



Getting Organized

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JESUS came to this earth to save us from something-but from what?" I pondered. He came to redeem me from serving a life of selfishness, sin and all my wrong habits of life. God wanted my home to thoroughly reflect heaven's order-both within and without. This would be possible only as I let Jesus be on the throne of my heart, my thoughts, and my doings. Would I filter all through Christ and let Him be my Lord-the Guide of my life?

Then I began to realize that the problem of shortcomings in my life was very real because I was not in the habit of union and communion with Heaven. I saw that it was natural to consult or commune with my "self," but then I served sin, selfishness and my old habits. Matthew 1:21 says that Jesus came to save me from my sins-not in them!

Jesus wants to bring me out of the "self" life into the spiritual life in Christ. He will do that by bringing me into such a close fellowship with Him that through union and communion with Heaven my mind and my home can be changed.

Desiring to be saved from all disorder and uncleanness, I determined to follow Jesus instead of my "self." But how was I to get organized? How could I commune with Jesus and let Him lead me? How could I learn to follow? I wanted my home to have that Heaven born love, which reflects upright order in the rooms of my house-as well as in the rooms of my thoughts, words and deeds.

As I was cooperating with these thoughts, thinking on them, I looked about my home and said, "What would Jesus want changed in my home?" I casually looked around my home. It was generally neat and orderly.

The responding thoughts from my Friend and Saviour went something like this, "It looks pretty good on the outside, but I'd like to suggest a deeper order, a deeper cleansing and organizing of your home, beginning in your thoughts." Jesus was speaking through my conscience, reason and intellect. His still, small voice was a thought, not an audible

Getting Organized

voice, yet I sensed in my heart that it was from God. It sounded just like I Corinthians 14:40 which says, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

God speaks to you and me in this way. He loves us that much! Yet many of us do not realize or recognize at first that it is from God. Jesus wants to come into such a close, intimate relationship with us that He can direct every detail of our lives. If we will cooperate by thinking on God's thoughts first, then our words and actions will be divinely influenced and we will be empowered to do the right thing. He wants to walk and talk with us as He did with Enoch of old!

That is what I wanted, but I found myself being timid and reserved in response to these thoughts. I struggled with what I should do. I then asked, "What are your suggestions for me?"

"Everything in heaven is neat, clean and orderly. 'Everything' means more than just the center of the floor being neat and clean. Are the corners clean, your end-table drawers orderly, your desk, your windows, your cupboards, your attic, your garage, your car, and even your garden?"

God's principles are exacting and apply everywhere! "Sally, you have read about modesty of dress. I'd even like to help you organize and make upright your clothes closet, if you invite me to."

Has God revealed these or similar thoughts to your mind as well? God wants to help us, and that is why He reveals a need for change in our lives. "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. However, "With God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26. "I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalms 32:8. "[I] will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. Be "keepers at home." Titus 2:5.

When God shows me areas in my home that need to be changed or redeemed, I have found that He is right there to make it possible with His divine hand in mine. He begins by changing my attitude toward my task.

As I cooperate in thinking, "With God I can do this, and I will!" I find His divine power attends my feeble efforts that not only cleans my end-table drawers, redeeming them to neatness and order, but also my attitudes.

Cooperating with Jesus in this way makes changes lasting, because they begin with my thoughts and feelings, empowered from above. Then through repetition God can recreate my habits, and as a result my character will be changed as well. This is how the new ways replace the old; yet it is not I, but Christ in me. See Galatians 2:20.

One day I was inspired with the thought that God wanted to redeem my kitchen. He wanted me to do it, but it would be Christ in me-not me in the human willpower alone. This is the application of Galatians 2:20.

Getting Organized

First, my old thoughts and ways must be crucified. I must turn from them, and this is done by giving heed to God-led thoughts instead.

Christ can actually change my thoughts, my desires, my feelings, my habits, even my old ways of working or responding—whatever I commit to His care!

Have you experienced this also? He can change all of our inherited or cultivated habits of thinking or acting! This is the redemption of the inner "self." It is the inside of the cupboard of my heart and life that God wants to redeem and transform.

One way that He teaches me this spiritual application is by physically showing me what it takes to redeem my kitchen cupboards to a state of order and cleanliness. How did God do this for me?

Getting my home organized began first with one room of my house. The Lord knows that I can't handle—either mentally or physically—all of my home at once, so He inspired me to begin with one room. This I can handle with Jesus!

