

Decluttering for Spiritual Clarity

This free resource is provided by Daily Christian Affirmations as a guide to accompany the video [Minimalism for the Soul: How Decluttering Can Deepen Your Spiritual Journey](#), which can be found on YouTube.

Definitions

The term *declutter* is a very recently coined term in the English language. It appeared first in print only as recently as around 1949.¹ The word does not even appear in the 2001 edition of Webster's College Dictionary, which is by no means an abbreviated reference.

The volume does, however, include a very insightful and interesting definition of the word *clutter*. Let's take a look...

clutter /klütər/ *n* 1 UNTIDY STUFF an untidy collection of objects 2 DISORGANIZED MESS a condition of disorderliness or overcrowding 3 CONFUSING RADAR IMAGES images on a radar screen that hinder observation ²

The idea of clutter as something that gets in the way of what you really want to see, such as on a radar screen, is very apt for our study here. What's on your radar? What might be clouding your judgment or distorting your perspective?

Now let's see what Oxford Languages ³ has to say about the word declutter...

de-clut-ter /,dē'klədər/ *v* remove unnecessary items from (an untidy or overcrowded place)

While I can appreciate that this definition is nice and simple, nice and...*decluttered*, I don't find it entirely complete.

Clutter has to do with more than just objects or material things. Clutter is something that can take up space, attention (conscious and subconscious awareness) or resources (energy and time). So with that, I'd like to offer another way to define...

de-clut-ter the removal of unnecessary things that take up space in all its various forms

Do you have clutter?

How do you know if you have clutter in your life? How do you know if what you have is clutter or is something else? Maybe it's just a mess.

According to Melissa Dinwiddie, there is a difference between having a mess and having clutter. In her blog article *Mess vs. Clutter, and Why You Should Care*, she states a number of comparisons between mess and clutter. She states, "In short, if it's energizing you, it's mess. If it's draining you, it's clutter." ⁴

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A couple of other statements she makes that I find particularly helpful for determining if something is just a mess or is clutter are, “*Creating a mess often energizes and brings joy. Clutter drains energy and has no redemptive qualities. Mess is an inherent part of the creative process. Clutter is a massive block to creativity.*”

I think the main thing we can notice here about clutter is that it has an energy to it that is not helping us or serving us, though we may believe that it is. Rather, the energy accompanied by clutter weighs us down.

What does the Bible say about clutter?

As we’ve already seen, the term *declutter* did not appear in written form in the English language until approximately 1949. Obviously, then, you won’t find it in the Bible. Nor does the word *clutter* appear in scripture. So, we have to infer from the text of scripture how it can apply to the problem of clutter.

Let’s take a look at some Bible verses and be open to how the Spirit is speaking to us about clutter...

Luke 12:15 (CSB) quotes Jesus as saying, “He then told them, ‘Watch out and be on guard against all greed because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.’”

Here, Jesus tells us that our *life* does not come from material abundance. What do you suppose he’s referring to when he says our *life*? He certainly cannot be referring to our physical or biological life. Clearly he is referring to our *spiritual life*, our vital energy, that which inspires and sustains our souls.

Matthew 6:21 (NIV) In the great Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

If you treasure something, you want to hold on to it. If it is not a treasure to you, then you will have no problem in getting rid of it or letting it go. Jesus warns us that material possessions can actually lay a claim to our heart and ensnare our soul. We can begin to value them over the more important things in life.

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”

The author of Hebrews tells us that, even before we begin to address sin, we have the opportunity to deal with *anything and everything* that can even simply *hinder* us. Remember definition 3 of clutter from above? It says it’s something that can *hinder* observation. Things that hinder us can be things like obstacles, impediments, snares, blocks, etc.

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Titus 2:10 (NLT) “or steal, but must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.”

Here, the apostle Paul is addressing Titus regarding how slaves of that day should behave towards their masters. While I understand the topic of slavery may spark an emotional reaction, the point we want to focus on here is that *how* we live our lives will have an impact on others - making the teaching about God, or the gospel, either attractive or repelling. We have to ask ourselves, if we were to invite our neighbors into our homes (the practice of hospitality, which is another spiritual discipline), would they find our homes, and thereby our lives, attractive?

