

Day 17

How to Be a More Effective Homemaker

If you've ever wondered why you can't get it all done or why homemaking seems so hard, you're not alone! Learning to be an effective homemaker is possible and today I want to share some of my best tips. Plus, we'll be looking at how you spend your time during the day.

Intentional homemaking is really about thinking about how we go about our homemaking tasks as well as what kind of atmosphere we want our home to have.

Remember, homemaking isn't about having a perfect magazine worthy house, it's about creating a space that feels like home where those we love can learn and grow.



So let's be honest, homemaking – whether you stay home full time or work outside the home – is always demanding. We live in a period of time when people are busier than ever. And while we have lots of tools and modern conveniences to help us be more efficient it can feel like there's just not enough hours in the day to get it all done.

Truthfully, there may not be enough hours in the day to get everything done if we are trying to cram too much into the day. I can't say whether you should cull some activities from your calendar or not. And different seasons of life are busier than others. I'm currently in a very busy season of motherhood. I only have two teens still at home but we are busier than ever.

Let me tell you this truth. Sometimes you say no to one thing so you can say yes to another and that's okay. When my five kids were younger I made almost all of our food from scratch. I baked most of our bread. I had this idea that all of our food had to be old fashioned, healthy, and from scratch. It was a lot of pressure.

And you know what?

Most of that pressure was self-inflicted. I felt like I needed to do cook from scratch, have a perfectly clean house, care for a lot of animals, and more.

Add in everything I did for the church, caring for elderly family members, and babysitting grandkids several times a

week, as well as homeschooling and running A Virtuous Woman... and more. I was doing too much.

I let some things go. Like baking homemade bread twice a week. And cooking everything from scratch. I'm still a good mom even if we do eat take out frozen dinners from Trader Joe's a couple times a week.

It's okay.

Time Management for the Busy Homemaker

Being an effective homemaker takes time, patience, and a good strategy. If you work outside the home – you need a good strategy. If you stay home full time – you need a good strategy.

Homemaking doesn't happen by itself. It takes self discipline to get chores done. Especially chores that aren't fun. And especially if we're tired.

Being a disciplined homemaker requires commitment. You need to understand your WHY.

Why is homemaking important to you?

Of course, I can't answer this question for you, but I can share my own feelings on this subject.

I want my children to remember home with fond memories. I want to be able to welcome guests into a home that feels warm and inviting. I want my family to enjoy a clean space. I want to live in a space that brings my family feelings of peace instead of feelings of chaos.

I want our home to be a place where we gather together for good food and shared memories. I want the walls of our home to be filled with laughter and happy sounds and uplifting music.

Of course not every day is perfect. The house gets messy. Food gets burned. And sometimes life is just hard.

I don't have an expectation that life will be perfect. I've learned that just because I have one bad moment that it does not equal a bad day. And even if I have a really bad day – that one day does not equal a bad life. I can embrace the moments that are joyful and I can embrace the moments that are hard.

Real life happens at home. It's the moments we share with the people who are close to us, who know us best, who see our worst – it's those moments that build a life. And a life that has been loved is a life well lived.

But I can be intentional in how I go about homemaking. How do you spend your time?

1 Corinthians 14:40 says, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

How do you spend your time as a homemaker? You can be exhausted at the end of the day and still feel like you accomplished very little. You can be exhausted at the end of the day from doing way too much. If you feel like you're tired all of the time, you may not be managing your time very well.

If you aren't sure how you are spending your time, it can be helpful to write down everything you do during the day for a few days and analyze where you could make changes. Maybe you don't realize you're spending two hours a day on your phone. Or maybe you will find that you spend too much time cooking and it might be helpful to plan easier meals for your growing family.

At the end of this post I have a free printable Homemaker's Time Tracker worksheet that you can use to help!

How long does it take to complete a task?

If you are prone to procrastinating and putting off your tasks or chores until it's absolutely necessary to get them done – i.e. the bathroom is so gross even you don't want to use the toilet – then you may have it in your mind that certain chores take way longer to complete than they really do. In fact, you just might be surprised at how many chores only take a few minutes.

Yesterday we talked about the One Minute Rule and I shared a list of 40 tasks that took less than one minute to complete. So much of homemaking is just about doing it right now.

Don't throw your coat on the back of the coach ... so you then have to pick it up and hang it in the closet. Hang it in the closet immediately.

Don't kick your shoes off in a pile by the back door... put them neatly in your closet when you get home.

Don't drop your dirty laundry on the floor. Put your laundry in the clothes hamper immediately.

Doing those things doesn't take any more time than throwing them on the floor. I promise. Developing self discipline really starts with the little tasks.

How long do chores take?

This may vary depending on how fast you move, but let me tell you. If you make it a habit to do your chores immediately, they will get done quickly.

- loading the dishwasher – 5 minutes or less
- making the bed – 2 minutes
- starting a load of laundry in the wash – 1 minute
- folding a load of clothes right out of the dryer – 5 minutes

- putting away a load of laundry – 5 minutes
- sweeping the floor – 2 minutes
- hand washing a sink full of pots and pans – 10 minutes or less
- vacuuming – 10 minutes or less
- cleaning the kitchen after a meal – 10 minutes
- wipe down bathroom – 2 minutes

Print out your Homemaker's Time Tracker {free printable below} or use good old fashioned notebook paper and time yourself as you do your chores.

If your house is in need of a lot of tender loving care to get it neat and tidy, cleaning may take longer initially. And that's okay. Getting your home in order is a process.

Time Management for the Busy Homemaker

1. Make time for God.

I can't encourage you enough to start your day with a moment of prayer. Even if you can only find five minutes to read a short devotion, Scripture verse, and say a prayer, starting your day off with prayer and devotion will help you focus your day and remember what's important.

Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

It's a lot easier to find the calm in your chaos when you have the One who calmed the storm walking with you during the day.

2. Wake up early or before your kids.

I know it's hard. Some of us aren't morning people. But I promise you, waking up even fifteen minutes earlier and pursuing your day instead of chasing it is so much better. I won't tell you what time you should wake up – that's different for everyone.

But even if you think you aren't a morning person, try setting the alarm a little earlier than normal and get up with the intention of getting things done.

3. Be intentional about your day.

You can use a planner or you can use a notebook, but creating a plan for your day will help you stay focused. Sit down once a week and plan for the week ahead. What things can you prepare ahead of time for those days that are especially busy?

Create a to do list. Add 3 – 5 things to your list each day. You can do this before you go to bed at night or first thing in the morning before your day gets started.

Consider your home and what needs to be tackled.

- Do you need to do an extra load of laundry?
- Do you need to start a meal in the slow cooker for the evening meal?
- Do you need to drop off your winter coats at the dry cleaners?
- Does the fridge need to be cleaned out?

Keep your planner open on the kitchen counter, on the dining room table, or other place where you can refer to it frequently throughout the day.

If you don't have a planner but would like to use one, you can put together a household binder or use a planner for busy homemakers. A good planner will help you keep track of all the miscellaneous details of running your home.

4. Be realistic about your time.

Sometimes it's not possible to do everything. Decide what your priorities are and what you can let go. Learn to be okay with saying no to some commitments so you can say yes to the best activities for your family right now. Set priorities based goals and be intentional about how you spend your time. Are you living your priorities?

5. Plan your meals.

Meal planning is one of the easiest ways to make your life easier during the week.

- prep meals ahead of time
- utilize a slow cooker on busy days
- know what your cooking for dinner
- know what to shop for on grocery day
- save money at the grocery store

6. Organize your family and assign chores.

From the age of 2 years old and older you can reasonably expect each child in your home to contribute something to the running of the household. You can download my age appropriate chore list [here](#).

Chores build character in your children. When you expect your child to do chores he's learning:

- a good work ethic
- how to be responsible
- that the world does not revolve around him
- that he is a part of the family unit

7. Be self disciplined.

Being disciplined means that you do what needs to be done even when you don't feel like it. That means, go

ahead and follow through on The One Minute Rule. The One Minute Rule is a small habit that will lead to bigger habits. It will also help you maintain a clean space with very little extra effort.

Creating good habits is a slow process and one that shouldn't be rushed. As much as we might love to do a major overhaul of our lives all at once, trying to make too many changes too fast is a recipe for disaster. Give yourself grace and work on one small habit at a time.

When you feel confident in your new habit, begin working on another.

8. Create a morning and evening routine.

Routines give your day a soothing rhythm. When you create a routine that works for you, you'll find that tasks are easier to complete, your children know what to expect, and you know what to clean and when. Homemaking thrives on routines.

Routines can also become habits and habits are easier to accomplish because you don't have to give them much thought. You just do it.

For instance, if you work outside the home, your morning routine might look like:

- wake up and shower
- 10 minute devotion and prayer
- exercise 10 minutes
- wake up kids and get dressed
- eat breakfast
- start a load of laundry in the wash
- load dishwasher with breakfast dishes
- load the car and leave the house

If you need to wash a load of clothes every day, beginning the wash before you leave for work every morning means that you can switch the clothes over to the dryer as soon as you get home and fold that one load of laundry and put it away before bed. It can be a habit. And good habits are what make us self disciplined.

9. Live with less clutter.

It's so easy to fill our homes with an abundance of stuff. Believe me, I know!! But choosing to live with less stuff also means living with less stress. Decluttering your home also means having less stuff to clean.

By having less stuff I can have more life. By having less stuff, I can have more time for living the life God intended me to live instead of wasting time on futile tasks. By having less stuff I can have more fun and laughter and games with

my family. By having less stuff to clean and pick up and wash I can have more time to do meaningful activities that add joy to my life – like painting, writing, crafting, scrapbooking, or sewing. By having less stuff to try and organize I can also have less stress which means I have more peace.

Clutter weighs us down mentally, emotionally and can even cause physical stress as we work to clean and move and put away and organize all of the overwhelming stuff in our lives.

Why not just let that all go? I would encourage you to purge anything from your life that isn't bringing you peace and joy.

10. Remember to have fun and find time for rest.

If you are overworked and exhausted you are more likely to drag through your day, snap at your children, and get less done overall.

Taking time for a Sabbath rest is essential to your health. God, in His infinite wisdom, gave us the Sabbath in the Garden of Eden. He knew it was an essential part of life, a life giving rest.

Finding joy in the little things and finding moments to laugh are crucial to being an effective homemaker. Never underestimate the importance of laughing and

playing with your kids. The fun memories you make playing with your children will last a lifetime. Schedule a movie or game night into your planner, take time to visit a park or museum, find ways to schedule that fun!

Time Management

If a task takes less than a minute to complete, go ahead and do it right now.

How do I spend my time? Am I managing my time well?

Do I take time to rest?

The Homemaker's Time Tracker

Time	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
7:30am			
8:00am			
8:30am			
9:00am			
9:30am			
10:00am			
10:30am			
11:00am			
11:30am			
12:00pm			
12:30pm			
1:00pm			
1:30pm			
2:00pm			
2:30pm			
3:00pm			
3:30pm			
4:00pm			
4:30pm			
5:00pm			
5:30pm			
6:00pm			
6:30pm			
7:00pm			
7:30pm			
8:00pm			
8:30pm			
9:00pm			
9:30pm			
10:00pm			
10:30pm			

