

THE MINIMALIST HOME



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This is meant to be a resource, a guide of sorts for those looking to minimize the stuff, the junk, the clutter, the mass in their homes. In our family's journey this process was also a very spiritual one, the minimizing of our stuff fell hand in hand with the scriptures we were reading, the life we were seeing laid out that we should be following.

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OUR STORY

A little about us, and maybe more of this book will make sense.

We're a family of 6- Mom, me; Brandon, high-school sweetie hubby; and four amazing kiddos. Currently their ages are 14, nearly 8, 5 and 9 months. Brandon and I began dating when I was only 14, and we were married mid week in a Las Vegas ceremony when I was 17 and pregnant. A couple years into being married, raising a baby and trying to get this "life" thing in order, we dropped everything and moved across the country to a state we had visited once and knew no one-- all for a chance to start a real grown up life.

Less than a year on the East Coast and we lost everything we owned (baby momentos, furniture, pictures, collections, everything) in a flood. Overnight all the STUFF that we had brought from back home in CA, everything we had worked for, been given, all of it was gone. All that fit in the boat we were evacuated in was ourselves, our dog and cat. We learned a lot during that time, we learned a lot about the true value of stuff. It can be nice, it can hold memories... but it can wash away in a moment and that's ok-- **because it is just stuff.**

The segment after that we went through major cycles of climbing the corporate ladder, working hard for the big fancy house in the perfect neighborhood, accumulating the right stuff, an obsession with very fancy (and costly) makeup from Sephora (Lord help me), designer bags (and shoes.. jewelry... sigh) and all the typical things I'm sure you can relate with.

After our second child was born, a major change happened. My husband and I decided that we were done. We were done working so hard, for someone else, to pay for the fancy home we didn't spend time in, the stuff we couldn't enjoy and the kids we spent evenings and weekends with. As most everyone does in this position (I assume you can sense the sarcasm) we decided to quit our jobs, give all our stuff away, and head to a state we'd never visited before to start a business on our own for the first time ever. So we did. We sold a few bigger items to make a few bucks, I put everything other than the clothes we'd take with us in the garage and posted on Craigslist "Household items for free- if you're in need, come take what you please!" On a Saturday morning we opened the garage door and everything of ours was gone in no time at all. The house was empty, we had some business booked from the

website I created, we loaded our tiny car up with our few belongings, two kids, dog, cat and headed to the Southernmost point of Florida to run our wedding floral business.

Another kid later, more moves, an exploding business, we found ourselves back to what we consider home in North Carolina, with nice homes and a plethora of stuff. I know you'd think we'd learn... but we're a little slow. And forever thankful that we serve a Lord who is VERY patient.

And this is where we are now, well- plus one more kid. We're slowing down our wedding business as we go full time into ministry, we've left the city and the suburbs for 8 acres of heaven tucked in the country, we're on an ever growing path of minimalism with our family, our stuff, our homeschool and in doing so we've become freer, happier, our home is more peaceful and our faith stronger than it's ever been.

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Thessalonians 4:11



I've been asked by many about how we did it, how we ditched the stuff and how we have the freedom to spend our days doing more of what we want and less of the rat race. This is that story, I hope it helps you and your family find the balance you're looking for.

With love and encouragement,

Heidi

WHAT IS MINIMALISM?

When this comes up I get one of two responses.

- a. Why on earth would you want to live in an empty/sterile house?
- b. I'm so incredibly overwhelmed and stressed and want so badly to gain some peace and tranquility in my home!

To clear the air, I do not live in an empty, sterile, hospital like house. I tend to think our home is rather cozy and warm.

Minimalism does NOT mean that you get rid of absolutely everything, live in a barren house and never bring another joy giving item into your midst. It's a process (an ongoing process) of letting go of the clutter, the junk, the excess. And Americans are sure known for their excess. Even most of the poorest families in our country have more than truly poverty stricken families in other countries could imagine. It's not a pleasant topic people like to discuss- but it's true. And stopping to consider this truth can help you put things into perspective.

