

Heart and Home Harmony

Aiming for hearts, homes, and lives in harmony with:
God and His Church, and the rest of His creation through the Holy Spirit.

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To Mothers (and Fathers)

Author unknown

* Have you ever *
* administered judg- *
* ment and discipline *
* while refusing to lis- *
* ten to their side of it? *
* Even our all-righteous *
* God is willing to rea- *
* son with us sinful *
* people. **Come now,** *
* **and let us reason** *
* **together, saith the** *
* **LORD: though your** *
* **sins be as scarlet,** *
* **they shall be as** *
* **white as snow;** *
* **though they be red** *
* **like crimson, they** *
* **shall be as wool.** *
* (Isaiah 1:18) *
* Communication *
* is so important. God *
* communicates His *
* mercy to us. When *
* problems arise with *
* your children or with *
* anybody, please don't *
* be unreasonable. *
* —RM *

Now I lay me down to sleep—
Don't want to sleep, I want to think,
I didn't mean to spill that ink;
I only meant to softly creep
Under the desk an' be a bear—
Tain't bout the spanking that I care.

'f she'd only let me 'splain and tell
Just how it was an accident,
An' that I never truly meant
An' never saw it 'til it fell.
I feel a whole lot worse 'n her;
I'm sorry an' I said I were.
I s'pose if I'd just cried a lot
An' choked all up like sister does,
An' acted sadder than I wuz,
An' sobbed about the "naughty spot,"
She'd said: "he shan't be whipped, he shan't,"
And kissed me—but, somehow I can't.

But I don't think it's fair a bit,
That when she talks and talks at you
An' you wait patient till she's through,
An' start to tell your side of it,
She says: "Now that'll do, my son,
I've heard enough!"—'fore you've begun.

'f I should die before I wake—
Maybe I ain't got any soul;
Maybe there's only just a hole
Where 't ought to be—there's such an ache
Down there somewhere! She seemed to think
That I just loved to spill that ink!

What Does God Think?

In January I made an unexpected trip south to Joshua Bauman's funeral. In talking to friends and acquaintances (and getting up to date on others), I noticed a disturbing phenomenon. Few who were part of a local brotherhood 8-20 years ago are still part of the same brotherhood of believers today. It wasn't jobs or church expansion that made the separations either!

What does God think, after Jesus prayed for the believers to be one, even as He and the Father are one, so that the world would know that Jesus was sent of God? (John 17:20-23) Jesus not only prayed for oneness, he also commanded it. (John 13:34-35) Furthermore, the scriptures state that we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. (1 John 3:13-16.) To top that off, the Bible also says, **If a man say, I love God and hates his brother he is a liar,** 1 John 4:20. In light of these words of God as recorded in the Bible, what do you think that God thinks? Where do we stand? Does it matter to us?

Are we justifying the lack of love in our relationships to our brothers? Are we like Cain (1 John 3:11&12) and have killed our brother because he was more righteous than we are? Maybe we haven't killed him physically, but how about assassinating his character by abusive talk and slander? Control freaks expect total 100% submission to their ideas and practices, OR ELSE! Did you ever ponder what John wrote about in 1 John 2:15&16 about the pride of life? Must you be in control, in power?

What about repentance, restoration, and restitution? God asks for it, if

we are to be in his will.

Jesus says, if you love me keep my commandments. (John 14:15) Also he says that except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20)

Oh, fellow believers in Christ, let us be careful that we do not lose our first love. We so desperately need Jesus as the author and the finisher of our faith. I trust if we have a single eye toward Jesus, we will indeed do His will..

With love,

Joy and four girlfriends are spending a month in Romania to help in institutions where a shortage of workers leave the children starved for love and attention. When they first got there the babies were quarantined because of measles and flu. Till it was lifted they had plenty to do helping the elderly and handicapped and other children. The needs they see are overwhelming. They realize that where ever there are people on this earth there are needs. If we open our eyes and look around, there is something for each to do to be of service. As you have opportunity, use your talents for good. However few our talents may be, they count and must be used if we are to live.

God be with you.

Heart and Home Harmony

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The question has been asked: Is cleanliness next to godliness?

When the subject of being clean is mentioned, my first thought is of my house, probably because it's often not as clean as I would like. *I'm not qualified to teach about that subject.* But as I pondered the idea of cleanness, I decided I do have something to say...

