

Part I.1-Before You Drive- General Maintenance

First things first: Specialized Cars Need a Master Mechanic?

If you're like most Americans today your family probably has more than one car. However, even if your family only has one car there are distinct things about that vehicle and why you have that car compared to all the other cars you could have had. We'll look at the "only car" aspect later in this chapter. If your family has multiple cars let me ask you a question. Are they all the same color? How about the shape? What kind of style are they? Are all your cars a sedan, SUV, sports car, etc...? More than likely your cars are different sizes, colors, and shapes. They are different year models and I'm sure in different shapes. They probably get different gas mileage and I bet they serve different purposes.

I want you to think of your teen in terms of the cars you own. To help them pass the Drivers Ed Test of Life you need to understand what type of teen you have. What is their natural bent or temperament? How does that God-given bent affect their character and personality? What's the difference between their temperament, their personality, and their character? Where are they in the sibling pecking order? In other words, are they a 1st born, middle child, last child, or only child? All of these factors determine what type of "car" you have sitting in your driveway about to take off on the road of life. Is that teen ready to meet the challenges they will face on the road of life? How well will they compete with other teens on that same road? How can you minimize the accidents that could occur? Have you prepared your teen for that long road trip where they might not return home for a while? To have the confidence to pass this test it all starts with the basics. Let's take a look at the requirements I'm going to call "**General Maintenance**".

Psalm 139: 14-16 says, "*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*"

Let me start by saying sadly, many teens and if we were honest some parents, don't really "feel" that they are fearfully and wonderfully made. When they look in the mirror they don't see anything wonderful. They don't see a God who was intricately involved in their creation and their success in life. Perhaps they were worked on by inexperienced "mechanics", or driven on the road improperly. One thing for sure, according to this scripture they were no accident. God took a great deal of time thinking about them. According to Psalm 139, your teen was **precisely** planned and **purposely** planned. To be woven together there must be a conscious effort of meticulous detail. He cared enough about them to put into place a plan for their well-being as their days were ordained in His book. We've already read about Jeremiah 29: 11 that says, "*I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*". That doesn't sound like an accident to me. God promises if we follow His plan, we'll prosper in what we do and have hope for our future. Now that verse does not say that if we follow God's plan then we

will never experience defeat, sadness, or frustration. But it does say that during a defeat, sadness, or frustration that God will help us experience victory (prosper). Remember, it's GOD'S PLAN, not our plan. His ways may not be what we think they should be.

This guide will help improve proper maintenance of the vehicle, our teens being the vehicles, so they will perform as they were created. Psalm 139 teaches us that God made each of us with a unique "bent" and an ordained path. We often struggle with our ordained path and unique capabilities because we inherited a condition from our parents. They, in turn, inherited from their parents and so on and so on. We were born with this condition (defect) and there is only one cure. This condition has been known to be called in the Bible as "the natural man", "the flesh", "carnal self", "the old man", "corruptible flesh", and "sinful human nature", to name a few. It is what causes so much confusion in the lives of people, especially teens. No one likes to say the word because it's not a pretty word. But our defect within our cars (including ourselves) is called SIN. We might say we are what the world calls "lemons" when it comes to a car with multiple problems.

The word sin has an emphasis on the "I" of the word because it always is about me (us). Sin causes us to be our God; we know what's best at all times. Pride in our lives brings about a defect within us and perfection goes out the window. This imperfection all the sudden drives us away from God and causes confusion and desperation wanting to know what's the meaning of life and why do we feel so incomplete. We do things we don't want to do and say things we don't want to say but we do it anyway. We hurt people, we frustrate people, we bring anger and bitterness into relationships and we wish we could all make it just go away.

The apostle Paul stated this confusion in Romans 7:15, 18-20 when he said, *"I don't understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it". (NLT)* Sounds pretty bleak and confusing, doesn't it? This sounds like the car that starts up in the driveway but every time you put your foot on the pedal it sputters and then dies. It does not fulfill its purpose of why it was made in the first place. Thank goodness Paul didn't stop there. Instead, he wrote a little later in Romans 8:1, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Victory is attainable.

Let me start by saying that if Christ is not at the center of the relationship between mom and dad then it's going to be pretty rough. If you are a single parent, then no one has to tell you how much more difficult life became with your teen when you do it alone without a partner, not only financially but emotionally. Life is already pretty tough even with Christ being a part of parenting, I can't imagine how difficult it must be for parents who try and fix these major problems without Christ. The world has a way of beating up mom and dad by bringing a lot of negativity into the home, especially through today's technology. If you are reading this material and have never had a time when you trusted Jesus Christ or your teen does not have a personal relationship with Jesus, then what better time than now to consider giving your life to Him. He is the Master Mechanic and has the solution to the defect that is built into the car.

You see, God according to Jeremiah and Psalms has a plan for all the cars He built. The

problem is we got hold of the blueprints and decided we know better than God on how to build the vehicle. We decided to make some "modifications" to the vehicle and made some choices that forever affected our relationship with the creator. The Bible calls this sin. It's this sin that separates us from God. Sin keeps us from communicating with God and hurts our ability to have peace with Him. It's just like when you have a major fight or disagreement with your teen and immediately the lines of communication become closed. We don't talk and we don't understand each other very well. Sin has a way of destroying a relationship. In this case, our defect within us (our car), will forever keep us from a personal relationship with the Master Mechanic (God), and eventually send us to an eternity of unbelievable pain and personal torture of loneliness because we'll be separated from His love, for God is love. The Bible says in 1 John 4:8, "*Anyone who does not love does not love God, for God is love.*"

However, it can be fixed if we take our car to the right person and don't listen to mechanics that don't have our best interest at heart. Have you ever asked someone you trust, "who is a good mechanic?", so you can take your car there and get it fixed. Trust me, to have a real purpose in your life and feel contentment and peace with your kids; take your car to the Master Mechanic if you haven't already. In chapter 10 verse 9 of the book of Romans, it says, "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." If you've never done this I implore you to seriously consider where you stand with Jesus Christ. He wants to help you so much as a parent and He will help you if you commit as you go through this course to follow the blueprint He has designed for you.