Because this was a spiritual journey for us, I want to share some of that here with you as well. As Christians, our goal is to live a life here on the present, but cursed, Earth where we follow the Lord our God and through his son Jesus Christ will be forgiven of our sins and will leave this place behind and move into the wonders of Heaven, be renewed in our redeemed bodies, serve Jesus through the Millennial Kingdom and prepare for the New Earth where we will live in perfection for all of eternity. Correct? (If you're not sure how to answer that, please let me direct you [HERE](#), [HERE](#) and [HERE](#))

If that is our ultimate goal, why are we so attached and putting all our money and effort into **STUFF** here on earth? Does hoarding 20 pairs of shoes matter? 13 boxes of Christmas "decor" aka JUNK? Every kitchen cupboard bursting at the seams with who knows what? Zillions of toys our kids spend more time dumping on the floor than playing with and truly enjoying? A garage packed with so much stuff that you honestly don't know what it all is? **Is that really what we're here to do?**

If God called you today to drop everything, leave your life you know and follow Him-- could you do it? Could you post online that everything was free and up for grabs? This isn't a judgemental question-- as

you read, it was a question we were faced with at one point and we had to answer it. By the grace of God I can say that we said yes, and we were blessed through that decision. Doesn't mean it wasn't hard sitting on the floor in an empty house with absolutely nothing and a hit to one's pride to be in the fancy, perfect suburban neighborhood with not a single thing. We're human, all sinners, and it's hard. BUT- the faith, the blessing, the strength, the relationship with Christ Jesus that came from our willingness to say "Ok, let's do it" regardless of the horrible things our families and some friends were saying to/about us, regardless of being scared, of swimming against the current-- regardless of it all. Could you answer the call?

Thinking about this type of a situation helps us to see that this movement of "minimalism" IS indeed a matter of the heart. **Where is your heart?** Is it wrapped up in the accumulation of stuff, the constant shopping, keeping of every little thing, hoarding every memento? Or are you setting your eyes on the Lord and your eternal life with Him as the Bride of Christ in the New Earth for eternity? Stopping and putting on some real Biblical perspective can be a big kick in the gut. If you're honest with yourself, it can be one of the best decisions you ever make.

When you're ready to be honest with yourself, to really get to work -- here is the method we use and have shared with many. No one can help you, you and your family have to be ready to declutter your lives and in doing so, reclaim them. Even if your house looks like an episode of Hoarders-- **you CAN do this.**

FOUR SIMPLE STEPS

STEP 1

Start as big or as small as you feel ready to. Pick one space. A closet, a drawer, an entire room.

Now take **EVERYTHING** out. Everything you possibly can remove, which can also be the decor on the walls if that's something you feel overwhelmed by, take it all out.

Now we're going to make 3 piles.

Absolute necessities for living - be real here. The BARE minimum, ie: 1 fork/spoon/knife per family member, 1 outfit a day for 3 to 5 days (you can do laundry to get you through the week), 1 towel per person, etc...

Super special items that you would honestly run back into the house if it was on fire to grab. Those irreplaceable items that you seriously would risk your life to grab out of a burning house. 37 stuffed animals from your kid's first Christmas do not fit this list. Be painstakingly real with yourself here - with each item, why is it important? Why would you pull it from the threat of flame? Reasons along the line of holding onto things because "so and so" gave them to you and you have to keep it doesn't work. I don't care if Emily Gilmore is coming over, you do not need to pull it out and pretend that you love it. Gilmore Girls anyone? Moving on...

Everything else. Everything else goes into this pile. Unless it's flat out trash, feel free to throw that away in this step. Seriously- nothing goes back.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21



Step 2

Clean the room, closet, drawer, etc... that you just emptied. Wipe it down with a damp cloth and some vinegar, or I use some [Rebel Green](#) to give me that little burst of clean smell! Or my “magic cloths” as my family calls them, [eCloths](#) are AMMMMAZING!

