

As cars get older, they develop some annoying peculiarities. For instance, my Toyota Camry has some kind of recurring problem with the front driver's side brake. It begins to shake very badly and I have to have the rotors turned. Then it is fine for a while, but after about three months it begins to have the same problem again. I figure that it must have been wrecked at some time in the past that caused a significant alignment problem.

Another problem it has is a little harder to deal with. When the humidity in the air gets pretty high, and especially when it rains, the engine will start missing and sputtering. The problem usually doesn't last long, but it can cause me to stall out in the worst of circumstances.

Anyone that has ever driven has most likely felt the aggravation of trying to start a car that sputters, misses, almost catches and then dies. Again and again it comes close to starting, but then fails. You pause for a little to let the starter rest, but your impatience causes you to crank it again. Then you beat your fists on the steering wheel in frustration when nothing seems to work.

I would think that God might feel the same agitation with us. Most of us are pretty hard to start. We ought to work just fine, but instead we just sputter and stall out. We have the best mechanic, the best fuel, and the best engineering, but something keeps us from performing. We all start to do good and follow God's will, but before we can rev up good we conk out. We must find a way to generate sustained, consistent, operation.

Another little quirk about this particular problem with my car is that it runs fine when it is just idling, but when you try to step on the gas it dies. Again there is a parallel to our own performance. We seem to be running fine until the need to operate at a higher level is presented. Then we balk and let the world choke us down.

Now I have done everything that I can to get my car problem fixed at the shop. They have replaced spark plugs, distributor wires and cap, tuned it up, and still nothing works. But there is no way to duplicate the conditions that cause the problem. No one has enough knowledge of the operation of the car to fix it.

In our spiritual lives, God knows everything about the operation of our soul. We call His Son, our advocate, the Great Physician; perhaps we could call Him "the Great Mechanic" as well. We have to turn ourselves over to him if we are to achieve optimum performance without sputtering. God can make us run smoothly and reliably, no matter what the conditions are in our lives. God can take the Spark of Good that lies within us and keep it firing so that we can reach a closer ride with Him.