



For some people the distractions may be video games, shopping or talking on the phone. Whatever it is that uses up so much of your time that the things of the Lord get pushed to the side, that is what needs to be eliminated. Sort out your schedule and get rid of anything you don't need.

## 2. Set in Order

*“But all things should be done decently and in order.”* 1 Corinthians 14:40

Once you have freed up your schedule, get yourself organized. Set up a specific time and place for Bible study and prayer. Even if you have young children you can do this. Use their naptime or a time when they are otherwise occupied. You will notice that when this becomes a habit other members of your household will learn to leave you alone.

Find a place where you feel close to God. I had a neighbor who found her place in the garden. There were no distractions, it was quiet and she could concentrate on her prayers and Bible reading.

Keep everything handy that you need. If your spot is inside the house keep a basket filled with a Bible, notebook, pens and any other books that you may be using to help you study God's word. If your place is outside the house, keep a bag specifically dedicated for this purpose, always packed and ready to grab on your way out the door. This also makes it easily accessible for rainy days when you can't go outside.

## 3. Shine

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God and put a new and right spirit within me.”* Psalm 51:10

This means to clean everything up. Just like when we pull everything out of the closet or garage that we don't need, we don't put back the stuff we do need until the space has had a thorough cleaning. Is there an area of your life where you struggle with sin? Nothing cleans up the soul like a good confession!

I knew of a man once who struggled with spending money. He had several credit cards and his spending soon led to a place where it was difficult to provide for his family. He started to clean up his life by cleaning out his wallet. He took out all the pieces of plastic that distracted him from the job of taking care of his family. He knew to be a godly man he had to set aside, or cut up, what so easily beset him.

We all have things that pull us away from being the Christian we ought to be, but if we are sincere about cleaning up those parts of our life, with God's help we can be successful.



## 4. Standardize

*“No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”* Matthew 5:15

I am a very organized person. I believe everything has a place and if an object is not in use it should be in its place. Once everything in our lives has been sorted, ordered and cleaned, the things that are not of God will stand out. This is where prayer for your own life is pertinent. Others can't see inside your heart and mind. You and God are the

only ones who know what's there. Pray and ask God to help sin stand out.

One time I was watching a cartoon on TV with my daughter when something in the show shocked me. It was of Satan and certainly should not have been in a small child's TV show. After turning the TV off, I prayed and asked God to open my eyes to the shows my children shouldn't watch. What an enlightenment that was! The closer we get to God, the more darkness in the world we will be able to see.

## 5. Sustain

*“Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. <sup>16</sup>Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.”* 1 Timothy 4:15-16

Now that everything is all set up in your life to allow greater spiritual growth, we still need to keep on working at it. Spiritual growth doesn't happen by itself. Keep reading the Bible. Keep praying everyday. Avail yourself of the sacraments as often as possible. Keep sorting and eliminating the things from your life that are hindering the work of the Holy Spirit.

## 6. Start

This may seem like a silly process to put at the end of a list. However good an idea this may seem, it won't do any good unless you actually begin to put these things into practice. Sometimes I read about a new Bible study and I tell myself that I will start tomorrow, yet tomorrow never comes. I keep putting it off until it is only a good idea that has been completely forgotten.

Don't wait to jump start your own spiritual growth. Start the process today, right now as a matter of fact. Go to step #1 and start sorting!

---

*Ruth O'Neil is a widely published author and homeschooling mother of three.*