

---

## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

May 17, 2015

*“Don’t hesitate to be enthusiastic - be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord!”*

Romans 12:11 (Common English Bible)

This week I received in the mail a helpful reminder from Jiffy Lube that my car’s regular and routine oil change and service was due. The reminder stated, “This isn’t just an oil change; it’s preventive maintenance to help keep your vehicle running right.” Naturally, Jiffy Lube is appealing to my desire that my car continue to meet my transportation needs with little worry. Regular maintenance equals dependability.

This is precisely what the apostle Paul is saying here in Romans. Paul is reminding us that a sturdy faith, a faith that is reliable in every season of life, requires regular and routine maintenance. The difficulty for some people is that they imagine that a Christian faith - and life - can be kept up without any particular effort. As David H. C. Read once shared, “Is your Daddy a Christian?” asked the little boy. “Yes,” said his friend, “but he’s not been doing much about it recently.” What is remarkable in that story is that the poor maintenance of a Christian life can be noticed by a little child!

It is easy to take our Christian faith for granted and rely on being sustained by our past experiences or in the continuing life of our church family. When a reminder card arrives in the mail (or a monthly newsletter from the church!) to attend to our spiritual formation and growth, we simply ignore it. After all, our lives are already full. We simply don’t have the time for such a luxury of a daily discipline of reading the Bible or sharing a devotional with another. The sober truth is, like a neglected car, failure to remain enthusiastic in the Christian faith results in a faith that fails us when we depend upon it the most.

You and I are either better Christians than we were a year ago – or worse. The Bible tells us that we simply cannot drift into God’s Kingdom. So does our practical experience. We cannot drift into a healthier diet or lifestyle. We cannot drift into a deeper relationship with those we love. And we don’t drift into a secure financial retirement. The same is true for our faith. Our Christian faith is confronted daily with doubts and challenges from the ever present evil and suffering around us. Be ready, says Paul. Be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord and your faith will sustain you in the midst of any storm.

Doug Hood

*Reprinted from Dr. Hood’s May 8, 2015 Blog Posting.*

