Have you heard the saying, “Too much of a good thing?” How can a “good thing” be harmful? Shoes are a good thing. You probably have school shoes, church shoes, and play shoes. They each have their place to fit neatly in your closet. What if you had twenty pairs of shoes all over your closet floor, and you couldn’t even get to your clothes and other belongings? The shoes have become clutter and are no longer a good thing! Just as physical clutter can hinder your surroundings, so “spiritual clutter” can reduce your effectiveness for God’s kingdom. When a person becomes busy with Bible studies, fellowships, and other “good” activities but neglects his daily time with God, then the excess “good” has become harmful. Ask God to help you see any clutter that would keep you from His best.
Orderliness Overview

What Is Orderliness?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what orderliness means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of orderliness is “preparing myself and my surroundings so I will achieve the greatest efficiency.” Being efficient means you do a task successfully, without wasting time or energy. Your desk is one of your “surroundings.” You can prepare this place to be productive by organizing your school supplies so you can quickly find what you need for each assignment. The kitchen is another “surrounding” you can arrange so that you work more efficiently. You can keep stirring spoons next to the stove or store dishes near the dishwasher to avoid unnecessary trips around the kitchen. Another way to prepare for efficiency is to organize your time. Taking a few moments in the evening to tidy your room, choose your clothing, and plan the next day will help you save time and effort in the morning. Once you make the effort to establish order in your home, you will be amazed at how much extra time you will “find”!

The opposite of orderliness is disorganization. When your room is untidy and your day chaotic, your whole life can feel out of balance! Leaving your clothes on the floor of your room may seem easier than taking the time to put them where they belong. But, as the piles grow, more time will be spent searching to find the articles you want. However, if you maintain a system of tossing your dirty laundry into the hamper and keeping your clean clothes hung in the closet or neatly folded in a drawer, you will save time and bring order to your room! An undisciplined and disorganized person does not realize that clutter is a thief of his time, space, and peace.

The goal of orderliness, however, is greater than gaining more time and a better system of organization. The more significant reason for ordering your life is so you are more productive in serving God and others. Keeping this in mind will help you guard against frustration when your schedule is interrupted. What seems like an interruption may actually be God redirecting you to serve Him differently than you had planned. Company may unexpectedly stop by, or you may be asked to get a tool to help your Dad with a project. God may bring someone along who needs a listening ear or moment of prayer. Rejoice in what He allows and calmly trust that He always brings what is best. An orderly home will help you be ready for these changes. When everything is in its place, you will be ready to jump in with a smile and meet the needs around you.

Consistently keeping your belongings organized will help develop a habit that will bring peace and harmony to your life. When your possessions are left in disarray, you demonstrate ungratefulness, unconcern, and disrespect for what God and others have given you.
Orderliness in Scripture

Read aloud and discuss each verse, question, and concept.

Proverbs 2:1–6 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” What a privilege to study the rich truths of God’s Word, hide them in your heart, and apply them to daily life! These truths are priceless treasures, far above the value and beauty of rubies and diamonds. As you dig deeper into God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will be a radiant expression of His love. He will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD
We see examples of orderliness in God’s character in the following ways:

- At the beginning of creation, God organized time into day and night, seasons, and years. (See Genesis 1:5, 14.)
- God set clear boundaries between what is holy and what is unholy. (See Leviticus 10:9–11; Exodus 30:34–38.)
- God ordained a schedule of annual feasts so that Israel would have regular opportunities to draw near to Him. (See Leviticus 23:4–44.)
- Jesus will one day establish and order His kingdom on earth, ruling forever with a perfectly just government. (See Isaiah 9:7.)
- Before distributing the food, Jesus organized the crowd of 5,000 people into groups of fifty. (See Luke 9:13–15.)
- Knowing His time on earth was limited, Jesus arranged His schedule to make helping and healing people a priority. (See John 9:4.)
- The Holy Spirit organized the first century church by appointing leaders who would take care in the spiritual feeding of the flock of believers. (See Acts 20:28.)

ORDERLINESS IN MY LIFE
Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out orderliness daily.

- What excess possessions do I need to eliminate from my life and why? (See Luke 12:15; II Timothy 2:3–4.)
- When I find an item that someone has lost, what should I do with it? (See Deuteronomy 22:1–2.)
- Do I work at making my penmanship easy for others to read? (See Habakkuk 2:2.)
- Does the beginning of my day include seeking the Lord’s direction? (See Psalm 37:23.)
- In addition to keeping my appearance and surroundings tidy, how can I keep my heart and conscience cleansed? (See II Corinthians 7:1; Psalm 19:12–14.)
- What should my priorities be and why? (See Matthew 6:31–33.)
- Am I careful not to let good works and good character displace my “first love,” Jesus Christ? (See Revelation 2:2–5.)

