

Spring Cleaning

Written by Elder Liu Kerh Li
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Christmas has hardly passed and the Chinese Lunar New Year is approaching. The shopping malls have started displaying all sorts of New Year goods. Many families have also begun their preparations for the New Year. In keeping with Chinese customs of remove the old to usher in the new, many have begun buying new clothes, new shoes, etc. A practice not to be missed is spring-cleaning. Each household, to differing extent, will take this opportunity to make time to clean up their home, including previously neglected corners. Also, unwanted items will be discarded. After the spring cleaning, the whole place is filled with a new and invigorating lease of life.

Just as we, in ushering in the new year, spring clean our house, we should also be concerned about the situation of our inner being and perform a spiritual spring cleaning. The benefits of spring-cleaning the house is transient. Shortly after the New Year, dust will begin to pile up and the entire effort spent barely impacts upon our true state of happiness and inner peace. A spring cleaning for our inner being, however, is different. It affects our spiritual well-being and thus has far-reaching benefits. If we do not pay special attention to get rid of the filth in our hearts, it will be etched in our lives and deter us from living an abundant Christian life.

How do we begin this spiritual cleanup? Our first priority is to get rid of the 'dirty stuff.' Reflect on our past and our current living to assess what we have done and what is not pleasing to God. It could be a bad habit or a mistake that you frequently make. If we want to live a meaningful new year, we must deal with these sins and remove them from our lives. Otherwise, the new and the current year are no different. Because of these obstructing sins, we cannot receive God's blessing. Psalm 51 records David's prayer of repentance. In particular, in verses 10-12, he says, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." Pray that the Lord will help us gain victory over sin and may the Lord restore us His grace.

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A determination to rid of your bad habits is a good start. Spring cleaning symbolizes bidding "farewell to the old and ushering in the new." Once we get rid of those bad habits, we should also replace them with good habits. We can start with the most fundamental spiritual exercise – Quiet Time. The point of keeping our Quiet Time Bible is to build a life that draws close to God. Hence, it is crucial to read God's Word - the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Through the Bible, God enables us to understand His heart's desires. It teaches us how to live right. The other part of Quiet Time prayer. Jesus encourages His disciples to pray to Him: "Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24). We communicate with the Lord through prayer and we confide in Him what is in our hearts and our needs. The Lord will answer our prayers in His time and according to His will. In this way, we will experience the reality of the Lord.

In this new 2014, let us live holy lives for our Lord so as to please Him. Through this, we will experience His bountiful grace and strength.