



# Feeling Overwhelmed by Clutter? Simple Decluttering Steps for a Peaceful, Joyful Home

Many people feel **overwhelmed by clutter**, to the point of fantasizing about drastic events just to get a fresh start. One Christian writer shared that after her friend's house burned down, several people shockingly confessed, "I wish that would happen to me," believing a fire might be the only way to free them from their out-of-control clutter<sup>[^1]</sup>. While you (thankfully) don't need a disaster to declutter, it's clear that clutter can weigh heavily on our minds and spirits. If you're feeling buried by piles of stuff, take heart: you are not alone, and there are simple, practical steps—rooted in both **biblical wisdom** and **psychological research**—that can help you restore order and peace. In this article, we'll explore why clutter feels so overwhelming, how it affects your well-being (and even your relationship with God), and **simple decluttering steps** to reclaim your home and joy.

## The Toll of Clutter on Your Mind and Body

Clutter is not a trivial annoyance—studies show it can have **serious effects on our mental and physical health**. Our brains naturally crave order, and constant visual disorganization drains our cognitive resources, making it hard to focus or relax. Neuroscientists using fMRI found that clearing clutter from your environment actually improved people's ability to concentrate and process information, boosting productivity<sup>[^2]</sup>. Conversely, a messy, chaotic space bombards your senses with stimuli (the scattered papers, the overflowing closets, the toys underfoot), leading to **cognitive overload** and stress. One study observed that disorganization and clutter have a *cumulative effect* on the brain, steadily increasing mental fatigue and reducing working memory<sup>[^2]</sup>. In other words, the more piles and junk you see, the more mentally exhausted and "stuck" you may feel.

Perhaps the most striking evidence is how clutter raises our **stress hormone** levels. In a UCLA study of families, researchers found that when women described their homes as "cluttered" or messy, they had significantly higher levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) throughout the day, whereas women in more orderly homes experienced cortisol decline normally as the day went on<sup>[^3][^4]</sup>. Chronically elevated cortisol can leave you feeling anxious, irritable, and just plain overwhelmed. It even has physical implications: A persistently cluttered home can trigger a constant low-grade "fight or flight" response in your nervous system, taxing the body's resources that are meant for survival<sup>[^2]</sup>. Over time, this chronic stress response can affect your immune system and contribute to health issues like high blood pressure, insomnia, or worsened anxiety. In fact, researchers report that a cluttered, chaotic environment correlates with poor sleep (people sleeping in cluttered rooms have more trouble falling asleep and staying asleep) and even unhealthy eating habits<sup>[^2]</sup>. For example, one experiment found that participants in a messy kitchen consumed *twice* as many cookies compared to those in an organized kitchen<sup>[^2]</sup>. Clutter can literally raise your stress and tempt you into coping behaviors (like mindless snacking or binge-watching TV) that undermine your well-being.

Clutter also impacts our **mood and relationships**. Psychologists have found that living in disorganization can increase feelings of depression and anxiety; in one study, women who felt their homes were cluttered



became more depressed as each day went on, whereas women who felt their homes were “restful” and orderly became less depressed throughout the day<sup>[^3]</sup>. Another study showed that background clutter in our environment can even impair how we interpret social cues—for instance, participants surrounded by clutter were less able to accurately read others’ facial expressions and emotions<sup>[^2]</sup>. No wonder a messy house often leads to more tension and bickering among family members: the disorder around us creates disorder within us. We end up losing time (searching for lost keys or papers), losing peace (feeling like we can never relax), and sometimes even losing connection with loved ones (avoidance or arguments stemming from the mess).

From a physiological standpoint, **clutter overloads your senses** and sends continual signals of “unfinished work” to your brain, keeping you in a state of heightened alert. If you’ve ever walked in the door and immediately felt your heart sink at the sight of disarray, you’ve experienced this effect. One professional organizer notes that a **chaotic home environment can constantly trigger stress** hormones and negative emotions, whereas an organized, “restorative” space can do the opposite, promoting calm and positive mood<sup>[^3]</sup>. And importantly, this struggle is not just a matter of willpower or laziness—often there are underlying causes. Fatigue, busy schedules, emotional upheavals, or mental health conditions can all make clutter worse. **Depression** and **anxiety** can sap the energy needed to tidy up, and **ADHD** or executive functioning issues can make organization extremely difficult. In some cases, clutter crosses into hoarding behavior. **Hoarding disorder** is now recognized in the DSM-5 (the psychiatric diagnostic manual) as a condition where people compulsively acquire items and feel intense anxiety at the thought of discarding them<sup>[^2]</sup>. Brain scans even show that for someone with hoarding tendencies, getting rid of items can activate the same brain regions as physical pain would<sup>[^2]</sup>! This means that if you or someone you love struggles with extreme difficulty letting things go, there are real neurological and psychological factors at play – it’s *not* simply greed or stubbornness. The good news is that therapeutic interventions (like cognitive-behavioral therapy and, if appropriate, medication) **can help** individuals with serious hoarding or underlying conditions learn to cope and gradually find freedom<sup>[^2]</sup>. We’ll talk more about seeking help later, but the key takeaway here is that clutter can be a genuine **burden on your mind, body, and relationships**. Recognizing this can free you from shame (“why can’t I just get it together?”) and instead motivate you to address the clutter as a legitimate challenge – one you can overcome step by step, with God’s help.