QUALITY KEY VERSE

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” I Corinthians 14:40
Bible Story
NEHEMIAH CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

Nehemiah, a Jew carried away captive to Babylon, served as the Persian king’s cupbearer. He still loved Jerusalem and grieved because the city lay in ruin. After prayerfully seeking God and securing permission and funding from the king, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to organize the repair of the city wall. While rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah experienced great opposition from two enemies: Tobiah the Ammonite and his ally Sanballat. The determined leader did not allow their mocking to deter him, and in only 52 days, the protective, stone wall around Jerusalem was finished! At the dedication ceremony, Ezra the scribe read aloud from God’s Law, and the people celebrated with great joy and singing. Nehemiah served as governor of Jerusalem for the next twelve years and then returned to his duties in Babylon. After Nehemiah left, the people began to violate the laws of God they had promised to obey. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem after some time, he found that there was no room in the Temple to store what God had ordained to be kept there. What disorder did Nehemiah find in the Temple? What “clutter” had crept into the hearts of the people and displaced their love for God? Would Nehemiah be able to eliminate the clutter and restore order in the land?

BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS
Read Nehemiah 13:1–22 together and discuss the following questions:

1. What had the high priest Eliashib done for Tobiah the Ammonite? (See Nehemiah 13:4–5a.) Why was this wrong? (See Nehemiah 13:1–2, 7.)
   What unnecessary things are you allowing in your life?

2. What had God ordained to be kept in that large room? For whom were these items reserved? (See Nehemiah 13:5b.)
   What things are important to keep? How can you make room for the more essential items you need?

3. What did Nehemiah do when he learned about Eliashib’s action? (See Nehemiah 13:8.)
   What books, movies, music, and activities distract you from hearing God? What changes might you need to make in your life?

4. What was done after Tobiah’s possessions were removed? (See Nehemiah 13:9.)
   How does your family prepare the living area for company or family times together?

5. What had happened to the Levites? What did Nehemiah do to re-establish the care of the keepers of the Temple? (See Nehemiah 13:10–13.)
   Who has God placed in authority over you to help maintain order?

6. What were the people doing on the Sabbath? (See Nehemiah 13:15–17.) Why was this practice unacceptable? (See Nehemiah 10:31.)
   What good things create disorder when kept in the wrong place or used at the wrong time?

7. How did Nehemiah eliminate the buying and selling on the Sabbath? (See Nehemiah 13:19.)
   How can you guard against clutter among your possessions and your time?

8. What else did Nehemiah do to guard the Sabbath from distractions? (See Nehemiah 13:20–22.)
   God’s order of time provides for a day of rest and worship. (See Exodus 20:8–11.) What activities may detract from those purposes?
Memory Verse
I CORINTHIANS 14:33, 40

Play the game together to help the children commit I Corinthians 14:33, 40 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

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

I CORINTHIANS 14:33, 40

MEMORY VERSE GAME
Stop! And Go!

First, say the verse together several times. Then, with the teacher acting as a “policeman,” have the children begin quoting the verse again. Now, when the policeman holds out his hand, everyone immediately must stop saying the verse. Whoever does not stop immediately is out. When the policeman puts his hand back down, resume quoting the verse from the point where you last stopped. Play until one of the children thinks he can quote the verse from memory by himself. If successful, he becomes the policeman for another round of quoting the verse. After everyone has had a turn to say the verse by himself and become the policeman, end the game with the entire group saying the verse together from memory.

DOERS OF THE WORD

In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “promptly put away my clean clothes,” or “be peaceable in my interactions with others,” or “behave respectfully in church services.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ______________ _________________.
I ask that You would develop orderliness in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
INTRODUCTION

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the orderliness key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.

I Corinthians 14:40
“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Orderliness
Preparing myself and my surroundings so I will achieve the greatest efficiency.

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “be” and “will.” Younger children could point to the ABCs. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words instead of only the underlined words.
Application

AWAY WITH THIS MESS!

Supplies:

- A disorganized cupboard, closet, drawer, or bookshelf
- Cleaning tools, such as a broom or a dust cloth
- Three boxes labeled as follows: Throw Away, Give Away, Put Away

Instructions

Which areas in our home look disorganized? Today our goal is to eliminate clutter and organize an area so that we can be orderly and able to find what we need when we need it.

Let’s first remove everything from this location. (For example, take everything off the bookshelf or out of the dresser drawer and lay the items on a surface nearby.)

Now we need to dust the shelf, as well as wipe off all the items. Cleanliness is an important part of orderliness! Plus, many items lose their effectiveness if not cleaned. Once we have wiped everything off, let’s neatly replace the items that we want to store here.

What should we do with possessions that do not belong here? Let’s sort them into three boxes. The box labeled “Put Away” is where we will place items that belong elsewhere. If you want to keep an item that does not have a home, ask me where a good place would be. The box labeled “Give Away” is where we will put things that we no longer use, enjoy, or need, but may be useful to someone else. The box labeled “Throw Away” is where we will put trash or items that would not be used by anyone. (If you desire, you could use a small garbage can instead of the “throw away” box.) Now let’s complete our project by taking care of our three boxes.

