

# What Have They Seen in Your House?



## SABBATH—MARCH 11

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Isaiah 38; Isaiah 39; Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:12-15; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 3:1, 2; 3 John 11.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But God chose you to be his people. You are royal guests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. All of this is so that you can sing his praises. He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9, NlrV).

**MESSENGERS FROM BABYLON CAME TO KING HEZEKIAH OF JUDAH.** They wanted to hear about the miracle of his healing. Hezekiah happily received these guests. He showed them his palace, weapons, and treasures. When they were gone, Isaiah asked Hezekiah, “What have they seen in your house?” (Isaiah 39:4, NKJV).

Suppose God asked you this question? What have people seen in your house? What have heavenly angels seen in your house? What does anyone see in your house when they walk in the door? What kind of spirit fills your home? Can one “smell” prayer in your house? Is there kindness, generosity,<sup>1</sup> and love? Will someone who visits your home think Jesus is there?

Dedicate your home life to Jesus and follow His leading so your home may bring glory to God.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** The home life of Christians can be a powerful tool for evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 18.

<sup>1</sup>generosity—willingly giving people what they need.

<sup>2</sup>evangelism—the spreading of the gospel to the world.

**SUNDAY—MARCH 12****LEARNING FROM A KING'S MISTAKE (Isaiah 39).**

**Review the story of Hezekiah's healing and the visit of the messengers from Babylon. 2 Chronicles 32:24-26, 31; Isaiah 38; Isaiah 39.**

The Bible shows that the messengers were interested in the miracle of King Hezekiah's healing. But Hezekiah seemed to have been silent about his healing. He did not share the things that would have opened the hearts of the messengers to the knowledge of God. The difference between Hezekiah's thankfulness for being healed in Isaiah 38 and his silence about being healed in Isaiah 39 is sad.

*God left Hezekiah to test him.* The messengers' visit was important. But there is no record of Hezekiah trying to get God's advice in prayer from prophets or from priests. And God did not act. The king was alone and without his spiritual advisors. So God's work in the king's life and in the life of his nation seemed to fade from Hezekiah's mind. The purpose of 2 Chronicles 32:31 may have been to show how easily people forget God's blessings and feel they can become independent of His help.

**Below are some lessons about faithfulness in home life we can learn from the experience of**

**Hezekiah. What other lessons can you think of?**

- Every visit to the home of Christians is an opportunity for people to meet followers of Christ.
- Most visitors do not usually start talking about spiritual things. Christians must find the right opportunity to share the good news.
- Christians are not expected to brag about their wealth or success. They are expected to "declare the praises of him [God] who called you out of darkness into his [God's] wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9, NIV). Or they can use Hezekiah's experience as a symbol, to declare that they were dying, but Christ has healed them. They can say that they were dead in sin, but that Christ has resurrected<sup>3</sup> them and seated them in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4-6).

**How can you use your home to witness<sup>4</sup> to others? How could you share your faith in Christ more boldly with visitors to your home?**

**MONDAY—MARCH 13****FAMILY FIRST (John 1:40-42).**

There is no more important mission field than your home. What can we learn from John 1:40-42 about sharing faith at home? Also read Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 and Ruth 1:14-18.

*An exciting report:* Andrew went beyond just reporting about Jesus.

<sup>3</sup>resurrected—to have come back to life after dying.

<sup>4</sup>witness—to tell others about Christ; to live life so others will know you are a Christian.

He arranged for his brother, Simon, to meet Jesus. An exciting report about Jesus and an introduction to Him as a person: What a simple plan for sharing the gospel with relatives in our homes! After the introduction, Andrew stepped back. From then on, Jesus and Peter had a relationship of their own.

*Helping children to have faith:* Parents make the mistake of thinking that children will quickly accept the family's religion. Children and young people quickly learn from what they see their parents do. But children also need individual attention and opportunity to be personally introduced to God. Deuteronomy 6 teaches us that attention must be given to the best kind of religious education. Regular spiritual habits of personal and family worship are to be encouraged in the home. Much time and attention must be spent on children and youth so they will choose to follow Christ.

**What can we learn from Ruth's words to Naomi? Ruth 1:8-22.**

Naomi tried to push Ruth away. Angry and depressed, Naomi blamed God for the loss of her two sons (Ruth 1:15, 20, 21). But Ruth spoke such beautiful words to her mother-in-law. Her words show that youth can make a decision to be loyal to God, even when parents are imperfect.

**How does the idea of home as the most important mission field influence your attitude (feelings)**

**toward the people who live with you? As a family, prepare a list of things you all can do to lead unsaved relatives to Christ.**



## TUESDAY—MARCH 14

**PEACE THAT WINS (1 Peter 3:1, 2).**

**What advice does the New Testament have for marriages divided by religion? 1 Corinthians 7:12-15; 1 Peter 3:1, 2.**

*The blessing of being a Christian partner:* In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul answers Christians' concerns that staying married to an unbelieving spouse might not please God or might bring dishonor upon themselves and their children. But Paul says no! The holy state of marriage is to continue after a partner's conversion. One Christian partner makes holy the other partner and the cou-

ple's children. The word "sanctifies" (makes holy) means that unbelieving spouses<sup>5</sup> receive the blessings of grace through living with their Christian partners.

Sad but true, the unbelieving partner may decide to leave. The results will be serious. But God always believes in freedom of choice. So Paul says to let the unbelieving partner leave (1 Corinthians 7:15).



A Christian spouse might help his or her partner to accept God.