Put back JUST the absolute necessity items. NOTHING else! Maybe nothing was a necessity, and that’s ok. Don’t cheat yourself here, be real with the pure basic necessities.

Pack up (doesn’t have to be fancy, a big trash bag, old box, whatever) the items from the Super Special pile and then the Everything Else. Take those items and place them out of sight. Basement, garage, spare bedroom, shed, your trunk. This doesn’t matter, just make them out of sight and out of mind.

Step 3

Wait a little bit- a week, maybe two, but really no longer than a month max. Take 20 minutes and revisit the bags/boxes of the Everything Else pile. Has the past week/weeks been unlivable because you didn’t have them items in there? No? You survived? Life continued on? Ok-- that stuff moves out. **Immediately.**

Donate to a thrift shop, look up your local women’s shelter, church, or post a free for all ad. Let it move on and pray that it can be a blessing to someone else.

Visit the Super Special pile, is it really that super special when you look through it again? I picked up some plastic boxes from the store- one for each family member, one for house goods and one (just one) for holidays (yep, all holidays). I separate the Super Special items into each person’s box. Box getting full? Reevaluate! Must it be saved? Why are you saving it? Holding onto the memories? A thought that helped me in this, because Lord knows I struggled, upon entering Heaven we will be given our new bodies with brain power unlike what we have currently. We have to give an account of everything we did here, can you remember every sin? Gosh, I can’t remember what I made for dinner last week. So with such an expansive memory, things we so quickly forget here will be restored to us. I won’t need a million little baby outfits to remember what my teenager (eee-gads) was like as a baby. I

will remember it, maybe I'll be able to watch it happen again on some cool movie like thing where my memories come to life. Who knows? I do know that at the end of this life, I'm not taking any of this with me. So is it that important that I hoard it around now? I know this part is hard-- but you can do it!

Step 4

Move on to the next space. Start at Step 1 again, rinse and repeat! Move as quickly as you can, just don't give up! Once you get through the first couple spaces and start feeling the peace, the calm, the relief that comes from your newly decluttered, dejunked and clean spaces you'll be eager to keep going!

4 Steps, that's it! The first time is usually the hardest, but this is a continual process. Usually a couple times a year I find myself repeating the process, although it's easier and easier each subsequent time.

KEEPING UP WITH A MINIMALIST HOME

This is my favorite- my house can get wrecked. I do weddings, weekends are insane for us, everything goes everywhere, and then... in 30 minutes my house can be magazine ready. Every 'thing' back in it's place, surfaces wiped down, floors cleaned and good to go. THIS is my favorite part of this life hack.

Once you go through the steps, you also have to stop the cycle of bringing more IN the house. I try to not bring anything in the house unless something goes OUT of the house. Really need that new item at Target? Ok, well what are you letting go of? Remember-- this is AFTER you've completed the steps so you're already at pretty bare minimum and don't have a lot to choose from.

*Note, I'm not saying you shouldn't have anything enjoyable. Is there something that truly brings joy to your family? To your spouse? To you? Then enjoy it! You just have to keep it in check, and submit it to the steps when it's time to go through them again. I love having plants... I pick them up often... grocery stores get me. But- I need to keep it in check. My family loves board games, but check yourself as often as needed. Let the old and missing piece sets go, donate the ones they've outgrown to another family.

When there is less stuff, it really is so much easier to keep a tidy home! Imagine that, less stuff to keep track of and your day is easier and home is cleaner. Clean as you go, put stuff back where it goes, once you get into the practice of doing this, others will start. Dishes can't back up if there's only one plate per person. Not if that person wants their dinner on a plate and not their lap. I don't stress having everything perfect all day long either, I have kids and a husband. Stuff gets taken out, left out and messed up. That's ok. I take 30 minutes after the kiddos are in bed, go through each common room, straighten anything that needs it, wipe down the tables/counters as needed and sweep/vacuum real quick. (Well, until I treated myself to [THIS](#), now Roby does this for me and I sit down with a cup of rooibos tea and some Bible time!) We load the dishwasher as we go through the day, I start it before I go to bed, and in the morning our oldest puts everything away. If I find a dish left in the sink, it's pretty easy to figure out whose it is... because there's not many dishes and people to choose from.