Cleanliness Is Godliness

A place for everything proper
and everything in its proper place.

by Rachel, with Luke Martin



Godliness is conforming to God's laws and wishes. How is that the same as cleanliness?

What is the definition of clean? A house free of dust, dirt, and clutter is said to be clean. But tools used for surgery must be germ free to be clean. In a clean garden, we expect lots of dirt and bacteria, but not weeds. A clean heart is free of sin. You get the idea...

Cleanliness is: a place for everything proper and everything in its proper place.

When God made the heavens and the earth and everything in them, He put everything in place and said it was good. All was peace and order, serving a purpose.

It was not long before man began to put things out of place. Adam and Eve took some fruit and put it exactly where God had said to not put it. The result was that their hearts were no longer clean.

Through the ages, this tendency of earthy, man of dust to put things out of place has resulted in suffering, pollution, chaos, confusion, and death,

both physically and spiritually.

Thankfully, God is not only the creator, but also the restorer. In the natural polluted environment, nature is working to heal and clean it. For our spiritual death, God has kept the promise he gave to Adam and Eve to send a Redeemer to make us clean and put us back into fellowship with God. Those who are washed by the blood of God's Son, become part of His Kingdom on earth. Though the world is confused, the Christian's life is in place.

How can we become part of this Kingdom? By repenting and turning from our uncleanness to Christ. If we open the door of our heart and let His Spirit enter, He will clean it of sin and dwell there. His Spirit will empower and teach us, helping us to get all the details of our life in order. He gave us the Bible to show His plan.

Clean in Body, Soul, and Spirit

You are in God's plan. He made you a living soul. You had no choice in the matter. Now you have no choice but to choose what to do with your mind, your hands, your tongue, your

emotions and sexuality and all the other things God gave you.

I dare say that you have messed up. **For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,** Romans 3:23. Now let God give you a clean slate.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God, as one alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Romans 6:12-13 MKJV

This brings us to another aspect of cleanliness. Besides being in the proper place, something clean has a purpose and everything not in a proper place, diminishes the usefulness and worth of something. When we yield ourselves to God, we are clean because He restores us to our intended purpose. Gone is the sin that contaminates us and disconnects us from God's perfect plan.

The proper place for our talents is to use them for what is right, not to bury them. (Matthew 25:14-30.) He made us to serve.

But Jesus called them and said, You know that the rulers of the nations exercise dominion over them, and they who are great exercise authority over them. However, it shall not be so among you. But whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:25-28 MKJV Jesus asks us to take our place of a servant like He did.

If we are selfish, unclean habits will take over. Our flesh must be put in its place of subjection to the will of our Creator so that our soul and spirit can live. If one never does anything higher than serving himself, he will feel worthless. He would be as useful as a dirty or broken tool or one that is lost because it wasn't put away. Serving self brings death.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6. Fill your mind with clean things. Seek clean company. **Do not be deceived; evil companionships corrupt good habits.** 1 Corinthians 15:33. Not only our bodies, but also our soul and spirit need clean food and surroundings to stay healthy.

God planned that sex is for marriage and marriage is till death do part. He planned that husbands are the head of the home. It is a blessing when things are in place according to God's purposes. But alas! Countless children and adults feel worthless because they have been misused and displaced by abuse and divorce.

It always feels good to be clean and have things in place. Even physical cleanliness and order affect our feelings of worth. At times when circumstances have left me feeling worthless, I decide to clean an area I'd been neglecting. It makes me feel worth something.

In serving others, we may have to get down and dig in the dirt or do other things that make us dirty, or even bloody. But that dirt does not make us feel worthless.

If we feel better after taking a bath or cleaning our room, how much deeper is the good feeling when we are washed the whole way through, clear

to the heart, and are of use to God and to others?

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:14. Washed white in blood? Do we understand how this can be?

A Clean Home

God commanded Adam to work and keep his garden home. A home with everything in its proper place is a safe, clean haven to nurture new, clean souls sent from heaven.

Children make a lot of messes and put a lot of things out of place until they learn to take care of themselves. To provide clean food, clothes, and a house for them may become an anxious burden, especially when there are many little ones.