## Clutter as a Spiritual Issue

Beyond the psychological and physical aspects, clutter often has a **spiritual dimension**. While the Bible doesn’t talk about “clutter” in the modern sense of stuffed closets or messy desks, it has plenty to say about our relationship to material possessions, our use of space, and the state of our hearts. **God cares about every aspect of our lives**, and that includes our homes and how we manage them. In fact, clutter is frequently intertwined with **heart issues** that God wants us to bring to Him. Jesus warned, “*Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions*” ([Luke 12:15](#)), yet how easy it is for us to accumulate more and more stuff in the pursuit of happiness or security. Sometimes, a house overflowing with things may indicate we are subconsciously trying to fill a void or find our identity in what we own. Other times, we cling to items out of a “**scarcity mindset**” – a fear that if we let something go, we might desperately need it later. During the early COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many people hoarded supplies (like the infamous toilet paper saga) out of panic. Such actions, if we’re honest, can reveal a lack of trust that God will provide for our needs. The Bible gently reminds us “*...my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus*” ([Philippians 4:19](#)). When we stockpile far beyond our actual use “just in case,” we may be leaning on our possessions for security instead of leaning on God.



Clutter can also become a form of **“heart clutter”** that crowds out a thriving spiritual life. Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Sower: some seeds fell among thorns and *“as they go on their way, they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature”* ([Luke 8:14](#)). In our context, the “worries, riches and pleasures” that choke us might literally be the piles of *stuff* we’ve accumulated – the extra gadgets, decor, clothes, and activities that consume our time and attention but don’t truly satisfy. All that clutter can **distract us from what matters most**: loving God and loving people. How many of us have been too embarrassed by our messy living room to invite friends over for fellowship, or too preoccupied with cleaning (or feeling guilty about not cleaning) to sit quietly in prayer? Our Lord wants something better for us. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves – nowhere did He say “maintain a perfect house to be a good Christian.” In fact, we’re cautioned not to let **perfectionism in housekeeping** become a false idol. The story of Martha and Mary is instructive: Martha was *“worried and upset about many things,”* hustling to be the perfect hostess, while her sister Mary sat at Jesus’ feet to listen. Jesus gently rebuked Martha that only one thing was truly needed – **time with Him** – and Mary had chosen that better part ([Luke 10:41-42](#)). The lesson? A spotless home is not the ultimate goal; a heart aligned with God is. **God does not want us to put an immaculate house above our relationship with Him.** So if your clutter has been making you feel ashamed or unworthy to approach God, let that go. *“Nowhere in the Bible does it say we are to have perfect homes,”* as one author put it, *“and I don’t believe God wants us to become like Martha, putting organization above our relationship with Him.”*<sup>[5]</sup> You are invited to come to Jesus *“weary and burdened”* as you are, and *“you will find rest for your souls”* ([Matthew 11:28](#)).

That said, the Bible *does* encourage **order, stewardship, and simplicity** as virtues that help us live a peaceful, godly life. *“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace”* (or “God is not a God of confusion, but of order,” depending on translation) – this is what Scripture teaches in [1 Corinthians 14:33](#). In the context, it was talking about orderly worship services, but the principle reflects God’s character in all things. The creation account in Genesis even shows God bringing **order out of chaos**. Our own acts of organizing and bringing order to our little corner of creation can reflect the character of our Creator. Later in that same Corinthian passage we’re told, *“But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way”* ([1 Corinthians 14:40](#)). Having an orderly home environment isn’t about pride or perfection; it’s about fostering an atmosphere of peace where family and guests can feel at ease, and where we aren’t constantly distracted by mess. An orderly home can even aid our spiritual life – for example, it’s easier to **practice hospitality** (which the Bible commends in Hebrews 13:2 and 1 Peter 4:9) when we’re not drowning in clutter. It’s easier to find a quiet corner to read Scripture or pray when our belongings aren’t overflowing into every space.

