to rebuild that house....
 You thought you were going to be made
 into a decent little cottage:
 but He is building a palace.
 He intends to come and live in it Himself.
 —C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*



PART ONE: THE FOUNDATION

*He will be the sure foundation for your times,
a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge;
the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.*

—Isaiah 33:6 (NIV)

Over the next seven days, we will be taking a long, intense look at the foundational issues of life. Through Scripture, we will examine how to build a strong foundation in our hearts that will ensure our lives will become all that they were meant to be.

Foundational Issues

Shortly after their wedding, a young couple wished to buy a home in which they would start a family, create precious memories, and build a life of pure happiness. What these sweet newlyweds lacked in money, they more than compensated for in a boundless and enthusiastic amount of energy. This naive yet earnest couple knew that a “fixer-upper” was all they were able to afford. They also realized that their difficult home search might require a top-notch realtor who was familiar with every home on the market. After diligent research and endless questioning of friends and family members, they found the top realtor in town and went on a ferocious hunt for their own dream home.

Day after day after day, they met the prosperous realtor and looked at every run-down, vacant house in town. This dynamic and relentless duo inspected the windows, the size of the rooms, the cabinetry, and the condition of the bathrooms. Very sure of their priorities, they were intent on not compromising even the smallest detail.

The realtor, who was a force to be reckoned with, looked the total picture of success; she was stylishly dressed in a designer suit with coordinating shoes while brandishing a pricey handbag.

After the couple had enthusiastically perused each home, she would quietly take off her gloves, lay her hat and purse on the dilapidated front porch, and crawl under the house. Then, without fanfare, she would crawl out again, wipe the dirt from her expensive suit, and simply declare, “No, I won’t let you buy this house.”

The disappointed young couple stood forlornly on the steps of the vacant yet potential-filled home while the realtor marched off to her fancy car.

Finally, after weeks of house hunting, the young couple and the realtor came upon a true monstrosity, a century-old home that had been uninhabited for nearly half of those years. The couple stood outside gasping for breath while trying to think of a tactful way to fire

the realtor; they were convinced she had lost her very successful mind. The realtor quietly climbed under the home, as was her custom. This time, as she crawled out from under the rodent-laden home, she said with great joy, "This is it! This is the home for you!"

The realtor knew a secret that the young couple had not possessed the wisdom to consider: it's all about the foundation. The realtor knew that even a lovely home without a solid foundation would never stand the test of time. A weak and wavering foundation would be the demise of the home and therefore the demise of the newlyweds' dreams.

As you inspect the qualities that you desire in a life of honor, security, and hope, have you taken a long look at the foundation upon which you have built your life? It is vital to remember that *your foundation determines what you have the capacity to become.*

Heart Inspection

What is the single most important part of your life?

What are some of the attitudes and habits that might compromise the foundation of your life?

List some words that describe the type of life that you would like to build:

Heartfelt Prayer

Lord Jesus, I just want You. I want what You want for my life more than what I want for my life. I ask that You would help me to trust You and to obey You every day. In Jesus's name, I pray. Amen.

Eternal Words

For no one is empowered to lay an alternative foundation other than the good foundation that exists, which is Jesus Christ!

—1 Corinthians 3:11 TPT

Digging Even Deeper

Read 1 Corinthians 3.