

43--- Perform Regular Maintenance

As guys we are in the habit of bringing our vehicles in for routine maintenance. We change the oil, oil filter, air filter, transmission fluid and check the tire pressure. We also have major maintenance at regular intervals of say every 30,000 miles. Why do we do this? Because the manufacturer tells us that's how we get the maximum value from the investment we made in our vehicle. So, if God designed you and bought you for a price shouldn't you do routine maintenance as well as major maintenance on your mind, body and spirit? Don't you want God to get the maximum return on the sacrifice of His son for us?

For me there is a need for daily maintenance. The first thing I do after getting out of bed and taking care of bodily functions is head to my den for daily quiet time. I am currently following devotions in "Jesus Calling". In the past I have followed "Daily Bread" and Oswald Chambers' "My Utmost for His Highest". The devotional is not the goal but is a vehicle to get to the goal of spending time with Jesus BEFORE ENGAGING in the issues in front of me. This daily preparation equips me to deal with whatever the world hurls at me. Another important part of my preparation to meet the world is to make sure I have put on the Armor of God. Details of this process can be found in the session entitled "The importance of using God's tools". Once I have spent time thanking God for what He has done, is doing and will do in my life, I can get His input on things that are on my mind. If you have not done this, it may sound weird to you. Trust me, it felt weird until I saw how talking things out with God brought issues into clear perspective. Now I cannot start the day without bringing struggles before Him and talking them out.

The second part of my routine maintenance occurs every Tuesday night when I come together with brothers to study the Word. This band of brothers knows my struggles. They offer insight. They offer encouragement. They pray for me, my family and those I minister to. They are the "earthly chargers" that help refill my ministry engine. Between my heavenly and earthly chargers I am blessed to the max! Thanks to these brothers I am never left to my own wisdom. They breathe God's wisdom into me and

every man in our small group. Over 7 plus years we have gotten to know each other at a deep level. We have walked alongside brothers who lost loved ones, lost relationships and endured difficult financial times. No brother has ever walked alone! We share burdens and praises!

The third part of my routine maintenance is a small number of men who have been a part of my walk for decades. These are Godly men who I can turn to when I need advice or a sounding board. They are mature believers who often call me for advice or a sounding board as well. Over the years we have been able to develop a transparent relationship that makes that call "safe" because I know I will not be judged. I may need correcting but it will be delivered in an uplifting manner. My pastor recently asked everyone to list 10 people who have impacted them over the years and 10 people they have impacted. Like my pastor I challenge you to answer the question below--- 10 people who have impacted you and 10 people you have impacted. Don't be surprised if you need more work in this area of your walk. It took me twenty years to get to the point where I can complete these two lists. Remember that life is a marathon not a sprint! If you don't have 10 people on each list just set a goal and ask Jesus to bring these people into your life. Then step back and watch the collisions occurs as He blesses you with Godly men who pour His wisdom into you and struggling men who need you to pour His wisdom into them!

The most important part of routine maintenance is being plugged into ministry. We have been designed to serve, not to be served. Look around you. Find a Rescue Mission, Food Bank, Prison Ministry or Outreach Ministry and join them in doing His work. You will discover that service fills a hole that cannot be filled by donating money alone. People need to see and hear from folks who love and care for them. People need people who treat them with respect and dignity regardless of their circumstances. By the way, once you get to know these ministries at a personal level you won't give less money because you'll see where your money is going and why it is so important to invest in the Kingdom!

As you examine your maintenance routine I challenge you to set aside time every day to connect with Him, find or establish a small group and allow your band of brothers to support and encourage you and get plugged into ministry wherever He leads you. As you take care of the routine maintenance you will find your walk is richer. You'll find that your life has more joy and peace. You'll find He has plans for you, plans to prosper you, plans to give you hope and a future. Fail to do the routine maintenance and (you know, so I don't need to lay it out for you).

Verse:

John 15:4 NIV "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me".

Personal Reflection: How is my daily time with Him? Do I need to pay closer attention to daily quiet time? Am I in a band of brothers? Do I carry my burdens alone or do I have a bunch of guys praying for my struggles? Have I found a place to serve? Am I plugged into a local ministry?

Group Discussion: How can you encourage your members to do routine maintenance?

Are you willing to allow your brothers to hold you accountable?

Can the group get plugged into a local ministry?