

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

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212 Cabrillo Street, Costa Mesa: the house I lived in for a couple of years when I was 8-9 years old. Picture taken in 2010.

A house is not a home...unless it is

“By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”
Proverbs 24:3-4

Most all of us are confined, to one degree or another, to our dwellings. I say it that way because while some are confined to their “home,” others may be confined to a house. “A house is not a home,” regardless of what real estate agents say. A house is made of wood and stucco; a home is made through hard work, by people who love each other beyond what they can express. I hope that you are fortunate enough to be confined to a home, not just a house. Because when I think back on my life, most of the good things that happened to me happen in one of our *homes*.

I lived in a lot of houses in my time — too many to count. My dad, bless his heart, had itchy feet. Well, that’s not fair — he did what he had to do to make a living for us and that meant moving a lot and often working two jobs. When we lived in the house pictured above, he worked all day at construction jobs, preached on Sunday, had several classes with non-members — seemed like he came, showered off the sawdust, put on a white shirt and tie, and was gone for a couple hours every night.

We didn’t live in luxury, but we always had plenty of what we needed, and we were content. For some reason, this house sticks in my memory more than the others I lived during my youth. I was living here when I became a Dodgers fan after listening, on an old radio, to the 1955 World Series, when the “Bums” finally beat the Yankees. I lived here when I started loving the Los Angeles Rams. It was here when I asked for a football uniform for my birthday and my mom got me one, but I was disappointed because it wasn’t like the pros. The pro uniforms all had white pants but the pants on mine were black. So, I searched for a team, any team, that had black pants and, sure enough, I found one: the Rice University Owls. I felt better.

This is also the home I lived in when I invited Steve VerPlank, my 9 year old next door neighbor, to eat with us. We were sitting at the table — my dad, mom, my 4 year old brother, myself and Steve — when Steve took his already used fork and procured a blob of butter from the butter dish. I looked at my dad (who was somewhat of a germaphobe) and saw a look in his eye that frightens me to this day. I thought, “this is the end of Steve.” Steve survived, but never dined with us again.

This was also the home where something even creepier took place. My dad, one Sunday, went to the closet to put on a suit for church, but it was missing (he only had two suits). My parents never argued in our presence, but I could feel the tension between them that day; my dad figured mom must have taken the suit to the cleaners, but forgot. My mom calmly said, “no, I didn’t.” A couple of days later, I was sitting on the couch and noticed a little bit of blue between the cushions I was sitting on. I started pulling on it. It was a denim shirt — had a number on the pocket. My forever calm and collected mother was freaking out — 1955 style, which was more like an “eek!” than a freak. The shirt, it turns out, was a prison shirt. An escaped convict had broken into our house, stole dad’s suit, and stuffed his prison shirt between the cushions of our couch. I kind of thought that was cool. My parents didn’t, nor did the police who came to interview my mom and dad.

What’s the point of all this? Well, most of us are sitting in a home — or a house. We make it what it becomes. Our little house, at 212 Cabrillo Street, was a home because my mom and my dad determined to make it one. It was a home because it welcomed many members of the church of Christ in Huntington Beach, where my dad was the preaching. It was home “filled with all precious and precious riches.” I hope, whatever your house looks like, that it’s a “home” — that’s where the heart is. — **dp**

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Checklist for Encouragers

From Paul's letter to the Thessalonians 5:9-19

Reference	Exhortation	Suggested application
1 Th. 9:10	Keep your eye on Jesus	Treat everyone you meet as Jesus treated everyone he met
1 Th. 5:11	Build each other up	Point out to someone a quality you appreciate in him or her.
1 Th. 5:12	Respect leaders	Look for ways to cooperate (see Hebrews 13:17)
1 Th. 5:13	Hold leaders in high esteem	Your leaders are not perfect but the office deserves respect. Take any critique or criticism of leadership directly to the leaders.
1 Th. 5:13	Live in peace	Search for ways to get along with others (Romans 12:18-21)
1 Th. 5:14	Warn the idle	Challenge someone to join you in a project.
1 Th. 5:14	Encourage the fainthearted	Encourage those who are timid by reminding them of God's promises.
1 Th. 5:14	Help the weak	Support those who are weak by loving them and praying for them.
1 Th. 5:14	Be patient	Give people the benefit of the doubt; listen; respond, don't react.
1 Th. 5:15	Resist revenge	Instead of planning to get even with those who mistreat you, do good to them.
1 Th. 5:16	Be joyful	Remember that even in the midst of turmoil, God is on your side
1 Th. 5:17	Pray continually	God never sleeps. Pray at any time, in any and all circumstances
1 Th. 5:18	Give thanks	Make a list of all the gifts God has given you, giving thanks to God for each one.
1 Th. 5:19	Do not quench the Spirit	Allow the Holy Spirit to work in you by reading and applying His word