

Lesson 13—The Chore Deck

(Video Transcript)

Hello and welcome to another video in the Time to Change video series by The Practical Disciple. I am John Arnold and I am really excited about what I am going to share with you today because I am going to share with you **a system I have for almost effortlessly keeping your house clean**. Now that may sound impossible, but its not. I have used this system for over 3 years. I have multiple other families I have passed it on to. They have used it and loved it. I had one mom show up in a committee meeting the other night and she said, “John I have to tell you, you have ended arguing with my children about chores.” If for nothing else this system is worth that, which you will understand, if you are a parent and have kids.

Let me tell you my story. I have what I call the chore deck. It is a deck that has everything that needs to be done in our house to keep it clean written on individual index cards. Every day every body picks three cards out of that deck and they do those three and that is all they have to do. It really doesn't take a lot of time because I **break down things into pretty simple tasks**. So for instance, you won't have a card that says, “clean the bathroom.” The bathroom may be four different cards because it may be bleach the toilet, wipe down the counters, mop the floor, scrub the tub. Okay, so, you have four different cards for that bathroom.

What I did (to create my deck) was I went through my house and created a master list of everything that needed to be down. I took each one of the items, put it on a card and then once I had a sense of how many cards I had I figured out how many I had to draw each day to be able to finish cleaning every single thing in our house in one week. Everything!

This was great because we had tried using a cleaning lady. We often times had trouble getting a cleaning lady who we really liked, who did things the way we want her to or did them well. We had this ridiculous pattern where we would clean before the cleaning lady got there. Some of you are laughing with me and not at me. You know what I am talking about. Your house would get in disarray and you would feel this need to tidy up before the cleaning lady got there to clean. We would do that and everything would be immaculate for a few days and then it would just slowly descend into this

pit of chaos and we would start the whole stupid cycle over again. My card deck ended that.

I am not going to say a whole lot more than that because what I really want to encourage you to do is to go to my other video on my website. I've put a link in the email that went out (There are two links on the lesson page to posts from my blog to help you). You can find it on youtube and you can find it on The Practical Disciple. It was part of a post. On my blog there is a post called, 'More God, Less Stress and Clutter.' You can search for that using the search bar and that video will pop up. In that video I tell exactly what the cards are in my deck. It's not only chores. I put some fun things in there.

In there, there is a day off card. If you draw the day off card everybody else has to draw an extra card and you don't work that day and they do your chores which is kind of fun. We don't let anyone get that card again until everyone in the family has had it.

I have 'wild cards' in the deck. I put those in there because I wanted my kids to be able to look around and find what needed to be done and take the initiative to do it. So the wild card says on it, "wild card, find a task and do it." That was to hone my kid's eyes on what needed to be done, That's worked really well.

I also have 'ten minute tidy' cards in the deck. In one of my other videos in this series I talked about doing a ten minute tidy. Those are in the deck.

I have a 'sack it' card. For those of you who did a bag a day for a number of days to get rid of clutter, I actually highly recommend that you have a 'sack it' card in your chore deck, so that once a week a bag goes out of your house. That way you stay ahead of your clutter and don't have to do these mad marathons of forty bags in forty days, but you just keep things at bay.

That said you can go and look at exactly what is in my deck on my blog, ThePracticalDisciple.com. On the search bar if you put in 'chore deck' a couple of different articles will come up that you can read and there is a video there you can watch.

Now, is this an absolutely perfect system? No. For example, you don't get the whole bathroom done at once because someone may draw bleach the

toilets and mop the floor, but you don't scrub the tub until two or three days later. However, here is what I found. There is some great trade off and that is...first off, **I know that all I have to do are my three things and I am done for the day and if I do my three things my house will be cleaned every week.** I found that when I worked the deck, **the general cleanliness of our house just shot through the roof.** The moment of epiphany for me realizing this, was one time when we were about an hour away from our house and somebody called us and they were coming through and they wanted to see if they could stay with us for the night. We were able to say to them, "Yeah, that's fine. Here's where the key is. Go ahead and go on in." and our house was ready because it just stood at an order of readiness that it had never had before. So, what I like to say to folks about the deck is, "**The deck works if you work the deck.**" You just have to be consistent on doing it all the time.

The other thing is **there is a great stress relief in having this system in place.** I used to come home sometimes and I would be tired and I would be worn out and I would think, "Oh my gosh, where do I even begin?" because I would have the whole house staring me in the face begging to be cleaned in one way or another. I don't go through that anymore. I know exactly where to begin. I go over to the deck. I pull my three cards. I do those three cards and I forget about it because even though something may not get done right then, it will get done within the week.

So that is my chore deck. It is a great system. Multiple families have used it. I highly recommend you go and read my post, 'More God, Less Stress and Clutter' and watch the video. There is also a follow-up post called 'Some Additional Thoughts on The Deck.' That is my tip for the day. I wish you a fantastically clean house with really pretty limited effort. I'll see you in the next video.

Here are links to the two posts I reference in the transcript:

<http://thepracticaldisciple.com/2009/01/more-god-less-stress-and-clutter.html>

<http://thepracticaldisciple.com/2009/01/some-additional-thoughts-on-the-deck.html>