Moreover, **decluttering can be an act of love and worship**. When we release our grip on excess stuff, we have the opportunity to bless others and trust God more. The Bible encourages generosity: *“If you have two coats, give one to someone who has none”* (paraphrasing [Luke 3:11](#)). Rather than hoard our surplus, we’re called to share with those in need. *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy...”* Jesus said, urging us to store treasures in heaven instead ([Matthew 6:19-20](#)). One practical way to do that is by donating usable items to the poor or to ministries – in doing so, you *“lay up treasure in heaven”* ([Luke 12:33](#)) and demonstrate love for your neighbor. God is delighted when we give willingly: *“God loves a cheerful giver”* ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)). Think of decluttering not as “throwing things away wastefully,” but as **making a gift** of your excess to benefit someone else. That old winter coat in your closet could be keeping a homeless person warm; the extra dishes collecting dust could bless a family starting over. By pruning our possessions, we cultivate a heart of generosity and faith. We learn to rely on God daily for our “daily bread” instead of relying on a stockpile of rarely-used items. This is deeply biblical: God provided manna in the wilderness one day at a time so Israel would learn dependence on Him. Similarly, if we give away something



and later truly *need* it, we can trust that God will provide what we lack (Jehovah Jireh, “the Lord will provide,” as affirmed in [Philippians 4:19](#) and many other verses).

Finally, remembering the **temporary nature of material things** puts clutter in perspective. The apostle Paul wrote, “*For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it*” ([1 Timothy 6:7](#)). Everything we own will eventually decay, be given away, or left behind. When we stand before God, none of our collections or knick-knacks will accompany us. What will matter is how we used our resources for God’s glory and love of others. Knowing this helps loosen the grip of consumerism on our souls. It becomes easier to say, “I have enough; I can let this go.” In Ecclesiastes it says there is “*a time to keep and a time to throw away*” ([Ecclesiastes 3:6](#)). Perhaps now is your time to throw away (or give away) the excess, and keep only what truly serves your life’s purpose in God. Simplifying your surroundings can free you to pursue your calling with less distraction. It can also cultivate contentment – enjoying what you have rather than constantly buying more. **Minimalism, in a Christian sense, is about contentment and focus on what God calls us to, rather than the endless pursuit of more things.**

In summary, clutter often involves our **heart, mind, and soul**. It can reflect and reinforce spiritual issues like misplaced priorities, lack of trust, or difficulty letting go. But by addressing our clutter with God’s help, we can experience not only a cleaner house but a more **joyful, Christ-centered life**. With that biblical motivation in mind, let’s turn to the practical side: how do we actually start decluttering when we feel so overwhelmed?

## Simple Decluttering Steps to Get Unstuck

Tackling a mountain of clutter can feel paralyzing, but it becomes manageable when you break it down into **simple, concrete steps**. Here are some proven decluttering steps, combining practical organizing advice with encouragement from Scripture. Remember, **start small and lean on God’s strength** – “*I can do all this through Him who gives me strength*” (Philippians 4:13) can be your motto as you begin. Let’s get started:

1. **Pray and Seek God’s Perspective:** Before you grab a trash bag or storage bin, begin with prayer. Ask God to give you wisdom, peace, and right motives as you declutter. Dedicate this process to Him as an act of stewardship and freedom. For example, you might pray, “Lord, help me let go of the excess and keep only what is needed and helpful for my family. Give me a generous heart to share with others and the discipline to bring order to this home.” Inviting God into your decluttering sets the tone for grace rather than perfectionism. Also, take a moment to reflect on *why* you want to declutter. Is it to reduce stress and be a better parent/spouse? To create a welcoming space for fellowship? To break an attachment to material things? **Align your goals with God’s purposes.** This will energize you with a sense of mission, not just drudgery. As you pray, recall encouraging scriptures: for instance, “*Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you*” (1 Peter 5:7) – you can even cast the anxiety about your messy house onto the Lord. Trust that He will help you, one day at a time. This first step is also about adjusting your mindset. Instead of saying “It’s hopeless, I’m just a messy person,” start speaking truth: *God can help me change*; a cluttered house now doesn’t mean it must be cluttered forever. With prayer, you’re no longer tackling the mess alone – you have the Holy Spirit, “the Helper,” guiding and empowering you from the inside out.
2. **Start Small and Set Realistic Goals:** One reason we feel overwhelmed by clutter is because we try to tackle everything at once or set unrealistic expectations (like “I’ll declutter the entire house this weekend!”). That usually leads to burnout or paralysis. The solution is to **start with small, bite-sized**

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



**tasks** and build momentum. Professional organizers and psychologists alike advise starting with just one small area: perhaps one drawer, one shelf, or one corner of a room<sup>[4]</sup>. Choose a spot that's frequently used (for instance, the top of your desk or a kitchen counter) so you'll immediately feel the benefit of clearing it. Set a timer for 15 or 20 minutes if you have to, and focus *only on that area*. **Ignore the rest of the mess for now.** Complete a small victory like sorting one box of papers or cleaning out one pantry shelf. When you finish that, celebrate it! Take a short break, say a prayer of thanks, and enjoy the little spark of relief from having that spot in order. Success breeds success – that bit of accomplishment can motivate you to tackle the next small area. As Scripture says, *“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin”* (Zechariah 4:10, NLT). Every little bit of progress counts.

