

Checking the Gauges

By Christina Dixon

It's 5:00 P.M. Friday. I'm leaving work in a hurry. I've got to go the bank, the grocery store, and tie up loose ends for my weekend commitments. If I can get out of the parking lot before 5:02 I'll get home fifteen minutes sooner than I would otherwise and I'll be just a little ahead of the game. Then, I see it. **CHECK GAUGES!**

The red letters glaring at me drew my attention to the gas gauge. Aw man! I forgot to go get gas on my lunch hour! Before I knew it, my hand was rising to hit the steering wheel. I was filled with frustration because now I had to add something else to my TO DO list.

Later, after I calmed myself I thought, "Lord, how many times do I fail to check the gauges of my life?" When it comes to cars we have various gauges with their red lights and dingy bells to warn us of potential problems. But what are the gauges of our heart? How can we know that our heart is close to being "out" of God's love **before** our thin patience causes us to yell out something we will regret? How can we keep ourselves from getting "empty"?

As I think about how frequently I pull into gas stations and grocery stores to fill my car and cupboard, I am challenged to realize that I need to increase the number of times I fill up on God's Spirit in my life. Like my refrigerator and cabinetry is depleted by meals I prepare, my supply of God's love and joy decreases with each of life's difficulties and challenges. It's such a natural part of life that at times, the reality of how low I am on God's character sneaks up on me; no patience with others or myself.

I realize that one of my gauges is going off, when I find myself becoming agitated by little things like having to stop to get gas, waiting in line at the market, my husband leaving the toilet seat up, or even something as simple as the telephone ringing.

"Christina, you're running low on the fruit of God's Spirit!!!! Refill! Refill! Refill!"

It's so comforting to know that when I'm running low I can spend time alone with God, and He'll fill me up again. Amazing! Little things don't phase me when I've been with my Heavenly Father. Somehow being with Him puts things in perspective for me. Consequently, molehills stop looking like mountains and I'm a lot less likely to put last things first.

How about you? Have you checked your gauges recently? Are your gauges working? Have you become familiar enough with yourself to determine what your warning lights are? Or do people and consequences have to tell you, "You've gone too far?"

Make some time to take a look at how loving, joyful, patient, kind and faith filled you are. Be honest! Are the warning lights blaring? Do fear, envy, impatience, harsh conversation, and moodiness tend to be the norm? If you're already on empty, don't stress yourself out. Ask God to fill you with His Character. Sure, it's a whole new way to look at life. But there's no doubt that, when you are able to see that you're running low on love and you decide to make time to "fill up" by spending time with God, your relationships with others are better for it.



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