

# Stain-Free While Managing the Mess of Life

Isn't it amazing how quickly life can become a mess?

I mean sure, if your life is like mine, most of the time it's messy. But toss in a severe cold that takes out each family member a week at a time. Sprinkle in some unexpected choices your children make that throw you for a loop, and you've got quite the chaos!



I was contemplating our cluttered life the other day while trying to summit a mountain of dirty dishes that had formed overnight.

For the longest time, I have been extremely appreciative of our dishwasher. We fill it to the brim every day and hardly come close to finishing them all. And then, the next day it starts all over again.

Some of us (not all) are old enough to remember life without a dishwasher. My parents waited until all four of us graduated high school before buying both a dishwasher and microwave. My mother would say, "Why do I need a dishwasher? I have two-legged ones that work just fine!"

You never knew struggle as a child until you had to wash the

dishes by hand. Traumatic memories came from standing at the kitchen sink, peering over a heap of bubbles. Not only did my brother and I severely suffer from sibling rivalry. But then we had to work together to get every used dish in the house washed, rinsed, dried and put away. My mother (bless her heart!) was determined to train us in this. Miraculously, we came out on the other side well disciplined in how to keep the kitchen clean.

## **Dirtier Than These Dishes**

As I scrape up the dried-on cereal and soak the coffee mug in my own kitchen sink, I think about how messy my heart gets when my life is all mucked up. The gunk of frustration rubs off on me when I am overtaxed. The sticky goo of impatience smears on to my mind when my boys decide not to listen. Pretty soon, my complicated life has spread it's filth on to my heart.

And the mess in my heart is much dirtier than these dishes.



Wouldn't it be nice if we could place our hearts through an automatic wash cycle?

Toying with the idea, I snickered to myself, the echo of dishes rattling in the rack of my dishwasher. In the next instant (\*DING!\*), a thought came to mind.

We **do** have a spiritual spin cycle for our heart. We **do** have

supernatural suds that wash the deepest stain away.

As I paused to contemplate the spiritual meaning of my daily duties, a couple verses popped into mind.

*But if we walk in the light, as (God) is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7*

A few lines later, John adds...

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

## ***What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

Now many of you out there are nodding your heads, "Yes, yes... We know." The biggest deal of becoming a Christian is how Jesus' blood washes you "white as snow".

Yet, what we often tend to neglect in our regular, consistent, daily journey with God is the ritual of repentance. Each day, we trudge through this life, collecting smears of sin and the gunk of offense. As stinking layer upon layer loads up on us, we stumble. It interferes with the closeness God desires to have with us. It harms our relationships, as we fling it upon others.

Lately, I have found a freedom in beginning each morning with a Daily Prayer. I have no idea what this day will hold. I have no confidence that I will make it through in my own strength. So, before setting my feet on the ground, I surrender to God in prayer all that I am and have authority over. I return to Him, recognizing where I have failed. Remembering how I am wholly dependent on Him to be of any good today.



John Eldredge taught me the value of the Daily Prayer in my favorite book [Walking with God](#). There are a few different versions of the prayer you can find on his website [here](#).

The only way we can keep our hearts and lives stain-free is regularly returning to a place of renewal we find in repentant prayer.

Daily Prayer cleanses us and aligns us with God's plan and purposes for us.

Pressing the buttons on the dishwasher, beeps echo through my home. I smile in realizing I don't have to wait a while for the "wash cycle" of repentance to work on me. God's repentance is ready, instant and available any time I need it.

Suddenly, my youngest son rushes in the room. "Mom! I forgot that I need a costume for school tomorrow. And why cant I play video games? All my friends get to play as long as they want!"

Here comes another sticky mess!