

## **Spring Cleaning for the Soul**

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Something about cleaning is that there is always work to be done; the minute we are done, there's something that needs to be cleaned again. Our spiritual lives also need constant cleaning. We aren't finished products this side of heaven. No matter how long we've walked with Jesus our lives will always need work. As we think of spring cleaning our homes, let's spend some time spring cleaning our heart. Using the word "clean" to help us to remember five steps to cleaning our souls.

### **C – Confess any sin in your heart.**

I hate to burst anyone's bubble, but no one is perfect. We've all got sin in our lives. And just like laundry or dirty dishes pile up, so does the sin in our lives.

Confession is the only stain-remover that can take away the dirt of our sin. 1 John 1:9 states, ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.***

If we were to leave the dirty clothes or dishes, eventually we must deal with them; otherwise the smell and disgustingness will cause us to either do something about it or to make us move out! The same is true with our sin – sin stinks up our lives until we deal with. In Psalm 32:3-5, David writes about what he experienced when he had confessed sin in his life.

***When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.***

### **L – Leave/Lay aside anything that hinders and the sin that entangles.**

Hebrews 12:1 says ***Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.***

After we've confessed our sin, we need to leave it behind. That means don't keep doing it. Repentance isn't just saying sorry, but it is doing a complete turn around and going in the opposite direction.

Beside sin, we need to lay aside things that entangle us in our Christian walk. These might not be actual sins, but they could lead to sin. For example, when I am dieting, the last place I want to hang out in is the kitchen. When I am trying to lose weight, I don't buy cookies or chips. I don't bring them into my home because they are a temptation.

Things that entangle could be TV, phone, internet, hobbies and leisure activities. Your favorite TV show could hinder you from spending time with God. Watching certain channels (such as the Home Shopping Network if you are trying to get of debt and stay within in a budget) could be an entanglement.

Even some people can be something that entangles – people that you know as soon as you are with them, you'll be saying things you shouldn't, such as gossip and complaining.

### **E – Examine your life for hidden sins.**

The advantage of spring cleaning is that you get deep down in areas you don't normally clean. A lot of times our homes only get surface or spot cleaned (you know making sure the rooms company sees are presentable, but the rest of the house is a disaster). We need to do some deep cleaning in our souls with self-examination.

Psalm 139:23-24 states: ***Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*** This is a prayer that God is willing to answer (and in my experience), He does it quickly. If I honestly pray this prayer, God will bring to light sin I wasn't even aware of, and areas in my life that need some cleaning and improvement.

Psalm 26:2, David writes: ***Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind.*** And in Lamentations 3:40, ***Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.***

#### **A – Accept God's scrubbing and re-shaping.**

As we examine ourselves and invite God to show us our hidden sins, with that comes scrubbing, re-shaping and molding, and throwing out; and it isn't always easy. It hurts when God shows us our faults, our shortcomings, and areas where we are in direct defiance against Him and His Word. Sometimes He must do a lot of scrubbing in our hearts.

God's purpose isn't to hurt us or to watch us squirm; His desire and purpose is to make us like Christ. Romans 8:28-29 says ***And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son....***

2 Corinthians 3:18 states, ***And we all, who have unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.***

#### **N – Never look back; keep moving forward.**

When spring cleaning and getting rid of stuff, the best thing to do is to put in a garbage bag and never look back. If we take a second glance at something, we might second-guess ourselves and decide the ugly sweater you haven't worn in years all of sudden looks good, or that unusual kitchen gadget you have never used, might all of a sudden be a must have in your home.

In our spiritual lives we need to forget about the past and move on. Paul writes in Philippians 3:12-14, ***Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.***

After we have confessed our sins, it is done; no need to dwell on it any more. Move forward.

Yes, you and I aren't all we will be, but if we take spiritual soul cleaning seriously, you and I won't be what we were, but will be moving forward all the while looking more and more like Christ.

Yes, our spiritual lives will get dirty, just like our houses, and it may feel like we will never get our spiritual house in order, but the good news is according to Philippians 1:6, ***Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

So, let's get cleaning!



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