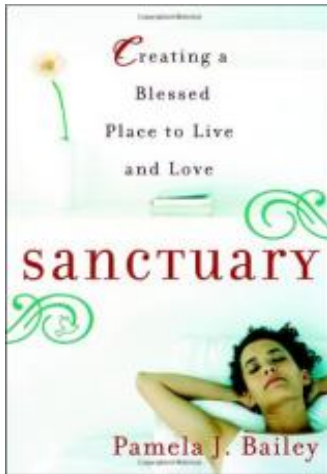


Sanctuary

by Pamela Bailey



About the Book

It doesn't matter whether you own or rent; whether you live in a mansion or a trailer. We each have the ability to create a beautiful, peaceful environment of our own—a more spiritual space to enjoy.

Is the place you live truly your home? Is it where you can take refuge from the world and emerge refreshed? a place to nourish your family's dreams and draw strength from what you believe in? Now, inspired by a personal moment of revelation and insight, environment specialist Pamela J. Bailey shows you how to apply biblical principles and prayer to make your house a restful, vital place that fulfills your soul and heart. Learn how to:

- ? Find innovative, inexpensive ways to make the most of—and enjoy—wherever you are living
- ? Create a home that reflects your unique interests and values
- ? Develop a personalized "Power Cleaning" routine that makes housekeeping easy—and fun
- ? Set aside time for rest and doing the things you love to do—and reap their God-given benefits to the fullest.

Discussion Guide

1. In Scripture, the word house encompasses two key meanings: the physical structure that a person or group inhabits (i.e., housing) and the person or group who inhabits that home (i.e., household). When Joshua swore "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," he was referring to his household—his family and all those dependent on his family for a livelihood. When David dreamed of building a "house for God"—the temple? God's response was to prioritize building David's house—his dynasty—first. When you consider seeking a blessing on your house, how is your household encompassed by that prayer? Consider how your dreams, plans, and decisions concerning your housing affect your

household.

2. Whether you are anticipating your first home, your fourth, or your fifteenth, you have dreams about what that home will be like. What factors figure into those dreams? Why? Don't neglect to consider the following:

? Location, location, location! Think about the geography of your home search, especially as it relates to the proximity of your circle of support (family, friends, church); critical or desirable service and supplies (medical care, schooling, food, fuel, public transportation, thoroughfares); frequent destinations (work, school, medical facilities, ministry sites); cultural or recreational resources (parks, museums, theaters, sporting venues, children's entertainment).

? Won't you be my neighbor? Think about the village in which you prefer to live. Are you a city or country mouse --- or do you prefer the middle ground of the suburbs? What are the pros and cons of each? Do you enjoy your space, or do you crave the bustle of other people --- or both in varying proportions? What population and population density are encompassed by this neighborhood? What are the demographics of your ideal neighborhood? Do you crave racial or socioeconomic solidarity --- or diversity? Investigate the reputations of the community's schools, and its sanitation and emergency services. Find out what the taxes are and what is included in them!

? What I want vs. what I need: Give detailed consideration to what kind of home you want at this time in your life and what kind of home you need. The two are not necessarily the same. You may want a modest but modern, three-story townhome in a cooperative community in the sultry South, where you don't have to worry about landscaping or dozens of rooms to keep clean or the cold harsh winters of the Great Lakes region where you grew up. But your household may require a sprawling, century-old ranch house in the Southwest, where your young child with allergies and your aging father with a walker can share space indoors and enjoy room to roam outside.

? Write the vision --- even if it is twofold: Now that you have recognized the difference between your desire and your need, write down both visions and commit them each to God. Be detailed: square footage and acreage; number of bedrooms and baths; modern conveniences or old-world charms; multilevel or ranch style; closets and storage space; basement and/or attic, finished or unfinished; garage and/or shed; driveway and sidewalks. Think about practicalities such as plumbing, windows, roof, and appliances. Do you want to design your own or identify a fixer-upper that needs your TLC? Do you prefer new construction, or a place with a history? If the latter, how much history? The more specific you are about the visions, the more awed and grateful you will be when God brings that vision to pass! Decisions

3. Once the dream is clear, you are faced with some decisions. How long are you willing or able to wait for the dream? Do you believe God is calling you to hold out for the desire of your heart or do you sense the Spirit saying, "Accept this for now and trust the rest to me"? Both decisions are intensely spiritual and personal.