Matthew 6:10 (CSB) From the famous prayer we call “The Lord’s Prayer,” Jesus tells us to pray, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

God’s desire for us, his plan for us, is that we would live in such a way as to make the earthly place where we live more like the heavenly place where He dwells. Our physical world is to be managed and stewarded in such a way that reflects the Lordship of Jesus over creation. That’s what it means to be image-bearers of God. Can we honestly say that we are fulfilling that vocation if our lives are full of clutter?

1 Corinthians 7:30-31 (NIV) “...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.”

Paul encourages the Corinthians to keep a proper perspective on material things. They will all eventually perish.

2 Corinthians 6:10 (NLT) “We own nothing, and yet we have everything.”

Here Paul says that, though he and his companions didn’t own anything, they still possessed everything. They had access to everything they needed, both physically and spiritually. They completely trusted God to take care of their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs.

Philippians 4:13 (Berean Literal Bible) “I have strength for all things in the One strengthening me.”

Here is perhaps a somewhat less-familiar take on the famous “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” verse. How was Paul able to live and preach an uncluttered life? Only by the grace of the almighty God.

What to Declutter

If you're looking for ideas of where you can start decluttering, here are a few of the obvious, and maybe not-so-obvious places to start...

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Home

- Closets and cabinets: Clothes, Shoes, towels, old medicines, expired food, unused dishes, broken appliances, etc.
- Bookcases: books, magazines, papers, receipts, knick-knacks, etc.
- Car

Digital

- Phone apps
- Photos
- Emails
- Browser tabs
- Old files on your Hard drive

Social/Emotional/Mental

- Relationships
- Social media
- Activities/Schedule
- Mental noise and business

How to Declutter

There are many resources that you can search up on the internet that provide various ways and approaches of decluttering. One may appeal to you more than others, and you can try them all until you find one that works best for you. Here, though, are a few things to consider no matter which systematic approach you take...

- **Pray about it first** - Invite the Lord into the process. Be a fellow worker with him. Ask him to reveal to you how and what to declutter.
- **Become aware** - Do an inventory first, even if it's just a mental one, before you remove anything. Become aware of your external surroundings and your inner world. See if you can identify any blocks you may have to decluttering or any obvious first-steps to take.
- **Find a support partner** - The Bible says that "two are better than one, for they have a good return for their work." Enlisting the help of a friend who is on the same journey, or even a professional who can guide you through the process will dramatically increase your chances of success.
- **Prepare for the journey** - Decluttering can be a life-long process. Have reasonable expectations regarding the progress you want to make. Rome wasn't built in a day.
- **Get Started** - Take action today, even just one small step. The momentum and energy you feel will propel you forward. Then celebrate the fact that you did something!

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Self-Reflection Questions

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing “not at all” and 10 being “totally,” how important would you say decluttering is for people in general and then for you specifically? Why do you think this?

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing “not at all” and 10 being “totally,” would you consider yourself a “hoarder” or a “pack rat?” How do you feel about your response? Why do you think you feel the way that you do?

Have you ever considered the correlation between clutter and stress? What are your thoughts on it?

About the Author

Steve Pederson is the author of *101 Daily Christian Affirmations: Change Your Mind and Your Life Will Follow* and the creator of the Daily Christian Affirmations, a thriving YouTube channel and community.

Steve holds certifications as a Life Coach, NLP Master Practitioner, Counseling Practitioner, Master Mindfulness Practitioner, Mental Health and Wellness Practitioner and has a Diploma in Modern Applied Psychology

Steve has been married to his wife Stephanie for over 25 years, and together they have raised two amazing daughters who are now in college. He has served as a worship leader in his local congregations for over 35 years.

Footnotes

1 [Google Books Ngram Viewer for the word Declutter](#)

2 Webster's College Dictionary, Second Edition, Copyright Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2005

3 [Oxford Languages](#)

4 Melissa Dinwidde, [Mess vs. Clutter, and Why You Should Care](#)