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For the nations seek after all these things. For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:31-33 MKJV

If we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, eventually other things will fall into place.

Children need a clean spiritual environment, with love, care, teaching, and training. They need to learn that they are needed and that there is a place for them in the home and in the Kingdom of God. As they learn how to clean themselves and their surroundings, how to use their talents, and learn what is important, they are an asset to

the world.

If dirt and clutter create a hazard and a hindrance, because the parents are too busy seeking carnal pleasure, the children are likely to be a mess on into adulthood. If the children's souls are polluted with criticism and neglect, so that the house can be made spotless, the home is not clean. If the children's hearts are smudged so that the walls can be washed and decorated, the house is being used to serve the parents ego. The proper purpose of a house is to promote the well being of all who live there.

The Spirit and the Word will help each member in the home take his proper place. He will help us place in our habitation things that have a proper purpose and clean out what does not.

The Clean Church

Those whom God has called out from the world constitute the church. Christ gave himself for the church; **That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:25-27**

I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every one that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. John 15:1-4 MKJV. Obedience to the Word cleans us.

Clean Judgment

Since most people want others to think they are clean, an effective way to insult them is to let them know that they are not as clean, whether physically or spiritually, as you think they should be.

Is it our place to tell others that they are not clean?

Sometimes, if our judgment is true, it is the kind thing to do.

A servant can help. He will know that he cannot see in others hearts. Therefore, he will only judge according to actions and what he can see. He will consider that others usually do not see the whole picture. Unless he knows all the circumstances that one is in, it may be hard to judge if one rightly placed his priorities. Sometimes there is a place for fingerprints on a window.

A servant will be gentle and humble. He will realize that the truth can hurt. Also, he will humbly consider it if someone thinks he should clean up.

A hypocrite cannot help, even for a speck! He should not judge. **Hypocrite! First cast the beam out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to cast the splinter out of your brother's eye.** Matthew 7:5

Too often we try to clean others up and put them in their place. We think that would solve our problems.

The Bible speaks of a clean, white dress to typify righteousness. **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** Revelation 19:8. If someone throws mud at us and we try to wipe it off, we will just smear it around. Christ gave us our clean, white dress. Since it belongs to

Him, we can let Him take care of it.

We may have a servant's heart but sometimes we fail because we have things to learn. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord that teaches us, humbles us, and cleans away the dross to purify us. After all, we want to be clean. We don't want to be out of our place.

Cleanliness is godliness if we have the right concept of clean: a place for everything proper and everything in its proper place. To find out what is proper, read the Maker's manual. Its principles and the Spirit of Christ teach us where everything belongs. His purposes for us will put us in tune with His perfect harmony.

Let's go back to Adam and Eve and look at what they did after they disobeyed God. (Gen. 3) They became afraid. They unsuccessfully tried to remedy their problem and tried to hide from God. When God confronted them, they shifted the blame.

We act the same way when we are out of our place. We fear and try to hide. We try to make our own remedies and we shift blame. If only we could clean others up and put them in their place, then things would be better. And so we try.

But it doesn't work.

God's way does. We must get in our place of a servant, first to God then to our fellow man. A servant will not try to lord it over others. The clean know that their connection is through submission to Christ. The unclean try to force a connection by bringing others into submission to themselves.

Now that I have every thought and period in place here, hopefully right and sensibly, I must get busy

Keep your health, your lungs, and your environment clean, while you clean—with non-toxic cleaners.

All-Purpose Soft Soap*

This disinfecting soap can be used for dishes, handwashing, floors, stoves, refrigerators, sinks, and hands. It's mild to the skin but effective and it keeps insects away

- 5 cups grated castile soap
- ½ cup baking soda
- 1 teaspoon borax
- 6 cups hot peppermint tea
- 1 teaspoon eucalyptus essential oil

Put soap into a 3-quart stainless steel saucepan and add hot mint tea. Simmer for fifteen minutes on low heat. Add soda, borax, and eucalyptus oil. Store in a labeled plastic jug or squirt bottle. Shake before using.

Disinfecting Spray Cleaner*

- 1 teaspoon sodium lauryl sulfate
- 1 teaspoon borax
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 cups hot water
- ¼ teaspoon eucalyptus essential oil
- ¼ teaspoon lavender essential oil
- 3 drops tea tree essential oil

Mix ingredients and pour in spray bottle for use and storage. Spray as needed on any surface except glass. Scrub and rinse with a clean, damp cloth.