4. Proverbs reminds us that there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors. A common adage is that two heads are better than one. It is also true that there can be too many cooks in a kitchen! Whom will you consult in making the necessary decisions related to your housing? Don't forget that renting or buying a home is not only a matter of faith; it is also a

decision that can involve a tangle of attached strings. Seek spiritual counsel?and legal and financial advice. Ask God for wisdom in choosing all of your advisors, from a real estate agent to an attorney to a loan officer to a management company.

Decorations

5. You have dreamed your dreams and made your decision? and now you stand on the threshold of your new home. Or perhaps, you have decided against a new home at this time, and you are resolved to do new work on your old home! Consider your space carefully and again, think about your wants versus your needs.

? Not just outward appearances: Keep in mind the biblical exhortation about God?s concern more with the spirit inside than with the outer dressing. A beautiful home may house a cold or dying spirit. A crowded and cluttered house may harbor the warmth of hospitality and peace. Are you as effective a steward of your household as you are of your house? Does your home reflect the spirit and personality of your family?

? Something old, something new: What things do you enjoy surrounding yourself with? Do you love the newest trend in decorating, something with sleek, modern lines and stark colors; or are you a traditionalist who prefers country style and wicker? Do you adore antiques or love knowing that no one but you has planted her hands on that spotless piece of furniture? Consider also how changeable your likes and dislikes are. Do you like to build a nest and settle in for the long haul, secure in having what is beloved and familiar around you? Or are you one who revels in novelty and change, craving something new to see, touch, smell, and taste? Take those personality preferences into consideration as you decorate your home and make responsible investments.

? Kids will be kids: If you have young children in your home (or are planning to add some in the near future), be mindful of that as you design your home?s interior. Safety is the key issue: How safe are children around your possessions?and how safe are your possessions around children? It is possible to have nice things and toddlers in the same home, but there is a price tag on that combination. Count the cost?monetary and in peace of mind?now, so you don?t regret it later. Doors

6. Shakespeare wrote, ?All the world?s a stage,? and in life as in theater, entrances and exits are important. Does that artwork come in? Does that story go out? Does that language make an entrance? Does that attitude make an exit? Do we make solo or group exits? What caregivers or influences are permitted entrance? Now that you are in your home, give prayerful consideration to what and who comes in and goes out of your house?and household.

7. Throughout Scripture, God?s people are urged to practice hospitality. However, because each person is unique?in personality and gifts --- each house (and household) will welcome others differently into the sanctuary of home. Ask these questions, among others, about the opening of your doors:

? To whom should the door be open? To whom will you grant entry --- only friends and family, or also strangers and enemies? At issue is not only the question of hospitality and generosity, but also that of safety and wisdom.

? On what occasions should the door be open? Will your home have a revolving door, open to guests whenever the impulse strikes? Or will you make your hospitality special, even sacred in some way, by choosing specific events for which to welcome people? holidays or meals or a monthly fellowship?

? Which doors should you open? Which parts of your home will be public territory? Will you serve them in the dining room or welcome them in the kitchen? Will every inch of your house be offered to your guests, or will you reserve special rooms for entertaining? If the latter, will the rooms be formal or informal spaces?

? When should the door be open? Will the door be open at all times of day and night or only during business hours? Will you close the door on specific days that might be reserved for family, cleaning, or rest? Will you have a special day, weekend, or time frame set aside for entertaining --- or will you throw open your doors without notice?

? Why will you open your doors? To celebrate or provide refuge? For fun or ministry? Out of a sense of Christian responsibility or because you are the quintessential extrovert? Do you enjoy having people around and sharing your space? Or does company stress you out and make you long for solitude?

? Whether to open the door --- or not? Will there be times when you shut the doors of your home? Might you choose to shut out certain influences, at least for a season? Or will it be a time of refuge or intimate fellowship --- when you, as an individual or as a family, just need some "me/us time"?

8. Because of the physical and spiritual significance of doors, seriously consider having a ?Home Blessing? ceremony in your new or renewed home. Many pastors or church leaders are willing to visit a home and say a prayer of blessing over it, even anointing the doorway(s) with oil as a sign of sanctification. If your church does not have such a convention in place, consider introducing the idea to the leadership, or invite a trusted friend of faith to share in a ceremony with you.

Author Bio

Pamela Bailey speaks about and holds workshops on the importance of creating peaceful, loving home environments. A graduate of South Carolina State University and a licensed missionary, she lives with her husband and two children in North Carolina.

Critical Praise

"Finally, a book that shows us how to invite God into the sanctuary we call home"

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