My kitchen is dealt with daily, so that seemed to be a good place to start. I stood looking at my kitchen, and I asked God, "Where do I begin?" Even this one room looked like too much for me. I sensed despair at my heart's door.

"Look to God's strength available to you upon request, and resist looking at your weaknesses or inabilities," was God's suggestion to my mind. I responded, "Lord, help me!"

The reasoning continued, "Why not just begin with that group of cupboards? You have time for those today." These thoughts were the "still small voice" of Heaven leading me in the path of righteousness. It was God showing me that He was with me and would enable me to perform His will!

Once I get my kitchen in order I must daily exercise some new habits of housekeeping to maintain that order. After getting that first room clean and orderly with Jesus, I added the next room, while maintaining the order of the first room. I continued in this manner, led of God, until my entire home, yard, garage and garden took on Heaven's order.

God led me first with the overview plan in my mind, but I still had to learn to cooperate, to listen, and to follow Jesus in the moment.

Making a decision is a vital part of getting organized. I decided to do it, led of God. To my surprise when I began to sort out the contents of the cupboards and drawers, I had a pile of things that didn't belong there—a pile of get-rid-of-or-sell items, plus a third pile of things that needed to be returned to the cupboard.

As I thought of the contents, I decided it would be more logical for the stirring and serving utensils to be closer to the stove for easy access and more efficient kitchen

Getting Organized

work. The knives and peelers I put next to the cutting board. That made for greater efficiency and a new order of things. This cleaning and reorganizing of the cupboards and drawers became more involved than I first anticipated, but, oh, what a feeling of confidence possessed me knowing that this was the right thing to do! I would be happier for all this work and effort!

The Lord was indeed leading me and empowering me for the task, and I found a cheerful spirit created within me!

Toward the end of this redeeming adventure, I became weary when doubts came into my thoughts and feelings. "Self" and Satan suggested thoughts to my mind as well. I must learn to discern the Spirit to whom I must listen and whom I will serve. The Lord led me to persevere by giving these, "I can't do anymore" thoughts and feelings to Him.

Jesus freed me from those wrong thoughts and feelings by His transforming grace. My thoughts, feelings and kitchen cupboards were undergoing a similar cleansing, transformation, and reorganizing as I cooperated with Heaven. By surrender and grace the task was accomplished day by day, section by section of my kitchen. It was in this way that it became thoroughly cleansed and organized with Jesus.

Redeeming my kitchen cupboards from disorder began with redeeming my attitudes and thoughts first. Some attitudes needed to be discarded, and some just straightened out. Taking Jesus with me was, and continues to be, the secret of success! The physical project was teaching me the spiritual sorting out of my thoughts and feelings. Getting them orderly and upright is a big job, while maintaining them requires "little attentions often."

As in the physical, so it is in the spiritual realm. Only God can clean up the rooms of my mind and heart! Then I must give myself to Him as often as I recognize the wrong thoughts and attitudes that are disorderly, and He will be faithful to clean them up-with my cooperation.

Next, I stood back and looked over my kitchen. God led me to think, "Are your counter tops attractive; do they give you a restful, clean look?" God wanted me to exercise thought and evaluation of the job.

I saw that my counter top was too cluttered. So I asked a question of each item on my counter: "Does this one need to be out? This one makes it too cluttered. I'll put this one away. Really, this item need not be here either! There, that looks better!" This process went on until, after trying different ideas, I could say, "There, that looks really nice! Having only a few items out is restful and attractive. "

"Lord, is there anything else that needs changing?" When my conscience was silent, my soul was satisfied and joyful! My kitchen was very pleasant to the eye-inside and out! It was redeemed by surrender, effort and God's grace.

Getting Organized

We must first learn to be led of God and to hear His voice speaking to our conscience. We must recognize that it is the daily, moment-by-moment repetition of the new habits of thinking and reacting with Christ that makes the new way of order replace the old way of allowing untidiness.

Now I can take Jesus with me in this new method of union, communion and surrender into every room: bathroom, bedroom, basement, attic, garage, and so forth, until the entire home is neat, clean and orderly by God's grace. I give away or sell any excess items that don't fit neatly into my home-drawers, closets or cupboards. I must evaluate the difference between need and want—filtering all through Jesus.

Years later when we moved to Montana, God called for another deeper cleansing of my cupboards because my kitchen size was drastically reduced. I had four sets of dishes in my tiny kitchen area. In view of the reduced space I had to reorganize my dishes to one larger set of Corelle dishes which I bought with the sale of the other four sets. It fits nicely now! God led me to be reasonable, yet to make hard decisions. One set of those dishes was sentimental. They were my grandmother's dishes; yet I didn't have room to store them properly.

