

Engine Troubles

“I Don’t Need God”

Going down the highway, the “check engine” light comes on.

If you are driving an older car with lots of wear and tear, it would not come as a great surprise that you need a mechanic. You would be expecting to visit one sooner or later. But if your car is new and in great condition, it would be easy to assume you won’t be needing a mechanic. The indicator light might come as a real surprise, and you may ignore it as a false alarm.

Those who are struggling tend to be more open to God.

When people are vulnerable, aware of their weaknesses and their struggles, they are like the first drivers in our example. They more easily recognize their need for God, and they are often more receptive to his guidance. This is probably why, throughout Scripture, God tends to work through those who are lowly instead of the important and powerful.

With worldly blessings, we can think we don’t need God.

Those who have all of their material needs met, for example, are more likely to feel self-reliant. They don’t need to depend on anyone else, including God. Even if everything is not perfect, most of us live comfortably. We have family and friends who love us and care for us. We have plenty of ways to be entertained. In such times, it is easy to think, “I’m doing just fine without God.”

But there are often signs that all is not well.

Like the “check engine” light coming on in our car, there are often subtle signs that all is not going as well as we pretend. We may struggle with anxiety or depression. There might be a boredom to our lives, or a quiet sense that something important is missing. We may distract ourselves from these realities with constant noise or activities, so that we don’t have to be silent and ask ourselves deeper questions. Sometimes, this interior pain can manifest itself through unhealthy relationships or behaviors, or we try to dull the pain with overeating, pornography, drinking, or drugs.

Have you ever had unexpected joy?

Besides paying attention to the warning signs that you might be experiencing, it can also help to look at the times that life has surprised you. Have there been times in your life when you have felt that life could not get any better, and yet someone or something entered your life and brought you unexpected joy? This is how it can be with God. When we invite him into our lives, we begin to discover a joy and a peace deeper than what we knew before.