*Called to live in peace:* The Bible makes it clear that it is best to find a way for the peace of Christ to rule in a spiritually divided home. The hope is to keep the marriage together. This will give proof that the gospel is victorious, even when marriage is difficult. This also will encourage the comfort of the partners even though one is a

<sup>5</sup>spouse—a husband or a wife.

<sup>6</sup>witness—when a person shares Christ with words and by living a Christian lifestyle.

believer and the other an unbeliever.

### What might be the limits of a spouse's responsibility toward a nonbelieving partner?

Lovingkindness, loyalty, humble service, and an attractive witness<sup>6</sup> on the part of the believer create the best chance of winning the non-Christian spouse. Surrender in a Christian marriage comes from deep respect for Christ (Ephesians 5:21). When a spouse surrenders to an unbelieving partner, that spouse's first loyalty is always to Christ. Faithfulness to God does not require a spouse to suffer abuse at the hands of an abusive partner.

**Is someone in your church struggling with an unbelieving spouse? If so, how can you help?**

## WEDNESDAY—MARCH 15

### FAMILY LIFE IS FOR SHARING (3 John 11).

**What do the following verses tell us about becoming a Christian and growing as a Christian? 1 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 5:1; 1 Thesalonians 1:6; Hebrews 6:12; Hebrews 13:7; 3 John 11.**

The New Testament focuses on being like Christ and other people who have strong faith. People copy what they watch and what they watch.

Children especially copy their parents' behavior. Young children also copy the behavior of their older brothers and sisters. Married partners often copy one another. So Christian families can set a good example that non-Christian families would be interested in copying.



**We copy who we watch. So watch Christ.**

*The power of social influence:* We witness from our homes when we give opportunities for others to study us and to share in our home experience. Many people have no good example of marriage or family relationships<sup>7</sup> to follow. In our homes, they may see how Christ makes a big difference.

<sup>7</sup>relationships—the connections we have with people.

<sup>8</sup>witnessing—teaching people about Christ and living a Christian life.

Ellen White wrote, “Social influence is a wonderful power. We can use it as a way of helping those around us.” —Adapted from *The Ministry [Work] of Healing*, p. 354.

Married Christian couples can invite other couples for meals, fellowship, Bible study, or to attend a marital growth program with them. This way, the Christian couple can be an example of family life in Christ to the other couples.

**What should we always remember when we are an example to others or when others are an example to us? Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23.**

*Follow believers who follow Christ.* We are all sinners. No one is perfect. But the Christian home is not about being an example of perfection. The New Testament idea of copying good Christians encourages persons to follow believers who follow Christ. Persons will accept the Christian faith when they see how this faith is shown in the lives of others who are also human and weak.

**What could you do to make your home a better example of Christian witnessing?<sup>8</sup>**

**THURSDAY—MARCH 16**

**CENTERS OF INFLUENTIAL FRIENDLINESS (Luke 19:1-9).**

**Compare<sup>9</sup> Bible examples of hospitality<sup>10</sup> with real events<sup>11</sup> in the homes of the following Bible families. Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10-12; Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9. What can you learn about hospitality from these examples?**

Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18:1-8)

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Rebekah and her family (Genesis 24:15-20; Genesis 31:33) \_\_\_\_\_

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Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9)\_\_\_\_\_

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Hospitality meets another person's basic needs for rest, food, and fellowship. Hospitality is self-giving love. Jesus showed that hospitality was important when He taught that feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty were acts of kindness to Him (Matthew 25:34-40). Using one's

home for helping people may include things like inviting neighbors for a meal to lending a room to an abuse victim. Using one's home also may involve simple friendliness, an opportunity to offer prayer with someone, or giving Bible studies. True hospitality comes from the hearts of those who have been touched by God's love. We want to show God's love in our words and actions when we have been touched by His love.

Families sometimes complain that they do not have the right things, or enough time, or the energy to offer hospitality. Others feel awkward, unskilled, and unsure about reaching out to unbelievers. Some wish to avoid the problems in their lives that may come from being involved with others.

**How does your home life show your family's spiritual condition?**

## FRIDAY—MARCH 17

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, "A Powerful Christian Witness," *The Adventist Home*, pp. 35–39; "Attitude [Feelings] Toward an Unbelieving Companion," *The Adventist Home*, pp. 348–352; "Ministry [Work] of the Home," *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 349–355; "The Ambassadors [Messengers] From Babylon," *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 340–348.

<sup>9</sup>compare—show how things are the same.

<sup>10</sup>hospitality—greeting and welcoming guests into homes.

<sup>11</sup>events—things that happen.

*The power of the home in evangelism:* “The influence of a true Christian home upon human hearts and lives is more powerful than any sermon. . . .

“Our influence may seem small. Our ability may be small. Our opportunities may be few, our talents may be limited. But we can do many wonderful things for soul-winning by using our own homes.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry [Work] of Healing*, pp. 352, 355.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Ask anyone in class if the influence of someone’s home helped them make a decision for Christ. Discuss what it was about that home that helped them. What can the class learn from that experience?
2. How can your class help a family with an unbelieving spouse?
3. As a class, talk about some of the

pressures in the home that work against faith. List some of these pressures. Then discuss ways of dealing with these pressures.

**SUMMARY:** The family lives of Christians witness to children, unbelieving spouses, other relatives, and visitors. While faith sharing at home may not always be perfect, imperfect family members try to point the way to a perfect Savior. Through hospitality in the Savior’s name, Christian families can introduce their guests to Jesus Christ.



What will they see in your house?