



Spring Cleaning... Not Just Cleaning your Home, but Fine-tuning your Estate Planning as Well

“Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms shall be filled with all precious and pleasant riches”

Proverbs 24:3-4

By Sid Johnston

There are many enjoyable aspects of life that come along with spring: wild flowers, warmer temperatures, greenery in abundance, deeply religious holidays filled with eggs and bunnies galore, and a general merriment that summer is right around the corner. However, one such chore associated with spring, is just that...a chore – the dreaded spring cleaning! It is a common practice in most homes to perform a deep cleaning around the house in the spring to clear up the grime leftover from winter and start fresh with a new year and a new spring. Why stop with just your home? Consider giving your life and estate planning a spring cleaning as well.

Estate planning, as with a home, is ever-changing and evolving so it should be consistently cleaned and updated. Logically, that makes perfect sense. In our busy lives, it is slightly more difficult to maintain that theory. Updating a will usually means attorneys and fees, neither of which is at the top of most people’s to-do lists. There are a few important reasons why you should consider cleaning and re-evaluating your will and estate planning documents yearly.

First, if you are younger, your life is changing – plain and simple. The will that you created a year ago could not be valid and fully represent your life now, if changes in your life have occurred such as the addition of children, loss of parents or relatives mentioned in the will, or the change in residence. If you are older, some of these reasons could apply as well and be reason to re-evaluate your will.

Second, life can change in the blink of an eye. In the case of death, which is the entire purpose of a will, it is vital to have a will in place. Only God can know when that time will come and it can be when you least expect it. Planning ahead and consistently updating your will is the only way to ensure that you are leaving your legacy as per your wishes to care for loved ones after your death. Unfortunately, there are stories time and time again of people who have not diligently prepared their estate planning documents or updated them accordingly, only to unexpectedly pass on without being able to express their wishes for their legacy through their will. The Foundation always encourages the



Church members to not fall victim to this unfortunate circumstance, especially if you are younger and have young children.

Another reason to spring clean your estate planning documents is that, while the laws and practices of estate planning are mostly unwavering, there are evolutions in life that bring about change in the laws and practices in turn bringing a need for changes within your will and estate planning. For instance, cyber assets and its protection is quickly becoming a topic that most estate planning professionals are learning to advise their clients on protecting their assets online in an age of identification and asset hacking. There are new practices that your estate planning professional can assist you with to protect your assets online.

As you can see, the reasoning for spring cleaning a house is to monitor your home and to start fresh for a new year in the spring. The reasoning for spring cleaning your estate planning documents is a mirror image to your house cleaning. It is not only vital to your loved ones and legacy, but just a good habit to begin early in life or maintain if later in life.

FMC Foundation has provided information on updating wills and maintaining strong estate planning practices to the Church for many years now. For more information on how to update your will and other estate planning documents, please contact the Foundation at 817-336-5698 or e-mail your questions to fmc@fmcfoundation.org.

While we are not professionals and we can provide you with information, we do also have connections with estate planning professionals throughout the Church community that can assist you with any stage of will updating and estate planning. If you would like such a recommendation, please contact the Foundation through the communication methods above for assistance.

My hope is that you will go forth into spring and the upcoming summer knowing that, like your home, your legacy and life affairs are fresh, clean and in order – thanks to a little yearly updating and cleansing on your estate planning documents.

