

Setting Your House in Order, Part 1

Marsha Bird

For about 2 years now I have felt the impress of the Holy Spirit to set my house in order, spiritually and physically. I would try for a while, do well and then would slowly lose sight of the goal that I had set for myself and the Lord. I was at a Reunion in July, 2003, and Brother Jeff VanBiber spoke to us under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The words of that message that burned into my heart were this: **"For verily, verily I say unto all who will hear my voice, give ear unto my word. For I proclaim it to the North, and to the South, and to the East, and to the West. For prepare ye, prepare ye, for the full portion of my gathering is nigh at hand, yea even at the door. And none can stay my hand, for I the Lord have spoken it. Amen."** The Holy Spirit burned in my heart and I thought...they're coming! The Lord is gathering in His people, and we need to be ready. I have to get my house in order. It was a very humbling experience, and since that time I have been trying to set my house in order and have felt led to prepare this class for other women who are also seeking to have their spiritual and physical houses ready for the Lord and His people who will gather in.

As Restoration women in the last days I believe that God has a special calling for each one of us. We do live in the hastening time. Everywhere you look people are running to and fro and don't have time for the important things in life. Their lives are so busy and full of obtaining the material things of this life that they fail to see that they are missing out on the greater blessings that God desires to give them. There is a great spiritual battle taking place on the home front. Satan desires to destroy the homes because he knows that is where the kingdom is being built up. He knows that it is the very foundation where the little ones are taught to love Jesus Christ and the gospel. God is calling us to come up to a higher level that we might stand as an ensign and a testimony of a better way of life to the world that we live in. God has given us a pattern in all things. He is a God of Order and He desires for us to have a life of order that we might be able to serve Him better. Order is a spiritual principle. Hopefully we will be able to touch on the important steps of what we need to do to set our homes in order that we might be able to do the great and marvelous work that He has called us to. We are called to build up a home where love reigns and order prevails. It is our calling and our stewardship for the time that we live in.

1. **Put God first in your life.**

a. Know His desires for you. If we know what His plan is, then we can make our plan. Matt. 6:38 *Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

b. Your day HAS to begin with prayer. Not a rushed, hurried prayer but time to kneel down a few minutes with the Lord and THANK HIM first, then ask Him

to be with you that you might be able to set your house in order both physically and spiritually. I have even asked Him to make the day go slow for me so that I might get more done, and it's amazing how much time I felt I had. You need His help in accomplishing the tasks of setting your house in order. I was preparing a class one time and had determined that each morning I would give my time first to the Lord. I decided that I would pray and study for half an hour before I began my day and claim His promises. It went well for a few days, then one morning I felt like I needed to get going and didn't have time to pray first. The Lord spoke to my heart and said "If you will put me first I will bless you." Needless to say, I got down on my knees and prayed and asked for forgiveness. I got everything done and had time to spare. Be aware that Satan also knows what you're trying to do and will try to discourage you and place stumbling blocks in your way. I always pray silently during these prayer times so only God knows the true desires of my heart.

c. Choosing the spiritual first. Luke 10:39-43. Mary and Martha had the opportunity to have Christ come to their home. Martha was so busy with her physical preparation that she did not have time to listen to the voice of the Master. Mary sat at His feet and chose the greater part. It is a lesson to us all. This doesn't mean that we can let everything go and use that as an excuse for not accomplishing what we need to for our families, but it does mean that we need to recognize that we have to make time for the Lord and make that a priority.

2 Nephi - 14:12. *"But behold I say unto you that ye must pray always and not faint: that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul."*

What will it take to make your home the place that God desires for it to be? Make a list of changes you would like to make or things you can do to have a Godly home. Here are a few things I have listed but I know you will think of many more.

- a. Feast upon the words of Christ - study time
- b. Pray and fast each day for specific things
- c. Keep the commandments - work on one at a time
- d. Teach your children to walk in truth and light, obedience, respect
- e. Teach your children to have great faith in Jesus Christ
- f. Teach your children to put on the whole armor of the Lord
- g. Family Worship - set a time - so important!
- h. Take unclean things from home - consecrate
- i. Stewardship - time, talents and money
- j. Jesus Christ as your example and foundation
- k. Peace and joy in your home - what we all want!
- l. Set example - a light on a hill
- m. Word of Wisdom - strength of body to do His work

d. Set priorities and goals.

1. Be a goalsetter. Write down exactly what you would like to accomplish in your house and have goals with deadlines. Have a plan and take action. You have to have a target to aim for.
2. Establish priorities and make wise choices - do you want to live a life of order or chaos?
3. Take control of your time. No one can take that away from you unless you allow it. (Stewardship) What changes can you make to put "more hours in your day?" It takes time to get organized which is part of the problem in the first place.. You must find 30 minutes every day just to pick up and do one job beyond what you normally do. If it means getting up 1/2 an hour earlier or cutting out something else in your schedule it is a MUST! Otherwise you will get frustrated because you're not making any headway. Find personal time for yourself and those you love especially your husband. You were a couple before the kids came and you will be when they're gone.
4. Having the discernment to say NO even when you want to serve. Do not over-schedule yourself. You will be frustrated and burned out, feeling like you're not doing anything well. If you allow yourself some time now to get your house established, you will be more productive for the Lord and others. BUT don't be afraid to move out in faith to do something the Lord wants you to do like teaching a class on setting your house in order! :) He will bless you and help you.