Once a week I mop the floors, and usually every season I go through the steps which includes a deep cleaning of each space. That's it, done deal.

A FEW NOTES PER EACH ROOM

Kitchen :

- CLEAR the counters! This step makes a HUGE impact. What do you use EVERY day? Everything else-- let it go. (Elsa voice optional) This includes “decor” that is just junking it all up too.
- Cut back on the cups, plates, etc... We started with one per family member. ONE. Then around the holidays last year we did add a dinner set. We know about how many family/friends come over for events so we bought a set of pretty gold rimmed dishes (a la Dollar Tree #winning) with enough for us all. That leaves us now with one set of dishes per our family (bowl to use in the am, a plate at lunch) and then we use the “fancy” dishes for dinner. Our family of 6, plus my two adult brothers, with cookware all fits in one load of dishes I run at night. Done deal.
- Scale down the silverware. You do not need it all. Sick of finding forks under your kid’s bed or in the couch cushions (HOW does that seriously happen? Please tell me it isn’t just our house...), one utensil per person. My husband even engraved each person’s initial into their fork, knife and spoon. That solved everything in an instant. Don’t laugh, we’re very serious here.
- Empty ALL the cupboards. Every single one. Follow the three steps, you do NOT need every gadget, 30 mixing bowls, a million tupperware containers. See what you actually use, what you actually need out of that ‘Everything’ box-- let the rest go bless someone in need.
- Have a “catch all spot” with mail and such? Put a little basket there- sort mail as you bring it in and toss toss toss! Don’t let it linger-- this is such a hard one for me!

Living Room :

- A bunch of dust collectors? Box ‘em up- funny when I realized I have to spend more time keeping the stuff I “love” clean than I do just enjoying most of the items. Unless you really love dusting or live in a miracle place without dust (please send me your location), if you spend more time cleaning it than enjoying it... are you REALLY enjoying it?
- Empty everything, even all the cupboards of DVD’s and games. Do you have more furniture than you need that’s keeping you feeling closed in? Take it out of the room for a bit too.

Bathroom :

- Makeup, soaps and more that have been in a drawer for ages? Toss 'em. I bought a travel size makeup bag and keep everything in there- not that I wear makeup daily anymore, but I have some foundation, a mascara, a bronzer/blush and an eyeshadow in there. That's it.
- Toss all the cleaners. There's a million reasons why mainstream cleaners are doing so much damage to our health and our kiddos-- you can easily DIY your cleaners with some vinegar or peroxide or pick up something like Rebel Green or Puracy products if you want a store bought solution. Or replace all of that with [eCloths](#)- they're AMAZING folks!
- In my kid's bathroom-- what things that I put in there are an issue all the time? Decor that the 5 year old always puts toothpaste on, "nice" towels I hate when they use and gunk up with their not so clean hands, pictures on the wall that always get too wet during bath time, just let them go. See a theme? Stop letting STUFF cause issues and negative feelings.

Bedroom :

- Tackle the clothes! 3-5 outfits, and a pair of pj's. Why do we really have so much and put so much into what we wear? Take your staple items and set the rest aside. The too small items that you haven't touched in years? Let them bless someone else. The shoes you never wear? Come on... be real with yourself. You know what you NEED. Stop holding on to everything else.
- Clear all the surfaces, we tend to put so many tchotchkes in our room and our kids-- see the point made above under 'Living Room'. S I M P L I F Y
- Put a pretty candle or some potpourri by the bed or on the dresser. I spend less time in my room than anywhere else, by the time I make it to my room it's to fall over into bed. It's nice to keep it super minimal in there to discourage junk from accumulating, and being able to have a yummy smell helps add to that feeling of serenity.