After the area is decluttered, dusted, and reorganized, and the items in the boxes are taken care of, have everyone step back and admire their work. Look at this tidy area! Doesn’t this look neat and organized? Will this orderliness make it easier to find what you are looking for here? Will our possessions be more likely to stay in good condition? Who else may benefit from our time spent organizing this area?

*Completing this activity gives you an opportunity to check it off on the application chart on page 23!*

Tips for keeping everything in the right place:

1. Learn where each item belongs and why.
2. Immediately put away your belongings rather than setting them down anywhere.
3. Designate a gathering point to temporarily put items that need repair or a decision before being put away where they belong.
4. Set a time each week to deal with items at the designated gathering point.
5. As a family, walk through the house nightly to put things away and tidy up.
Nehemiah Cleanses the Temple

“And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff to Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense” (Nehemiah 13:8–9).
Hymn History

“This Is My Father’s World”

Sing “This Is My Father’s World” and read about the orderliness proclaimed by the hymn writer, Maltbie D. Babcock.

I’m going out to see my Father’s world.” These words were often heard as the young pastor went for a jog in the morning sunshine. His usual route involved running two miles to a certain hill and then back again. Sometimes he would run farther on to a bird sanctuary to see more of his “Father’s world.”

Rev. Maltbie D. Babcock’s vigorous morning exercise set the tone for his day—praise to God and enjoyment of life.

Rev. Babcock was a man of many talents. A brilliant scholar and athlete, he had been an expert swimmer and the captain of the collegiate baseball team. His musical interests had included directing the university orchestra, playing multiple instruments, and composing Godly music. Other talents involved his leading the university glee club, singing, and art. In his leisure time, he was also an avid fisherman.

Though he could have chosen from many different professions, Rev. Babcock’s love for the Lord led him to choose the pastoral ministry. During his first pastorate he composed the hymn, “This Is My Father’s World.”

This is my Father’s world,
And to my listening ears,
All nature sings and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

How was Rev. Babcock able to accomplish so much? One way was in prioritizing his time well. Every morning he had an hour scheduled for prayer. If he had not set that time aside, other tasks in his busy life would have easily crowded out his prayer time and hindered his relationship with the Lord. In his poem “Be Strong,” he wrote:

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift,
Shun not the struggle; face it;
’Tis God’s gift.

While in his early forties, Rev. Maltbie’s church gave him and his wife a very special gift—a trip to Egypt and Palestine. Sailing for home afterward, he took ill of a deadly fever, and the ship took him to Naples, Italy. He died there at the International Hospital on May 18, 1901. Six months later, his wife compiled and published his poems and hymns. Included in the collection was the hymn, “This Is My Father’s World.”

Orderliness is “preparing myself and my surroundings so I will achieve the greatest efficiency.” Certainly Rev. Maltbie’s life exemplified orderliness! Unaware of the shortness of his time on earth, he wisely arranged his days with purposeful planning, making times with the Lord a priority. His hymn points to his trust in an omnipotent God Who does all things well. May we stop and observe the beauty and order of creation, and learn to arrange our days so we may achieve greater efficiency for God!
This Is My Father’s World

Maltbie D. Babcock (1858-1901)  Franklin L. Sheppard (1852-1930)

1. This is my Father’s world, And to my listening ears,
   All nature sings, and round me rings The music of the spheres.
   This is my Father’s world, I rest me in the thought Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; His rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev’rywhere.

2. This is my Father’s world, The birds their carols raise;
   The morning light, the lily white Declare their Maker’s praise.
   This is my Father’s world, He shines in all that’s fair; In the hand the wonders wrought. Jesus Who died shall be satisfied, And earth and heav’n be one.

3. This is my Father’s world, O let me ne’er forget
   That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.
   This is my Father’s world, The battle is not done; Jesus Whom I love I shall not lose, His treasures all for me prepared.

Hymn Sheet Music
Word Search Answer Key

S C T C P I S A A G D L
S U R R O U N D I N G S
E E D J T D A S O I R U
N A F E T N I G D R E Y
I Q L F C B H N S A A N
L N E L I E T I C P T K
R O S E I C N H Z E E N
E H Y D I W I T E R S Z
D T M O A E R E L P T T
R A N N V D O S N Y S E
O R D E R D C C X C M W
L T C R O E R H E T Y N

Hymn History Bibliography


Recommended Resources

- **2019 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar**
- **Hymns for the Family CDs**
  (“This Is My Father’s World” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 4.)
- **The Power for True Success**
- **Character Cards**
- **Character Cards Memory Game**
- **Character Sketches, Volumes 1–3**
- **Achieving True Success**
- **My Heart Christ’s Home** by Robert Boyd Munger
- **Heroes of Faith: Susanna Wesley** in booklet or audio drama CD series
- **Creation Proclaims Series** by Dr. Jobe Martin and Dan Breeding
- **“How to Conquer the Tyranny of the Urgent”** (Message by Roger Magnuson, available at embassymedia.com.)
- **“Decluttering Your Home”**
  (Message by Kay Hill, available at embassymedia.com.)

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