It's also important to set **realistic daily or weekly goals** rather than expecting an overnight transformation. You might decide, “Each day I will fill one donation bag” or “Each Saturday for two hours I'll work on one room.” Write down your plan and treat it as an appointment. By pacing yourself, you'll reduce frustration. One clinical psychologist notes that it's easy to get overwhelmed if you try to address an entire room or house at once – instead, *“set yourself up for success by starting with a single drawer or shelf”* and perhaps make it more enjoyable by putting on music or an audiobook as you work<sup>[4]</sup>. You can even gamify the process: for example, commit to remove 10 items of clutter per day. Another tip is to create a checklist of target areas (e.g., **Closet, Pantry, Garage, etc.**), then tackle them one by one over weeks or months. Each checked box will feel satisfying. **By starting small and being consistent**, you will gradually chip away at the chaos without burning out. Remember Jesus' words that *“whoever is faithful with little will also be faithful with much”* (Luke 16:10). As you're faithful in decluttering one little spot, you're building the skills and habits to handle bigger areas.

1. **Sort and Decide: Keep, Donate, or Toss:** Now let's get into the nitty-gritty of decluttering. When facing a pile of assorted stuff, the classic approach is to **sort items into categories** to make decisions easier. A tried-and-true method is the “Three Boxes (or Bags) Method”: label one **“Keep,”** one **“Donate/Sell,”** and one **“Trash/Recycling.”** Pick up each item and consciously decide which box it goes in. If something is truly important, useful, or deeply meaningful to you, keep it – but *remember, not everything can be “important.”* Aim to **keep only the things that you use regularly or that bring significant value to your life.** If an item is in good shape but you no longer need or love it, that's a perfect candidate for donation (someone else can use it). If it's broken, expired, or not worth giving, it likely belongs in the trash or recycling. Some organizers add a fourth category called **“Store”** (for seasonal items or keepsakes you will put in storage out of the way) or **“Move”** (for items that belong in another room). Feel free to adjust categories to fit your situation, but don't create too many or it gets confusing. **The key is to force a decision on each object** – don't just shove things back in a drawer mindlessly. This step can be emotionally challenging, especially for sentimental items or “maybe I'll need it” items. If you find yourself hesitating a lot, remind yourself of your larger goals (a peaceful home, blessing others, etc.). Also, try using some *decluttering decision questions*: For example, *“Have I used or enjoyed this in the last year?”* If not, it's a strong sign you won't miss it. *“Is this item helping me serve God or my family, or is it just taking up space?”* *“If I let this go, could it benefit someone else in need?”* Often that last question gives courage to release things – knowing it will serve someone else rather than gather dust in your house.

As you sort, it might help to recall the biblical principle that *“everything we have has been given by God, and we are only stewards of it”* ([Psalm 24:1](#)). We honor God's generosity by not letting His gifts rot in a closet but by putting them to good use or passing them on. Also remember Jesus' promise that *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). Donating items can become a source of joy knowing you're blessing someone.

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.





One Christian decluttering “theology” is that *sharing our excess goods is a way to bear fruit in keeping with repentance* (echoing John the Baptist’s advice in Luke 3:11) and that *God is pleased when we give things away cheerfully* (2 Corinthians 9:7) as an act of love<sup>[1]</sup>. So, far from feeling guilty about getting rid of Grandma’s extra dishes or those five coats you don’t wear, you can prayerfully release them for God’s purposes, trusting He can use them to answer someone else’s prayers.

**Practical tip:** If you’re really struggling to decide on certain items, you can create a “Maybe” box. Put those unsure items in a box, label it with a date (maybe 3 or 6 months in the future), and tuck it away. If you haven’t needed to retrieve anything from the box by that date, it’s a good sign you can let those items go. This interim step sometimes eases the anxiety of parting with things. But do make sure to follow up when time’s up, and treat anything still in the box as likely not essential. Another helpful strategy is the **one-in-one-out rule** going forward: whenever you acquire a new item (say, a pair of shoes or a book), commit to removing a similar old item. This prevents clutter from creeping back.

During the sorting stage, you may confront some emotional or spiritual resistance. You might feel guilt (“I spent good money on this, throwing it out feels wasteful!”) or fear (“What if I need it again?”) or sentiment (“But my late aunt gave this to me!”). Bring these feelings to God. It’s okay to keep a few truly sentimental treasures – those can have a designated storage place. But for the rest, remember that *the memories are not in the object itself*. You won’t lose the memory or the love if you give away the item. Perhaps take a photo of it if that helps you let it go, then release it. As for fear of future need, remind yourself that **God will provide** if you ever genuinely need that item later. Holding onto dozens of just-in-case items “out of fear” can actually be a form of mistrust in God’s provision. Test yourself: maybe try giving away something you’ve been holding “just in case” and watch how you manage without it. You’ll likely find creative solutions or realize you didn’t need it after all. This builds faith and flexibility.

