

## Equipped to avoid running on empty

Have you ever run out of fuel while driving your car? This happened to me and it's a most frustrating experience! However, I could have avoided this if I had checked the fuel gauge and then filled up the tank before setting out. I would then have been able to enjoy the journey because my progress wouldn't have been halted by an empty fuel tank. In daily living, we are sometimes in danger of running on empty. Perhaps you will find the following principles helpful when your spiritual fuel gauge is hovering around the empty mark.

### Check the fuel gauge

How do you know when your spiritual fuel gauge is low? Some indicators are you find yourself doing things in your own strength, rather than depending on God; reading the Bible is a mechanical, rather than an exciting experience; your prayers are no longer full of hope and expectation, but are dull and lifeless; serving God becomes an effort; and there can be a mismatch between what you believe and how you behave. Can you relate to any of these indicators? If so, you could be running on empty.

### Fill up the tank

The solution to an empty fuel tank is to fill it up. But how do you deal with an empty spiritual tank? By having it filled up! In Ephesians 5:18, we are instructed to be "*filled with the Spirit*" (NIV). In the same way as our cars need to be filled up with fuel on a regular basis if they are to run well, we need to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. This means every area of our lives is influenced by His indwelling presence as we give Him more and more control of what we think, say and do. When we are filled with the Spirit, we don't have more of Him than when we're not filled, but He has more of us.

Imagine filling up your car with a mixture of fuel and water. You probably wouldn't get very far when you tried to drive it because the fuel would be diluted by the presence of the water. We need to be serious about being completely filled with the Spirit and not be satisfied with our lives being directed partly by Him and partly by our own selfish desires.

I sometimes wonder if there are any areas of my life with a "Keep Out" sign as far as the Holy Spirit is concerned. It seems I'm prepared to give Him control of part, or even most, of my life but stop short at giving Him control of it all. If this rings a bell with you, you might find it helps to think about a particular issue in your life that you need to bring under the Spirit's control. It might be something to do with your thought life, the way you speak to others, or a persistent habit that is dishonouring to God. Pray about this regularly and invite the Holy Spirit to change you more and more into the person He wants you to be. Don't be afraid to fill up the tank by allowing Him into every part of your experience.

### Enjoy the journey

When the tank of your car is filled up, you can travel for miles and miles without having to worry about coming to a sudden stop as a result of running out of fuel. You can enjoy the company of those who travel with you, as well as the scenery you might pass on your journey. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit - when we allow Him access to every part of our lives - this gives us a deep-seated joy which accompanies us on our way. Sometimes, the scenery of life will be beautiful and amazing; at other times, it will be ugly and depressing. But, if we're filled with the Spirit, we won't find ourselves coming to a sudden halt as we experience life's difficulties. He will enable us to keep going through all the ups and downs that come our way. He is the One who fuels us for the journey, not ourselves or our own efforts, and His power can never fail.

Next time you check the fuel gauge on your car, take a look at your spiritual fuel gauge too. Don't run on empty - be filled with the Spirit!