Lime Dish Detergent Powder*

- ½ cup clay powder
- 2 tablespoons lime essential oil
- 4 cups sodium lauryl sulfate
- 6 cups baking soda

Wear a dust mask. Mix clay and oil, then, combine with the soda and

sodium lauryl sulfate. Mix well.

Laundry Concentrate*

- ¼ cup clay powder
- 2-3 tbsp. essential oil of your choice
- 13 cups borax
- 12 cups baking soda
- 4 cups sodium lauryl sulfate

Wear a dust mask. Using a small whisk or fork, mix the clay powder with the essential oil. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Use 1/8 cup per load.

Lanolin & Cedar Wool Wash*

The lanolin in the formula restores wool to some of its original luster and water repellence; cedar essential oil keeps moths away.

- 2 cups grated castile soap
- 6 cups boiling water
- 1 tablespoon sodium lauryl sulfate
- 1 teaspoon cedar oil
- 1 teaspoon lanolin

Put soap into ½ gallon glass or heavy plastic jar. Add the boiling water and let the mixture sit for half an hour; then stir in other ingredients. Store in capped jar. Use approximately ¼ cup per sink load of woollens or 1 cup per automatic load.

These ingredients are available from SunFeather Natural Soap Co., 1551 Hwy 72, Potsdam NY 13676. (315-265-3648) www.sunsoap.com

We get 50 lb bags of animal grade baking soda at the feed store. Recently I decided to experiment with the grime in our old-fashioned, hard-to-clean bathroom sink. I sprinkled baking soda in it and scrubbed it with a cloth wet with vinegar. It did a good job. —RM

*Used by permission. Condensed from Herbal Homekeeping by Sandy Maine. Published by Interweave Press. Available in bookstores.

In Quest Of Truth Beware Of Religious Fanaticism

Jesus came to give an abundant life. (John 10:10). God is interested in blessing his creation. The word, gospel, as used in the Bible, means good tidings. Jesus preached the gospel. (Luke 4:18.) In Matthew, Jesus taught that his followers were to be a light to the world. (Matt. 5:14-16) It is recorded in the scriptures that we are to study, to show that, as a workman for Jesus, we are approved in how we understand the truth. (2Tim. 2:15). Many who are disciples of Jesus bear the message of God's love toward man, that, in his mercy, out of the goodness of his heart, he gave his only son that whosoever believes should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16).

But I want you to beware of a world-view, a way of thinking that is dangerous, dark and is not the gospel, or a light to the world. Many who profess to be Christian are caught up in this darkness, that they call light. Please read on and consider what may happen.

A person is faced with a particular question or dilemma. He says to himself, **If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given to him,** James 1:5. So he prays to God for wisdom, to be taught. After some prayer and study, or listening to other people's views, he comes to a conclusion. He reasons that the Lord led and taught him; therefore, he thinks that he now has the infallible truth of God.

Since he reckons that the Spirit guided him to this truth, he will conduct himself as if he cannot be wrong! So, he never reexamines his position. Even if someone should show him something different from the Bible, he will reject the light. (Some even go to

the extreme of saying they don't need the Bible anymore, because they now has the Holy Spirit of God in him.)

Then when he meets another person who arrived at a different conclusion than his, he will probably accuse him of having a bad spirit, of being dishonest in his study, or of being a heretic. Is this love? Can he esteem other better than himself?

Is someone a heretic just because he disagrees with us? It is the one or ones that arrive at some premature decision and form a clique based on it that are the heretics.

Another amazing thing I find is, that often, the narrow-minded, dogmatic person or persons who expect others to line up with their doctrine will accuse and reject an honest, truth seeking brother. All the while they will tolerate and even justify lying and other immorality to go on in the church, or brotherhood, or family.

We need to always keep in mind when searching for an answer to a question, that Jesus said, **you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."** **This is the first commandment. And the second is like this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.** (Mark 12:30-31)

Your decisions and actions will be judged in light of these two commands of God. All God's commands are true. Truth will stand, and we ought to stand with truth.

May God bless you as you exercise yourself in the "faith that works by love."

A brother in Christ,
Luke M. Martin