1. **Organize and Assign “Homes” for Everything:** Decluttering isn’t just about removing what’s unnecessary; it’s also about organizing what you *do* keep so that your space stays clutter-free. After you’ve pared down your belongings, it’s crucial to **give every item a proper “home”**—a designated spot where that item lives. For example, decide a specific drawer for all your batteries and light bulbs, a single basket for incoming mail, a shelf for board games, hooks by the door for keys, etc. By assigning a place for everything, you make it far easier to put things away and find them again. One common cause of clutter is simply items that don’t have a clear home (so they float around surfaces). As one organizing expert puts it: “setting up homes for your things” means when clutter pops up, you immediately know where it goes, which reduces the mental effort and stress<sup>[3]</sup>. If you notice certain clutter “hot spots” (like piles of shoes by the entrance or receipts all over the table), that’s a clue to create a storage solution for those specific items (maybe a shoe rack by the door, or a folder for receipts). **Labeling** containers or shelves can help everyone in the household stick to the system, too.

While organizing, try to keep *like items together* and stored as simply as possible. You don’t need to spend a fortune on fancy storage bins—though a few well-chosen containers or drawer dividers can be very helpful. The goal is to make your environment intuitive and orderly, so that even when life gets busy, it’s easier to maintain. For instance, if you decluttered your clothes and now have only what fits and you wear, consider arranging your closet by category (all shirts together, pants together, etc.) or by color, whichever makes getting dressed simpler for you. In the kitchen, you might dedicate one shelf as the “coffee/tea station” so all mugs, coffee, tea bags, sugar, etc., live there; it creates order and saves time searching. **Keep frequently-used items accessible** and infrequently-used items stored higher up or in the back.



As you organize, think of it as bringing **order and peace** into your home—a reflection of God’s peace. A Scripture that can inspire this is *“Let all things be done decently and in order”* (1 Corinthians 14:40). It’s amazing how even a little bit of organization can reduce daily stress. No more frantic morning scavenger hunts for keys or homework papers when everything has a home! Instead, you create a *smoother routine* for yourself and your family. Libby Sander, an organizational behavior researcher, noted that our physical environments significantly influence our emotions and behaviors, including our interactions with others<sup>[^2]</sup>. A tidy home often leads to more harmony: family members aren’t as likely to argue over lost items or chores if systems are in place. In fact, research has shown that those who keep their houses cleaner tend to be more active and have better overall health than those in very cluttered homes<sup>[^2]</sup>. This doesn’t mean your home must look like a magazine—remember, we’re striving for functional order, not Instagram perfection. But implementing some basic organization will pay dividends in **time saved, lower stress, and greater peace** each day.

A quick tip while organizing: leverage simple habits to maintain order. For example, adopt the rule **“Don’t put it down, put it away.”** When you’re tempted to drop the mail on the counter, take 30 seconds to sort it: toss junk mail immediately (so it never becomes counter clutter), put bills in a designated slot, etc. After using an item, train yourself (and gently your family) to return it to its home. It’s much easier to do this little by little than to deal with a huge mess later. Consider instituting a 10-minute evening family cleanup time—set a timer and have everyone tidy up their own things and common areas. When this becomes routine, you’ll wake up to a fairly orderly house, which is a much calmer start to the day.

1. **Maintain Progress with New Habits (and Give Yourself Grace):** Decluttering is not a one-time event but an ongoing process of stewardship. After the big initial push to declutter and organize, the challenge is preventing “recluttering.” This means cultivating new habits and attitudes. One helpful habit we mentioned is the one-in-one-out rule to keep your total possessions in check. Another is doing quick daily resets: for instance, make your bed each morning (it instantly makes the bedroom feel neater), and do a 10-minute pickup each evening of any items left out. Develop a habit of dealing with paper as it comes in (mail, school papers) rather than letting piles accumulate. You might establish a **weekly routine** like “Fridays are fridge clean-out day” or “Saturdays we donate any full giveaway bags.” Find a rhythm that suits your household. Remember the biblical principle of *self-discipline*: *“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline”* (2 Timothy 1:7, NIV). The Holy Spirit can help you grow in discipline and consistency, which are fruit of the Spirit (self-control is listed in Galatians 5:23). Little by little, as you walk in the Spirit, you can become a more diligent and organized person – not for your own pride, but to better love God and others through a well-managed life.

However, **equally important is giving yourself grace**. Life is not static, and some seasons are naturally messier (raising young children, for example, or periods of illness or transition). Your home will not stay immaculate all the time, and that’s okay! Don’t get discouraged if some clutter starts to creep back – just refer to your skills and tackle it before it balloons. If you slip up or get busy and the house goes back to chaos for a bit, resist the urge to beat yourself up. Instead, pray for renewal and start again with the steps above. It’s a bit like our spiritual journey: we continually need to confess, declutter our hearts, and refocus on God. Similarly, your physical environment may need periodic re-decluttering. Many people find doing a spring cleaning or fall cleaning purge each year helps keep possessions manageable. Others do the popular “12-12-12” challenge occasionally (find 12 items to throw away, 12 to donate, 12 to put back in place).

