

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Ever wonder why we don't hear a lot about Jesus knocking doors down and crashing parties? We know He went to weddings. He tended to bring funerals to a screeching halt by reviving the guest of honor. He was known to hang around with a rough lot of fishermen. Ignored the Sabbath on occasion. Associated with known prostitutes. Even went to dinner with an I.R.S. wanna-be. But no record of gate crashing. He mostly just went where He was invited.

You see, He seems to have invented the first open door policy. No open door, no fellowship. The reason Jesus stands at the door knocking is because it is not His door. It is ours and it is closed. If we don't want to open it, rest assured that He will not. The famous picture painted to represent this, even shows the door with no exterior latch. Access to the opening is controlled strictly by the inhabitants. There was a humorous story about this scripture once. It seems a pastor was visiting his parishioners and knocked repeatedly on one door to no avail. So he wrote upon his card, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in", and put it under the door. Two days later the card was mailed back to him with these words upon the reverse side. "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself".

That is one good reason not to open the door. Some others are not so good. If we open the door, our visitor will get a good look at how we really live. They may judge us as being too fastidious, dirty, or messy. Sometimes we don't want them in because we know that conversation will be awkward with those with whom we have nothing in common. Some people are too difficult to get to leave without dropping hints that are pretty direct. We feel they may be of a higher class than we are and look down on us when they see how we live. We are even afraid that our schedules, our lives, or our habits will be compromised. So we don't tend to let people in unless they are already our friends. The threshold marks the line between what is ours and what is everyone else's. It marks the extent of what might be lost if we allow someone else in to live or stay with us.

Jesus is not quite so particular. His door is open to everyone and the wedding feast is about to begin. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. That is why the invitation in Acts 2:39 was issued to us, our children, and as many as are afar off. He is no respecter of persons. If His children will not come, anyone from the highways and byways is welcome. Anyone that is thirsty can come and drink. It is funny. We can not get into the inaugural ball without a special invitation from the president. But the wedding party of the King of kings is open for our enjoyment. He welcomes us any time.

Let's face it. Our relationship with Jesus is going to depend far more upon our door than upon His. Too often we want to just visit Him in His house while He is wanting to come and live in ours. That is the difference between a visitor and a roommate. Until the time comes when He shuts the door so that no man can open it, He does not bar our way into His presence. But if we keep ours closed, we must be aware of something. You can get the doctor to make house calls, but unless you let him in, you are going to die. If we're feeling a little uneasy in our souls and a little weak spiritually, maybe we need to invite the Life of the party back in. Check out the status of our door. Let's be perfectly open with God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever noticed that you are in control of your fellowship with God? That when you do not wish to be bothered, He honors that wish?
2. How often do we avoid His company because we don't think He would be comfortable with a part of our life or with a particular activity we are involved in? Do we really imagine that He does not know about it already?
3. Do you ever not pray because you are not sure God wants to talk about what interests you?
4. Do you ever feel unworthy in the presence of God? A little bit dirty?
5. Knowing that birds of like feathers flock together, do we avoid seeking His company because He would not fit in with our other friends?
6. Why is it that Jesus seems so much more willing to share His home and His life with us than we are with Him?
7. What are the primary qualities of the friends that you are comfortable inviting into your home? How about up into your room? How about into your mind?
8. Is there a difference between Jesus visiting and Jesus living with you in your home? Is there a difference between your visiting or living with Him? What are the characteristics of some of the places the Bible lists as dwelling places of God?
9. Do we keep God relegated to a visitor status, or better yet, limit our contacts with Him to visits at His house, in order to keep the control of our relationship in our hands?
10. What do the scriptures tell us will eventually happen if He keeps knocking, but we do not open the door?