You too will have trials and difficulties bringing your home into Heaven's order, but Jesus is there to help you and direct you. Follow thou Him!

Getting organized is a good way to come to know God in a very personal way. As God helped me get my kitchen in order I learned many practical lessons about how God wants to clean up the cupboards of my thoughts and feelings. Erroneous thoughts, or bondage thoughts, get tucked in the recesses of our minds and need to be discarded just like my kitchen cupboards needed some things eliminated, led of God.

When God reveals these things to me, it is His way of asking, "Do you want this? Shall I get rid of it for you?" It is the power of God on the inner man that cleans up our thoughts, feelings, desires, and appetites, or whatever, with our cooperative effort. Isn't God good?

"The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.

" 'Abide in me, and I in you.' John 15:4. Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character." *The Desire of Ages*, 676.

Bringing my home into Heaven's order also orders a time for everything and everything important in its time. Ecclesiastes 3: 1 says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

Getting Organized

"Yes, Sally, you need to schedule your life—your day's activities. You need regularity. You are the house manager. You need a time to go to bed, a time to rise, and a time to commune with Me. You need a time to study, a time to be quiet, a time to think and a time to evaluate. You also need to learn that there is a time to speak, a time not to speak, a time to work, a time to play, a time to rest, a time to eat, a time to refrain from eating, a time to plant, and a time to harvest."

Planning my day with Jesus leading me is the way of divine success! Scheduling my life is a necessity—not an option.

Putting my home on a consistent schedule with a little flextime was a great blessing, but at the same time, it challenged me! It was best for me, my family and our walk with Jesus. I must admit, making breakfast consistently in a timely way, crossed my former ways. You too will find that some changes are easy, while others are hard.

Take Jesus' hand! He desires to walk and talk with you through each change. Jesus came to save me from my unheavenlike, selfish ways. He is my Creator and Redeemer, if I walk and talk with Him.

A schedule gives a time for everything that is a priority or necessity in my life. It's like my grandmother often said about keeping her home well ordered, "Everything has a place and everything must be kept in its place. It's the best way to live."

God cares about every detail of my home order. He wants to help me. It is God who calls to my heart and mind for me to make and keep order. As I respond to the Holy Spirit's influence, it is the power of Heaven that enables me to perform my part with a cheerful heart, consistently.

God does care about every detail of my life! For example, God has at times reminded me to check my refrigerator door—and I find it ajar! He kindles my thoughts when I see something laying out, impressing me that I should put it away properly. When I am putting clothes into my drawers, and I see that it's getting disorderly again, a thought comes,

"A moment of effort to redeem this drawer now, will save you hours another day." God is with me directing! He loves me that much! I find happiness and peace when I follow my Saviour!

Getting out of order brings unhappiness and frustration. For example, too often for me, I would go to clean out the lint trap from my dryer too late. Then I would feel guilty because I had thought of it yesterday, but I didn't do it then.

Such neglect causes needless work for Jim because in time he must get all that lint out of that long dryer hose under the house. I cried out to the Lord in frustration, "Lord, how can I ever learn to clean this out regularly and in a timely manner?" "I can help you" was

Getting Organized

the responding thought from God to my reason, intellect and conscience. "You can? I mean, You can! Help me, Lord! Remind me somehow."

Jesus prodded my thinking, "Why don't you pick one day out of the week to do it so it has a time, and then do it at that time?" I responded, "That sounds wonderful, Lord! Yes, let's do that! I pick Thursdays, and I know You are faithful to remind me. You won't forget like I do!"

God then gently reminded me that I must respond and do it when He brings it to my remembrance. When Jesus reminded me the very next Thursday, I responded immediately to the thought, for that was my responsibility in cooperating with Heaven. I found that God went even further than that. One Tuesday I was working with the laundry and the thought came to me to empty the lint trap. My responding thought was, "But it's not Thursday!"

"But you have done a lot of extra laundry. Why not check it now?" God's reasoning continued with me. When I checked it, sure enough, it was full! God is good, and He will be our constant companion to guide us through every detail of our lives if we commit ourselves to His care and cooperate with Him.

Won't you try God? Learn to recognize His voice so He can lead you through life to get your home physically in Heaven's order. Then take those lessons you learn into your thought life, into your marriage, and into your child rearing. What do you want God to help you redeem and put into order? God is faithful to lead all of His sheep who will follow Him as their Shepherd. Getting organized begins by coming into union and communion with Christ our Saviour.