Crucially, **balance your pursuit of order with the flexibility of love**. If you live with family or roommates, involve them in the process and set reasonable shared expectations, but don’t let decluttering turn into

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



harsh perfectionism or constant nagging. Relationships come first. A perfectly tidy home means little if achieved by anger or if it makes everyone afraid to live freely in the space. So strive for order, but also warmth and hospitality. If your spouse or kids aren't as on board, encourage them gently and by example rather than becoming bitter. Pray for unity in your home goals. Over time, they'll likely appreciate the benefits of a neater home too. And if you have to choose between spending an hour making memories with your child or scrubbing the floor, remember Mary and Martha—sometimes it's needful to let a bit of mess remain while you focus on the "better part" of relationships and rest in God. **It's all about balance.** The Lord doesn't want us stressed out from cleaning; He wants us to enjoy the blessings of home and family.

1. **Seek Support When Needed (Don't Go It Alone):** Decluttering can be emotionally and physically taxing, and sometimes you'll hit roadblocks. Remember that it's okay to **ask for help**. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us that *"two are better than one...if either of them falls, one can help the other up."* If you're feeling stuck, enlist a friend or family member to help you declutter. A fresh set of eyes and some moral support can make a huge difference. You could even make it fun: turn on some upbeat worship music and make it a fellowship activity. If you don't have someone who can physically help, consider an "accountability partner" – someone you update on your progress, who cheers you on and holds you accountable to your goals (and you can offer to do the same for them in some area). Some people benefit from online support groups or challenges (for example, a 30-day decluttering challenge where participants encourage each other).

Additionally, there is no shame in getting **professional help** if the clutter is beyond your ability to manage. Professional organizers are trained to tackle chaos efficiently and can create systems tailored to your needs. Yes, it costs money, but it might be a worthwhile investment for a fresh start, even if just for a particularly troublesome area like the garage or an overstuffed attic. There are also nonprofit agencies and church volunteers in some communities that help seniors or overwhelmed individuals declutter as an act of service – don't hesitate to reach out if you need that assistance.

On a deeper level, consider seeking help from a **counselor or therapist** if clutter is entwined with emotional challenges. This is especially important if you suspect conditions like hoarding disorder, depression, or ADHD are involved. A therapist can help you process the attachments or fears that make it hard to let go of things, and teach coping strategies. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, for instance, has been shown to be effective in treating hoarding behaviors by gradually changing the thoughts and feelings about possessions<sup>[2][4]</sup>. If anxiety or depression is severe, a psychiatrist might recommend medication to help lift your mood or reduce anxiety enough that you can tackle tasks – taking medication for mental health is not a sign of weak faith, but a wise use of God's provision (much like you'd take insulin for diabetes). In the Bible, Jesus said, *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"* ([Mark 2:17](#)). Seeking medical or psychological help when needed is perfectly compatible with trusting God – He often works through skilled helpers. As a Christian, you can pray for healing and also pursue practical treatment; it's not either/or. So if your **overwhelm has crossed into chronic anxiety, debilitating depression, or relational conflict**, reaching out to a Christian counselor or support group can bring both healing and accountability in your journey to a clutter-free life.

Let me share a brief real-life example that shows the power of combining practical steps with support: **Case Study – "From Chaos to Calm."** *Jane* (not her real name) was a 38-year-old mother of three who described herself as "drowning in clutter." She felt tired and anxious all the time, and was embarrassed to have anyone over. Her living room was full of toys, laundry, and random stuff; her garage was so packed that the family couldn't park the car inside. Jane rated her stress level about her home as 9 out of 10. Finally, after a particularly tense argument with her husband about the mess, Jane decided to seek help. She enlisted a

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.





close friend from church to come over once a week and declutter one area together – this gave her encouragement and a sense of accountability. She also joined an online Christian moms’ decluttering challenge where members shared progress and bible verses each day. Jane started with small goals: 20 minutes a day decluttering, focusing on one room per month. Over three months, she donated over 25 bags of clothes, toys and household items to a local charity (her kids even helped pick things to give to “kids who don’t have as much,” which made them excited). She also threw away lots of broken or useless items that had just been taking up space. With her friend’s help, they set up storage shelves and clear bins in the garage for the things they decided to keep, and created a playroom area so the kids’ toys had a designated home. By the end of that period, Jane’s home wasn’t perfect, but it was significantly more livable: you could see the floors and countertops again! Her stress rating dropped to about 4 out of 10. More importantly, she reported feeling “**so much lighter.**” She said, “It’s like I can breathe and think clearly now. I’m not always on edge about what I’m forgetting under all those piles.” Jane even hosted her Bible study group at her house for the first time in over a year, which was a huge joy for her. Her relationships with her husband and kids improved as well; the constant fighting about chores subsided when everyone saw the benefits of the new, simpler order of things. This transformation didn’t happen overnight – it was step by step, with prayer, perseverance, and support. Jane’s story shows that **no matter how overwhelming the clutter is, change is possible** with a plan and some help.