e. Simplicity in all we do

1. Get rid of the clutter in your home one room at a time. If you haven't used it in a year you're probably not going to. Share it with others.
2. Organize each room as you go and only have in it what you need and what makes it a place of usefulness and beauty for your family. No more than we need and a place for it.
3. If you find you're on too many committees or taking responsibilities that are just busy work, re-evaluate and get rid of some of the "clutter" out of your life that detracts from your goal of having a home that is in order. What is important? Ask the Lord.
4. Keep life simple - just be still some times and don't be on the run all the time. Realize your limits and keep the stress to a minimum.
6. You will have more time for the important things in life—to be able to visit the sick and afflicted, to do things for others. Everything will be easier to take care of because you will have control of your home. You will have joy and peace.

f. Preparation and Discipline

1. **Make a "To Do" list** for every day of things that you need to do and prioritize them according to importance i.e. #1, #2, etc. (I like to also put how long I think a job will take so I can try to beat that time).
2. **Decide on a job and get started**. Lack of motivation or

procrastination keeps us from having our homes the way we would like them. We all feel overwhelmed at times but we have to start somewhere. Get a friend to help you that will encourage you.

3. **Start small.** Learn to take little bites out of a room. Do a corner at a time or just pick up the clutter and it will feel cleaner. Set a timer and spend 15 minutes on a room or project and then stop. You will be amazed at how much you can get done. My kids loved this because we were working together and it was a game to see how fast we could get a room done. It also gives them a sense of accomplishment and responsibility.
4. **Move quickly** and don't try to do a "perfect" job. Just try picking up a room in 15 minutes and see how much better you feel. If you try to make everything perfect all at once, you will never get done and probably won't ever get started.
5. **Do a little each day**, i.e. if you know you have cookies to bake for Thursday, bake them and freeze them on Monday or Tuesday or start deep cleaning the week before so you're not tired and stressed at the last moment.
6. **PLAN AHEAD.** Marsha's law - "If it can happen it will!!" and it does! Lack of preparation causes a lot of stress in our lives. Have a plan. Preparing the night before. **Preparation (planning ahead)** – when I was a young girl, my mom would prepare everything ahead of time. She would make our dresses from old dresses. She would wash, starch and iron church clothes early in the week and have them hanging up. She would have us read our Sunday school lessons the night before, take baths, curl our hair and lay everything out. She would prepare food the night before. She would get up at 6 to get ready then would wake us up, fix our hair, feed us, and we would leave at 8 for an hour drive and beat the deacon to church. She was an organized woman! It was a different time, and we would do well to learn from those who have gone before us. Today a lot of people make plans for Saturday evening and stay out late and give very little time in preparation for the day of the Lord. It's something to think about. It's also stressful doing things the same day because you never know what's going to come up and throw your plans out the window (sickness, emergencies, etc.).
7. **Don't overdo.** Take time out to rest, reward yourself. Get rid of the stuff you've gone through. Just keep plugging. It took a while to get things in a mess. It will take a while to get it sorted out. Be patient. Remember it takes 21 days to break old habits.
8. **Learn from others** how to be efficient and organized. Watch how other people do things and learn from them. Ask them how they declutter a room or plan ahead and they will tell you. It is a blessing to be able to change old habits that keep us from being our best.

9. **We must be flexible.** Even the best laid plans go by the wayside. Sometimes I'm down to Plan Z wondering why I even bothered to plan my day and make a list. If you've prayed over your day, just remember that sometimes God has other plans for you that day. Just try to be focused and not get stressed and upset, but just keep trying to do the things you have committed to.

g. Hospitality

1. Just remember that your homes do not have to be perfect. It is more important to have a home that you can find rest in and that your family feels free to live in. You want to create a home filled with warmth, laughter, love, happiness, good memories - a place where God's Spirit can dwell and all who come in feel that and want to be there.
2. Open up your home and your hearts to others. Get to know the saints better by having them over for Sunday lunch. Keep it simple. Just decide to do it – then plan ahead.
3. Remember everything is the Lord's. Being organized allows us to be spontaneous in our service to Him and to others. We are to share all that we have for the sake of the Kingdom.

h. Sick and afflicted, poor and needy

This is such an important part of our lives. God has commanded us to take care of those around us. It should be a daily part of our lives. Never be too busy to go to the hospitals and visit the shut-ins or to impart of what you have to others who are in need. I cannot say enough about this. We have all fallen far short in this area and need to make it a matter of prayer that the Lord will help us to have time to reach out to others.

God desires for us to have balance in our lives and he is willing to help us with that. If our spiritual lives are in order, then our houses will be in order and that is the desire of our hearts. May God bless you in the exciting journey that is ahead of you as you set your house in order for His purposes. What we do is not just for us and our families but for the great and marvelous work that we are privileged to be a part of. Remember - they are coming!