

INTO THE SANCTUARY

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Many things that happen in the world around us are hard to understand. We wonder why, if God is in control, he tolerates them. Why does he let accident, illness, pain and trouble afflict those who seek consistently to serve him and honor him? Why doesn't he intervene in the course of the world of nature and mankind to prevent disasters and tragedies, and cause outcomes to take place that reward the innocent and the righteous? An ancient writer grappled with such questions, and maintained that he found direction and reassurance when he went "into the sanctuary." There, in the presence of God, he remembered that God is truly in control, and will indeed be with those who trust him.

Jesus instructs us to go into our own personal private sanctuaries, and there experience the presence, peace and provision of God. He said, "*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*" Going into your room and shutting the door behind seems so ordinary, but in fact this action is an opportunity to enter into our own personal, private sanctuary. We go there to shut the world behind us for a few minutes and find peace and direction in the presence of God.

There in the sanctuary we can praise God and reaffirm our commitment to following him and depending on him. We can bring before him the troubles and anxieties that preoccupy us, and find strength and direction to deal with them. There, in our own sanctuary, we can humbly and sorrowfully confess our sins and weaknesses, and receive from him confidence of forgiveness and help. In the sanctuary, as we kneel before God, our hearts are reassured that God will be with us to protect us, guide us and to enable us to face whatever challenges lie before us that day. Where is your sanctuary? When was the last time you spent time there? Have you been neglecting your sanctuary? What peace we forfeit, what needless pain we bear, simply because we get too busy or too distracted to spend time in the sanctuary. Do not neglect to go there each day. (Psalm 73:16-17, Matthew 6:8)