

Eddie Long: Why You Need to Spiritually Clean House

Have you ever noticed that empty houses rarely remain empty? Whether you realize it or not, there are unwanted dwellers that can't wait for you to move out so they can move in. I'm not talking about vagrants or homesteaders. I'm talking about stealthier unwanted guests.

You can clean a room and within days, dust, mites, spider webs and other uninvited guests take advantage of your industriousness. Rest assured, empty spaces don't remain empty for long. Sooner or later, something will take up residence.

We believers also must be careful of the dangers that lurk when we have empty spaces in our lives. Many times, when we respond to God's call, we come loaded with baggage. We're laden with broken dreams, bad habits and lousy attitudes. But as good housekeepers, we strive to rid our lives of such ills.

Christians try to clean up their lives by attending church on a regular basis, cutting ties with the past and giving up bad things we once considered fun. But it's not enough to simply get rid of our negative stuff. We must fill the void with God's desires for our lives lest we end up worse off than when we started.

In case you haven't noticed, the devil loves a vacuum. He loves it when we leave him just enough space to bring in spirits of doubt, heaviness and fear.

When something bad or negative happens to us, we discover that our **faith** is either strong or made of empty things. How do you respond in times of stress or when you're devastated by the loss of a job or by the death of a loved one? Does anger or pride set up shop in your empty space? What about arrogance? Do you struggle with that as well?

Jesus warned us in Luke 11:24-26 about leaving voids in our Christian walk. He detailed the story of an **unclean spirit** that had returned to a clean home, deciding to have a wild party with his unclean friends.

We even see examples of this parable with our nation's children. Parents have given the responsibility of raising their children to schools, baby sitters, weekend programs and, worst of all, television and the Internet. We teach our children early in their lives to be independent of the person they need most: God. We tell them things such as, "You can make your own decisions about **Christianity**," instead of teaching them about the fear and admonition of the Lord.

It's amazing how you don't have to intentionally teach your child to become a bad person. If you neglect to fill his or her life, mind and spirit with **biblical truths** through quality time spent together, a child can easily become filled with evil things as a result of society, their friends, television and music. If you leave a child's mind empty the **devil** will fill it.

Getting right with God is only the first step to filling empty spaces in our lives. But as with any good relationship, the one we have with Him must be nurtured.

Our **spiritual lives** are like a garden. If you have ever seen or planted a garden, then you know that as long as you feed it, weed it and water it, it will grow into a beautiful sight. But if we leave our spiritual lives unattended in the same way some people do their gardens, we will deteriorate with all sorts of weeds and parasites.

God is not just some casual observer sitting high and unconcerned as we struggle below. He feels our hurts, our anguish, our frustration and our righteous anger. He knows who caused us to be afraid, who made us feel unloved and who instilled in us a **spirit of rejection**.

But none of this stops Him from calling each of us to a closer and more intimate relationship with Him. He not only longs for us to return to Him, but when we get there, He also wants us to stay. He wants to fill our lives with Himself, with His goodness.

God is not concerned with the untidiness of our past, but He is concerned with our **passion** for His presence and the **miracle** of our future. God is looking at our hearts, and He is saying that we must tend to our houses and our gardens because there is no middle road—we are either filled with the things of God, or we are empty.