## Embracing a Clutter-Free (and Spirit-Filled) Life

Imagine your home as a place of **calm rather than chaos** – a place where you can walk in and smile, where you aren’t afraid of surprise visitors, where everything necessary has its place. You don’t need a picture-perfect house to honor God, but a reasonably decluttered, orderly environment can truly be a blessing to your spiritual life and your family’s well-being. By removing the excess and organizing what remains, you are essentially creating **margin** in your life: margin of space, time, and energy that can now be devoted to what matters most. Instead of spending an hour searching for papers or shifting piles around, you might spend that hour playing with your child, having an unrushed meal with your spouse, or reading Scripture in a tidy corner chair that used to hold a heap of clothes. Instead of feeling defeated and stressed by your surroundings, you can begin to feel **peace and gratitude** in your home.

As you declutter and simplify, don’t be surprised if you experience a kind of spiritual renewal as well. Many people report that having a cleaner, simpler space helps them pray and think more clearly. It’s as if the external order brings internal quietness that makes it easier to hear God’s “still, small voice.” This makes sense: Jesus often went to solitary, uncluttered places to pray. While we can’t all retreat to a mountainside, we can shape our homes to be havens of peace conducive to God’s presence. **Your home can better serve as a domestic church**, a place of fellowship and ministry, when it’s not bursting at the seams with clutter.

In the journey of decluttering, you may also find God teaching you deeper lessons of the heart: lessons about **contentment, trust, humility, and generosity**. You might find yourself echoing Job’s words, “*Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart*” (Job 1:21), and holding earthly goods more loosely while holding onto God more tightly. You might develop new empathy for those who have less, and a desire to help them, as you clear out your surplus. You might even inspire others in your church or community to simplify and put people above possessions. There is a quiet, countercultural testimony in living simply and joyfully in a world obsessed with material accumulation. Your decluttered life can shine as an example of “**living with enough**” and finding joy in Christ rather than in stuff.



As we conclude, let's circle back to the spiritual encouragement: if you're feeling overwhelmed, remember Jesus' invitation, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* ([Matthew 11:28](#)). Take a deep breath and invite Him into this process. He cares about you – and yes, He cares about your clutter because it's weighing on you. He wants you to experience the *"glorious freedom of the children of God"* (Romans 8:21) in every area of life. So hand over your feelings of overwhelm to Him. Then take that first small step. You might be amazed, as the author Ruth Soukup discovered, that "getting your house in order" can be an almost immediate antidote to overwhelm<sup>[5]</sup>. She described how after finally tackling the chaos in her home, she suddenly felt she could breathe again, her stress was lifted, and she was *"ready to deal with whatever curveballs life threw"* her way<sup>[5]</sup>. You, too, can experience that relief.

One day, you'll look around your decluttered space and feel a surge of gratitude – gratitude that God has helped you make room in your life for peace, for loved ones, and for Him. In the end, decluttering is really about **"throwing off everything that hinders"** (Hebrews 12:1) so that you can run the race God set before you with endurance and joy. It's about simplifying your life so you can more fully devote yourself to God's call and enjoy the blessings He's given you. With each bag you donate and each closet you organize, you are saying, *"Lord, my life consists not in my possessions"* (Luke 12:15); my life is in You. I trust You for tomorrow, so I can let go of this today. I want my home to be a place of Your peace, not disorder (1 Cor 14:33). Help me steward it for Your glory." That is a beautiful prayer, and a beautiful goal.

So go ahead – take that hour to tame the chaos in your physical space, as a gift to yourself and an offering to God. Put on your favorite worship music and make decluttering an act of praise! You may find that as the clutter disappears, *"the peace of God, which transcends all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7) begins to settle more richly in your heart and home. **You've got this**, and more importantly, God's got you. Step by step, you can conquer the clutter and step into the more abundant life Jesus wants for you – a life of greater peace, freedom, and joy.

