

An Organized Life

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Happy New Year! Have you made any New Year's resolutions? Resolutions are a feature of New Year. Another feature of this time of year is organization. If you go to a home center, there are displays for home organization: boxes, tubs, packing materials.

People organize their homes this time of year for several reasons. Some take the opportunity to declutter as they put away Christmas decorations. Also, in places like Ohio, home organization makes for good indoor work during cold winters. Offices get organized. New files for a new year are created. Families will plan an annual budget.

It is easy to become disorganized. Things seem to have a way of accumulating. Maybe we procrastinate and neglect organizing a mess. Sometimes, we put things out of sight. Eventually, though, we will have to deal with our mess.

Organizing is not typically a fun job. We may know we need to get organized but procrastinate tackling our mess. We might feel overwhelmed by the task. We don't know where to start. However, organizing our homes is necessary. If we do not, the mess will consume us.

Home organizing is important, but what about organizing our lives? Our lives can become cluttered and chaotic. We can become hindered and distracted from serving God. The clutter of our lives will consume us if we do not get organized. How can we have an organized life?

Tips to Get Started

1. Take an inventory. Organizing our lives must begin by taking an inventory. What is in our lives? What is important? What is unimportant? What is valuable? What is junk?

In the days of the prophet Haggai, the recently returned Israelites were in the process of rebuilding. They were supposed to have rebuilt the Temple; however, they neglected the Temple and focused on their houses. Haggai called the people to "consider their ways" (Hag. 1:4-9).

The Israelites were consumed by their lives. They were busy raising their families and trying to earn living; yet, they were not satisfied with their efforts. They were focused on themselves rather than God. Likewise, if we neglect God in our busy lives, we will not be satisfied. We will never be content. Oh, we may be busy, but we will not be happy. So, we must consider our ways. Take an inventory of your life.

2. Determine what has value. Have you ever picked up an item and wondered, “Why have I been keeping this!?!” Or, have you ever discovered something of value hidden under junk? As we take an inventory of our life, we must identify what has value. But how do we do this? We must give value to the things God values.

God values His Son.

God values His children.

God values His Church.

God values people.

Our lives become disorganized when we value the wrong things. Too often, we become self-absorbed. Even our families can become vehicles of selfishness. If our values are wrong, we will waste our lives. We must never give our love to the wrong things. To do so is sin. Augustine once defined sin as “disordered love.” We are to instill what God values in our hearts and our families.

3. Throw out the junk. There are few things as satisfying as throwing out junk from the house. When we realize there is no good reason to keep an item, we get rid of it. Removing junk creates space for what is essential and enables us to focus on what is most important.

Once we take an inventory of our lives and determine what has value, we can throw out the junk. We must eliminate things that are worthless and distracting. We must remove things that are creating obstructions on our path to Jesus. In Hebrews, we are told, “...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely...” (Heb. 12:2).

Removing lust and pride from our hearts is how we become transformed into the image of God. This is how our hearts are reshaped. Paul told the Colossians, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry...you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:5, 8-10).

4. Display our treasures. We all have items that we treasure. It may be a valuable collectible or a sentimental heirloom. Seeing the item brings us a sense of happiness. We display our treasures. They become conversation pieces. If the item is buried in a messy attic; however, it is worthless.

When we organize our life, we can display our treasures. When our lives are a mess, we are unable to project value in the world. The value we possess comes from our Creator. We have been made in His image. Disordered hearts and minds prevent us from radiating His glory in the world. Sin is described as a failure of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23). On the contrary, there is nothing as beautiful as a life that reflects this most valuable treasure.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus identified obstructions of the heart. Among them, He mentioned materialism. He made a critical point regarding our hearts and our treasures. He said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). If our treasure is in Him, we will be the focal point of our lives. He will be the conversation piece of our lives. He will be the valued heirloom we pass on to our children.

Conclusion

As we begin a new year, is it time to organize our lives? Do we need to take an inventory? Do we need to throw out some junk? Have we been procrastinating getting started? There is no better time to start than today.

The task may seem overwhelming; however, by the grace of God, our lives can be transformed. With trust and resolve, we can be reformed into people who shine God's glory into the world. An organized life shows an organized heart.