

Time for an Oil Change?  
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I know very little about what makes cars work. I know if the gas gauge creeps towards empty, I will soon need to get gas. Or wait till my husband wants to drive my car and let him do it for me. (It's all in the timing, folks.) The rest of my car knowledge can be summed up this way: If the car won't start, it means the car is "broken" and my husband either needs to fix what's broken or buy me a different car. (I tried to put all that in our marriage vows, but the minister said that wasn't a good idea.)

The other day, I was listening to a lady on the radio give hints about car maintenance to women. She said we should pay attention to the oil gauge. Seems like there's an oil indicator light on the dash to indicate if the engine needs more oil. (Or in my case, let my husband add more oil for me.) She said that dirty oil makes the car operate inefficiently and can even irreparably damage the engine.

I was reminded of the times I've seen my husband change the oil in the car. I've seen how clear and clean and "oily" the oil looks coming out of the oil can. I've seen the dirty oil that came from the car. Black and thick with gunk, it reminded me of the dirty silt from the bottom of a pond or the muddy banks of a river. That's the moment God stepped into the midst of things with that thought of clean oil versus dirty oil.

God is the oil of my life. Clean and pure oil that makes my life run smoothly. If I keep my thoughts and actions and attitudes in line with the thoughts, actions, and attitudes of God, my life runs smoothly. I have clean oil to help me drive through the challenges I face on my life's road. Going uphill is no problem, because the clean oil of God propels me.

However, if I stray from listening to God's Voice, if I ignore spending time with Him in His Word, if I think I'm too dependent for God and I can "do life" on my own, my disobedience contaminates my spiritual engine. If I neglect to thank Him for every good and perfect gift, if I don't confess my sin to Him, if I reject His leading in my life, I add sinful thoughts, actions, and attitudes to my oil, my life. Sin contaminates the oil of my life. Without regular doses of God's clean oil, I find that my oil is so thick with sin and I can no longer go forward.

"Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me. Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about. See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life." (Psalm 39:23-24, The Message.)

What contaminates of sin are you putting in your oil?