



# Orderliness

vs. Confusion

**Orderliness is keeping everything that is under our jurisdiction neat, clean, functional, and in its proper place.**

**O**rderliness is knowing what to remove from my life and surroundings and having the courage to do it.

## The Second Law of Thermodynamics:

Without intervention, things tend to go from order to disorder.

*“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . . . Let all things be done decently and in order.”*

—I Corinthians 14:33, 40



**C**leanliness is not next to Godliness; it is part of Godliness.

*“That ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.” —Leviticus 10:10*

## Definition

Several Hebrew words are translated *order*. One such word is *'arak*. It means “to arrange, set, put, or lay in order.” Another word is *taqan*. This word describes Solomon’s setting “in order many proverbs” (Ecclesiastes 12:9). It means “to equalise, make straight, arrange in order, compose.”

The Greek word *epidiorthoo* means “to straighten further, to arrange additionally” and is translated *set in order*. While this word is used only once, in Titus 1:5, other Greek words translated *order* have similar meanings. For example, the word used most frequently is *taxis*. It means “an arranging, arrangement.”

Interestingly, *taxis* is a derivative of *tasso*, a word similar in meaning to the Hebrew word *'arak*. Both of these words can be used to refer to a military company that keeps rank, such as the valiant men of war who came to make David king. “All these men of war, that could keep rank [*ma`arakah*—derivative of *'arak*], came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king” (I Chronicles 12:38).

## How to Be Orderly

### 1. Follow a wise schedule.

God’s first act in creation was a demonstration of orderliness.

He created light and then separated the light from the darkness. “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Genesis 1:5).

God designed the day for labor and the night for rest. Jesus stated, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). He also intended the day to begin in the evening. “And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:5). The hours before midnight have been suggested to be more beneficial for sleep than the hours after midnight. The time-honored proverb, “Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise,” would affirm this suggestion.

The truth of this saying is guaranteed if we meditate on Scripture while going to sleep and waking up in the morning. “Blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. . . . whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1–3). By beginning our day in the evening, we can experience creative thinking during the night in the same way that David did. “I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons” (Psalm 16:7).

As orderly people, we should make the best use of every minute,

because time is one of our most valuable, yet most limited, assets.

## 2. Listen to orderly music.

Orderly music is consistent with the nature and ways of God. God has described Himself as the beginning and the ending: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Revelation 1:8). Orderly music has a beginning and an ending and structured progressions in between that lead to resolution.

God is a triune God; each Person in the Trinity is in harmony with the others. God the Father is preeminent, just as the melody in music should be dominant. Jesus subjected Himself to the will of the Father and magnified the Father through His obedience. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). This is the function of harmony in orderly music. It is under the control of the melody and enhances and reinforces it.

The rhythm in music is analogous to the Holy Spirit. He did not come to magnify Himself but rather the Father and the Son. He did not come to draw attention to Himself but to glorify the Father and the Son. When rhythm becomes dominant and independent of the melody and the harmony, it causes the music to be disorderly.

God is the Creator and has infinite variety in what He creates. Likewise, orderly music has recurring themes, but the identical melody, harmony, or rhythm does not repeat itself more than once. Disorderly music often emphasizes repetition. After three or four repetitions of either a melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic progression, the listener either reacts to it or

becomes passive by it and addicted to it. Those addicted to disorderly music are motivated to violate the order of Godly thinking, behavior, and relationships.

## 3. Practice orderly behavior.

Orderly behavior is in harmony with the will of God and produces the fruit of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22–23). Disorderly conduct is described in Galatians 5:19–21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Perverted behavior is taking that which God created for one purpose and using it for an adverse and damaging purpose. God refers to immorality and perversion as "confusion." (See Leviticus 18:23, 20:12.)

## 4. Maintain clean surroundings.

Clutter breeds filth and confusion. The saying, "cleanliness is next to Godliness" is not quite accurate, because cleanliness is indeed part of Godliness. (See Exodus 19:10–11, Leviticus 10:10, and II Corinthians 6:17.)

God illustrated the need for cleanliness in the world by creating scavenging animals, bringing regular rains, and causing dead matter to decompose and return to dust.

Orderliness requires that we keep only those things that are



**O**rderliness is having a place for everything and everything in its place.

Clutter is the enemy of order. Clutter is what we would never remember having if our houses burned down.

*"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* —Luke 12:15



The power of order is demonstrated by an army of locusts. Though locusts are small, when they come together in huge swarms, the ground actually shakes under their feet.





**W**here there is disorder, there is uncleanness. Where there is uncleanness and filth, there is usually moral corruption.

As you clean out cluttered drawers, remember that an empty drawer is a clean drawer.

Keeping possessions organized and in good working order is a way of expressing gratefulness to God for providing them.

**The chipmunk illustrates orderliness by designing its home with a room specific to each need. In their underground burrows, chipmunks build storage rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and even toilets.**



needed, have a place for everything we keep, and keep things in good repair.

### 5. Have order in God's house.

Church order begins with qualified leadership. "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Timothy 3:5). Order also involves coming to the house of God with reverence for the King of all the earth.

Orderliness includes the sequence in which we give gifts to God. We are to give Him the firstfruits of all our increase, including the first part of our day, our week, and our income. "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9–10).

The four major functions of the first-century church are listed in Acts 2:42. The order of this list is significant: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Often, the last item in a Biblical list is the most important. In I Corinthians 13:13, love is listed last, but it is the most important. (See also II Peter 1:1–10 and Proverbs 6:16–19.)

Applying this principle to Acts 2:42 reveals that doctrine, fellowship, and communion are all important, but their primary function is to prepare the worshiper for powerful prayer. The goal of Jesus for His Church is that it be a "house of prayer for all people." (See Isaiah 56:7.)

Order within the church service is also necessary to avoid reaction by visitors and to convict them of their sin and bring them to repentance. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one

place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? . . . For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Corinthians 14:23–33).

### *Personal Evaluation*

#### **How orderly are you?**

- Do you begin your day with wise planning and quality time with the Lord?
- Do you go to bed early and go to sleep meditating on Scripture?
- Do you seek to discern God's will for every decision?
- Do you listen to music that is in harmony with the character of God and that is honoring to your parents and other Christians?
- Do your clothing and appearance reflect order and show respect for how God made you?
- Do you have an orderly system for necessary records?
- Do you maintain your home, yard, and car carefully?
- Do you have a place for everything and keep everything in its place, or do you own more than you can keep organized?
- Do you keep your home ready to receive guests on short notice?
- Do you come to God's house prepared to listen and give a testimony?
- Do you encourage younger brothers and sisters to be orderly and attentive?