Kid's Room :

- Do your kids really need all the decor in there? Or do you spend more time "fixing" their room's decor to the way you want it? My house is not an "after" on Fixer Upper. My kids play in their rooms and like making the space their own version of pretty. Let them be.
- Tackle the clothes!!! We scaled our kid's down to 3 shirts, 3 shorts/pants and 3 jammies. I kept a few sets extra in their current size to rotate out as needed, everything else went to bless new kids. I do maybe 2 to 3 loads of laundry per **week**. For a family of 6... that doesn't use many

paper products (all cloth napkins, lots of hand towels, washcloths...) Join me in the happy dance! Woot woot!

- Toys. We started by buying a little wicker basket for each kid and let them put 10 items in it... then down to 5... then we got rid of all the toys. The little ones kept 1 stuffed animal and they have a communal box of Legos in the dining room. That's it. Taking away all the toys was the best thing we did, the kids had the most positive reaction from that too. Not kidding. When their grandma sends them money they buy more Legos (which all go in one big bin) or I let them shop at Dollar Tree. We know it'll break in no time and once something's broken it goes to the trash. Kids can enjoy it, but when it's done, it's done. They still find a way to make messes (I don't know how to be honest) but it's MUCH more manageable! Thank you sweet Jesus! Mommy is much nicer this way, but surprisingly kids are much happier and grateful.

Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

I Timothy 6:6-8



MINIMALISM IN MANY FORMS...

For us this process has morphed its way through many aspects. The chemicals we use in our home, the food we eat, the way we school and run our business... And all of it somehow always pointed us back to scripture.

There is NOTHING here on this earth that I want to let hold me back. Tv, don't care. Social media, leave it. The dream home, what's the point? Who knows how much time we have here, but I do know I have an eternity waiting for me. I want a calm home that can be a wonderful setting for myself and my family to grow in the Lord. I want to keep myself pure and away from the poison and chemicals that the corporations of this world are pumping into our food, water, cleaners, soaps... well, everything.

I don't want my stress to manifold into a negative attitude and poor home atmosphere. When I realized that a lot of the stress comes from being overwhelmed, overworked and constantly on the run (cleaning, fixing, hurrying here and there, keeping little hands off of stuff...)-- then that's the point that I say get rid of it then. No **THING** should cause me to stumble and turn my words and attitude to vinegar.

All in all, this "minimalist" handbook comes down to four simple steps. But- you must be real with yourself about it. **And that's why most won't do it.** It's not as easy as Pinning a million ideas about "home organizational hacks", it takes work, dedication and causes you to move out of your comfort zone. Stay in prayer about it, ask the Lord for His wisdom and direction as you spend time in His word each day. Start making time EVERY day to spend just you and Him in the word.

I'm rooting for each one of you, with all sincerity. I've seen the difference this can make-- in my home, friends and family's homes.

It's all a process of stopping the world from ruling us and opening ourselves to be led by the Lord in all aspects... not just on Sunday's.

Let Him lead your home, your chores, your free time, your attitude, your feelings as stress rises. It's amazing the life He has in store for all his children, first you must be willing to lay down everything. And it's amazing!

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

Matthew 6:25-27



Come connect with us!

Our homeschool plans are all shared online for free, www.MinimalistHomeschool.com

I share most often of day to day stuff on Instagram, www.instagram.com/MinimalistHomeschool

Occasionally I update Facebook, www.facebook.com/TheMinimalistHomeschool BUT we do have a Facebook group on there that has other families sharing in this discussion- come join us!

We share much about all of this, and our 100 Days of Homeschool series all on our YouTube blog, www.youtube.com/MinimalistHomeschool

We've also started a free, online magazine! Grab your copy on our website, www.MinimalistHomeschool.com/magazine

If we ever can help with anything, pray for anything, or you just want to share some feedback, feel free to contact us anytime, through any of those channels.

xoxo