---

## References

1. Susan Verstraete – *"A 10 Point Theology for Getting Rid of Clutter."* Church Bulletin Inserts (2013). This article outlines biblical principles regarding clutter, including trusting God's provision (Phil. 4:19) and remembering that life is more than possessions (Luke 12:15). It shares an anecdote of people envying a friend who lost everything in a fire, highlighting how desperate we can feel to escape clutter. [BulletinInserts.org](#)
2. Libby Sander – *"What does clutter do to your brain and body?"* RACGP newsGP (Jan 25, 2019). An expert in organizational behavior explains the impact of clutter on anxiety, cognitive load, cortisol levels, and even physical health. Notable findings include clutter triggering a constant low-grade fight-or-flight response, impairing focus and working memory, disrupting sleep, and links to poor diet and weight gain. Also discusses hoarding disorder in DSM-5 and a Yale study showing discarding items can cause pain in the brain for hoarders. [RACGP](#)
3. Elizabeth Earnshaw, LMFT – *"Clutter, Cortisol, and Mental Load."* *Psychology Today* (Sept 12, 2024). This piece describes research on how home clutter raises stress, especially in women. It cites a 2010 UCLA study where wives who saw their home as cluttered had rising cortisol levels through the day (versus declining in those without clutter). Discusses the cognitive overload clutter creates, often leading to feelings of overwhelm or shutdown. Also suggests solutions: "shedding" excess stuff, "preventing" clutter by assigning homes for items, and "adapting" expectations during busy life seasons. [Psychology Today](#)

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



4. Daryl Austin – *“Being organized can actually improve mental health. This is why.”* *National Geographic* (Jan 11, 2024). A science-backed article highlighting numerous studies on clutter and mental health. Key points include: clutter’s downsides (memory impairment, increased anxiety, poorer eating habits, higher risk of mood disorders, cortisol link, reduced well-being and sense of security). It quotes experts like Joseph Ferrari and Catherine Roster on benefits of getting organized (less exhaustion, better productivity, improved life quality, possibly better sleep and relationships). Also gives practical tips: start small (one drawer), set aside decluttering time, imagine the benefits of an organized space, and enlist support (friends or professional organizers). [NationalGeographic.com](https://www.nationalgeographic.com)
5. Ruth Soukup – *“When You Finally Lose It Over Clutter and Chaos.”* (Excerpt from **Unstuffed**). *FaithGateway* (n.d.). Author describes a personal meltdown caused by days of chaos and clutter, and how intensely cleaning her home for two hours provided immediate relief from overwhelm. She emphasizes that getting the house in order was “the antidote” to her stress, making her feel able to breathe and more calm to handle life. Soukup ties this to the idea that our homes reflect our state of mind and that creating a soothing, orderly environment helps us feel calmer inside. She also balances the perspective by citing 1 Corinthians 14:33,40 (God is a God of order) and the Mary vs. Martha story, concluding that while God values order, we shouldn’t idolize a perfect home over our relationship with Him. [FaithGateway](https://www.faithgateway.com)
6. Cleveland Clinic (Health Essentials Podcast) – *“Decluttering Your Life: How Cleaning and Mental Health Are Connected”* with Dr. Dawn Potter, PsyD (June 16, 2021). A clinical psychologist explains that clutter and mess can make people feel overwhelmed, and conversely, having a clean, organized home helps many individuals feel more in control and less distracted. Dr. Potter notes that cleaning can be a stress-reliever and provide a sense of accomplishment (a tangible result when other problems feel untackable). She also discusses hoarding disorder – how those with hoarding feel distress when pressured to discard items and how cognitive-behavioral therapy can help by challenging their beliefs about needing to keep things. [ClevelandClinic.org](https://www.clevelandclinic.org)
7. Judith Kolberg and ICD – *Clutter–Hoarding Scale and Chronic Disorganization resources*. The Institute for Challenging Disorganization (ICD) provides the **Clutter–Hoarding Scale®**, a tool used by professional organizers to assess the severity of clutter in five key areas (structure, pests, household functions, health/safety, and personal effects) on a scale from Level I (low) to Level V (severe). It helps determine when additional help (like a team clean-out or therapy) is needed. Chronic disorganization is distinguished from routine mess by its persistence and negative impact on one’s life, often linked to conditions like ADHD, depression, or brain injury<sup>[13]</sup>. The ICD and organizing experts emphasize reducing stigma and focusing on safety and functionality. [TwilightOrganizing.com](https://www.twilightorganizing.com) (Blog explanation of the Clutter–Hoarding Scale)
8. Crosswalk.com – *“Does God Care about My Clutter?”* by Mary Oelerich-Meyer (Mar 20, 2025). This devotional article delves into spiritual aspects of clutter, affirming that God cares about clutter because it often points to deeper heart issues. It recounts the story of the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23) to illustrate how attachment to possessions can hinder one’s willingness to follow Jesus. It also discusses the “scarcity mindset” behind hoarding, referencing how people panicked during COVID by hoarding supplies, and counters it with God’s promise to meet our needs (Phil 4:19). The author defines clutter broadly as anything (things, thoughts, activities) that crowds out the abundant life Jesus offers, and encourages readers to seek fulfillment in Christ rather than more stuff. (Crosswalk slideshow article). [Crosswalk.com](https://www.crosswalk.com)