

The Organized Homeschool



A “Homeschooling How To” Book
by Anne Elliott

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Published by

Foundations Press
P.O. Box 333
Brownsdale, MN 55918

<http://FoundationsPress.com>

All links referenced in this book worked accurately when checked on May 9, 2011. Please notify us if any link does not work so that we may update it in future editions.



What do you love about this picture? Everything is so peaceful...

Why? Because there is no clutter! 😊 There is very little noise, no wind hitting your face, no movement of any kind, calm lighting, and very few people.

Now, obviously, God has called you as a wife and homeschooling mother to a “world” of clutter, noise, and people. If He didn’t want you to minister to *people* (both little and big), then He would have just called you home to heaven. He has you here for a reason, and “here” can be a very cluttered place!

But can you create a more peaceful “here” by eliminating any **unnecessary** clutter? Do we have to hold on to *things* because we’re afraid of the future? Do things give us a sense of security? However, what damage does all the visual and mental clutter do to us and our families?

Sometimes we’re just cluttered because we don’t see it. We’re in it all day long, so we’ve become numb to it. If you think this might be you, go out your door, walk around the house, then come back in the door. Take note of how your home feels to someone just coming. (Or... maybe even how it *smells*?)

To be perfectly honest, sometimes things are just cluttered because we're BUSY — and TIRED — and MOMS! 😊 Yup, my house gets cluttered really fast, too!

In this book, we're going to examine how to make our homes organized. We won't be looking for perfection, but we're certainly looking for peace.

May the God of all peace fill your heart and home with His grace and love!

~Anne



Table of Contents

The Priority of Homemaking	6
A Quick-Start Guide to Decluttering	8
Creativity in the Home	12
Music in the Home	14
Light in the Home	17
A Loving Atmosphere in the Home	19
Help from the Master Planner	22
Principles of Decluttering	28
The Job That Never Ends	31
Keeping Life Uncluttered	34
Organizing Toys	39
Handy Homeschooling Supplies	44
More Hours in My Day	46
A Peek into My Notebook and Computer	51
Handling Things in a Large Family	57
Homemade Bread, Housework, and Homeschooling?	65
Home Business and Home School	69
Managing Your Home When You're Tired	75
A Daily Routine for Real Moms	79
Recommended Resources	82
Coffee Break E-zine	35

The Priority of Homemaking¹

I will never forget the day I discovered that making my home pretty was part of the will of God for my life! With the dishes stacked high in the sink and on every available kitchen surface, with unfolded laundry piled on the living room floor, with toys scattered upstairs and down, and with overdue bills waiting to be paid, I turned in desperation to the Word of God. I searched for every Scripture passage that spoke about a wife's responsibilities, and I made a list that covered the front and back of a piece of notebook paper.

What I read made me tremble! I realized all my dreams for my life hinged upon my success as a homemaker, for my very reputation was at stake. I determined to make a change and, grabbing a piece of scotch tape, I hung my list on the kitchen cabinet over the sink. I plunged into the dishes and attacked stuck-on grime as I read the verses I had written. Halfway through, I turned the sheet around and read the other side of my list.

Later, as my kitchen shone with cleanliness, I realized not only was my reputation at stake, but my joy and happiness were as well. My great discovery was that...

**“The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands”** (Proverbs 14:1).

Evidently, I'm not the only woman who has recently made this discovery. As I browse through a popular Christian bookseller's catalog, I see scores of books and tools designed to bring women to the realization that a skillful housewife is a needed commodity. Christian women worldwide are heeding the call of Titus 2 and training the younger women around them to be “homemakers” ([Titus 2:3-5](#)). A lucrative business awaits those who are savvy enough

¹ The following is an excerpt from [Juggling Life's Responsibilities: Biblical Help for the Married Woman](#) by Anne Elliott, pp. 175-176.

to take heed to this trend and add training materials, tools and seminars to the market. Multi-year curriculum have been published that help mothers train their daughters in the skills of the home. There are obviously many talented women who excel in homemaking!

I'm not one of them, but I have a strong desire to become one. The Bible teaches that "an excellent wife is the crown of her husband" ([Proverbs 12:4](#)). I don't know about you, but that appeals to me! Scripture also very clearly teaches that keeping a home is the primary responsibility of the wife ([1 Timothy 5:14](#)).

