

Spring Cleaning

By [Karen Ehman](http://www.proverbs31.org) www.proverbs31.org (April 11, 2008)

"But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator..." Colossians 3:8-10

Devotion: My mom was a fanatic about spring cleaning. Each year in April or May, when the first string of 60 degree days made its appearance in chilly Michigan, my brother and I grabbed our brushes and buckets and helped mom "spring clean" the house. She would open the windows, letting in the crisp spring air. We washed walls and windows; cleaned carpets and closets. We took down, washed and re-hung curtains. We beat rugs and straightened shelves, threw away broken toys and donated too small clothing. We even had to de-junk and organize the garage--the most dreaded task. Even though my mom didn't particularly enjoy this yearly routine, in our family, it was not an option. She taught us that if you were consistent in keeping up on these nasty chores, they could be tackled *before* they reached the point of no return. It was hard enough to wash down those walls with a year of accumulated residue from our oil burning furnace on their surface. Just imagine how difficult the job would be after two or three years!

I will be honest and say it that even though I dreaded those few days each year in the 70's and 80's, I also loved the feeling that I got when spring cleaning week was over. The house's surfaces seemed to sparkle. The air smelled lemony fresh. The shelves and closets and drawers looked neat and tidy. And, as an added bonus, this spring cleaning excursion often unearthed some prized possession I thought had been long lost. Once it was a favorite Skipper doll. Another year, my bright red Etch-a-Sketch. Later a cherished issue of Tiger Beat magazine. If I hadn't participated in this annual ritual, I'd never have rediscovered these important items!

Our homes are not the only things in need of a good spring-cleaning. Often it is our hearts that really require some purging. We must be in the habit of looking deep into ourselves to rid our hearts of any feelings, habits or emotions that are making them dingy and dull; envy, strife, jealousy, hatred, discontentment, impatience, unkindness, revenge. Though these reside in our hearts, they often manifest themselves in our tongues.

When we make the effort to bring our hearts to God asking Him to do what only He can do, He will forgive our sinful attitudes and resulting actions and make our hearts new again. Then maybe we'll be able to unearth some cherished treasures we thought were long lost; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self control.

What do you say? Is it time you gave your heart a good spring-cleaning?

Dear Lord, Forgive me for sometimes paying more attention to cleaning my house than to cleaning my heart. Please rid my heart of anything that is displeasing to You. I give You the bucket and brushes. Make my heart fit for service to the King. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps: What counterproductive or sinful emotions of the heart do you most struggle with? What attitudes can you ask God to replace them with? If it is envy you often feel, ask for contentment; if it is impatience--calm acceptance; if you wrestle with revenge, ask God to teach you true forgiveness. For every offensive attitude and action God has a solution for you. Ask Him to replace the old with the new!

Reflections: What attitudes of the new Christian life do you miss the most? Did you have a good dose of patience or kindness or joy when you first became a believer? Ask God to restore these to you as you seek to return to your first love.

Grab a concordance--whether paper or cyber--and locate some scripture verses that speak to your particular situation. Commit to memory a few of these verses. Whenever you face a time of testing, turn to your arsenal of scripture to combat the blows the enemy seeks to throw your way.

Power Verses: **Psalm 51:10**, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." **Ezekiel 36:26** "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."