God has also been gracious enough to outline some of the duties of an excellent wife in the well-known poetry of Proverbs 31. If you, like me, desire improvement in this area, maybe you should read this portion of Scripture, then grab a piece of notebook paper and some scotch tape and display your own list of qualities that you'd like to see in your life. You will find that this list is immensely practical, for an excellent wife is:

- A hard worker
- Enterprising
- Diligent
- Wise with her money
- Healthy
- Conscious of the future
- Skillful in her home
- Kind and hospitable
- Careful about her appearance

If God can change my heart in this area, what can He do in yours?

A Quick-Start Guide to Decluttering



I'm sure you're realizing that it will be tough to homeschool if you can't even step through the clutter in your living room. Becoming a good manager of your home is key to succeeding in homeschooling. I'll soon give you lots of principles to help you conquer clutter, but if you're wanting to get started today, here is a quick-start guide:

First, I'd like you to make a time schedule.

Make sure you have scheduled *daily* times for **maintaining your home**. Don't forget to include times to cook meals, time to plan menus and shop, and time to do the dishes after EVERY meal! Don't forget to plan for doing laundry — folding and putting it away as well as washing it! You should also add chores to each day such as...

- Sunday — touch up bathrooms, vacuum
- Monday — pay bills and file paperwork
- Tuesday — dust, water plants, vacuum
- Wednesday — clean bathrooms, empty garbage
- Thursday — change bed linens, mop floors
- Friday — do seasonal cleaning jobs
- Saturday — rest

Your list will look different from this, but you get the idea. Plan, plan, plan...

You might be thinking, “This is all great, but how can I clean when it’s such a mess to start with?”

Well, if this is your situation, I’d like to give you the advice I received from the book *Organizing from the Inside Out*, by Julie Morgenstern. She tells us to take about an hour a day, each day, for as long as it takes to get your house in order — whether it takes a week, a month, or a year!

I’d recommend you start in the kitchen, since we women spend so much time here and its efficiency helps keep everything else running smoothly.

Now it’s time to make a good plan.

- ❑ First, **analyze the room** to discover which parts are well organized and which parts are NOT. Figure out why the bad spots are causing such problems. Is it just too inconvenient to put things away when there is really no good spot to put them? Is the room so ugly you just can’t stand to be in there?
- ❑ Second, you need to **develop a strategy**. In her book, Julie tells about how she visited a kindergarten classroom and noticed how well organized it was. She realized that the organization is natural because:
 1. The room is divided into **activity zones** — art is over here, reading is over there, coats go there, etc.
 2. It’s easy to **focus** on one activity at a time — kids in the reading zone aren’t fiddling with their lunch boxes, etc.
 3. Items are stored at their **point of use** — scissors aren’t with the Bob books, phonics charts aren’t in the bathroom, etc.
 4. It’s fun to put things away because **everything has a home** — and what bright, colorful, clearly labeled containers they are!

5. There is a **visual menu** of everything that's important — when you step into the room, you know that learning the alphabet is *important* to these students!

- Third, **define your zones**. Using a sheet of paper from your notebook, make a list of the **activities** you need to perform in each room, as well as the **supplies** you'll need to make it happen, and what kind of **storage space** you'll need when it's time to put those supplies away. For instance, you know in your kitchen that you'll need a place for cleaning dishes. The supplies you'll need are dishcloths and towels, soap, a dish drainer, etc. You also need to designate a cupboard (maybe under the sink) for storing these supplies. Do you get the idea?
- Fourth, use more paper to **map out how the space should** be. This is fun! It's like being on an episode of Home & Garden Television! Measure furniture, plot and plan, and get ready to make some important changes!

Now you're probably chomping at the bit to have a beautiful home again, but wait! This is going to take time, and the bigger your mess, the more time it will take. Make yourself stick to your time schedule and only work on your house when your schedule says you can. Use a timer if you have to, but don't forget to do everything else in your life as well!

(What good practice this is in self-discipline! 😊)

During your daily clean-up times, you might like to have the following supplies handy:

- Trash bags (yes, you're going to have to get rid of some things)
- Three boxes, labeled "Put away", "Give away", and "Throw away"
- Cleaning supplies (you might as well wipe out the cabinets while they're empty)
- Manila folders (for organizing your paperwork)

- Post-it notes
- A planning notebook
- Beverages and snacks to help you keep your energy up

When your clean-up plan is made and your kitchen is organized, ask your husband which room *he* would like you to do next. This will show him you care, and I guarantee he's going to love having a peaceful, organized home to come home to!

(You'll also be amazed how much better the children behave when their toys are organized and not spread all over the house.)