

# The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ

*in Guinnett*

## Check Your Oil - Is the Engine Light On?

By Kendall Knight

**Elders**

Steve Galbreath  
Alan Rouse

**Evangelist**

Richard Alawaye

**Teacher**

Gary Roberson

**Women's Ministry & Welfare**

Sarah Alawaye  
Roxanne Galbreath  
Sherry Rouse

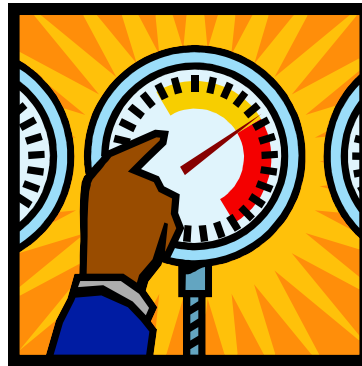
**Teens**

John and Marisabel  
Becker

**Deacons**

Peter Berry  
Steve Collier  
Danny Doble  
Danny Emmett  
Audie Flowers  
Bill Francis  
Patrick Freeman  
Glenn Hayes  
Kendall Knight  
Karl Lynn  
Russ McGarr  
Alvin Modest  
Jeff Mueller  
Todd Reynolds  
Dan Stehr  
Ken Watson

Football season has arrived. There is a very common expression used by football coaches. A coach will say about a player, "Let's check his oil." This is a huge statement as it is referring to a player's heart, character, passion and dedication toward his role and responsibilities. It simply means can he be counted on under fire. Is he who he appears to be, and can he be counted on to hold up when the lights are on?



Over the last several months I have been fascinated by the book of James. I have seen this book from a very different perspective. Many scholars and Christians appreciate James' directness and frankness. It's certainly a book to check the believers' oil for sure to make sure our spiritual engine lights stay off. The book of James is fascinating as it encourages Christians in every significant area of our spiritual lives. The book of James encourages us to look at our walk with God in a very direct and pure fashion; Are we who we say we are?

I have also discovered that James understood God's grace at a very deep level ([James 2:12-13](#)). He helps us to see that MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGEMENT. To me this is the most profound expression in the entire book. James was a major contributor in the first

century church and had to deal with a major issue. The council at Jerusalem could have torn the church apart. The Hebraic Jews wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised prior to becoming followers of Jesus. It was James who said, "We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God." ([Acts 15:19](#)) Mercy gives us the chance to grow and project God's love to the world and one another. The Christians in Jerusalem obviously were struggling with being judgmental and hypocritical. How different are we is the question? When we are merciful we are able to grow in our walk with God in every area of our lives. Judgmental behavior will limit us and ultimately hurt our overall walk with God and his people.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

9/11-13: Marriage Retreat "Always & Forever"  
Winshape Retreat in North Georgia – Speakers: Jim and Virginia Lefler (Chicago Church of Christ)

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# Check Your Oil - Is the Engine Light On?

(Continued)

James 1 encourages us to face trials with joy and faith. This without question is very difficult. I personally have experienced many personal trials. It is easy to become bitter and the like. Many times joy is the furthest thing from our minds, certainly mine. Every day I must keep God's mercy in front of me. Are you joyful during trials? The latter part of chapter 1 is challenging us to listen to the word and do what it says through pure religion ([James 1:27](#)).

James 2: Powerful passage on favoritism. We have to be careful in this area of our lives. James wants us to be diverse in our thoughts and hearts. James says don't favor the rich over the poor. Thus mercy triumphs over judgment. As we know, this is a challenging issue for all of us as well. We must do all that we can to treat all people the way God would treat them. It is always easier to look at the shining star. The latter part of Chapter 2 is all about faith and deeds ([James 2:14-22](#)). If you have true faith you show it in your deeds and actions. Do we faithfully explore areas or relationships outside of our comfort zones, fighting for those relationships? Are we actively trying to show our neighbors the love of Jesus? Or have we imposed judgment on them? James uses the profound examples of Abraham & Isaac as well as Rahab's faith to distinguish the differences between their current faith and where it needs to go. God used James again to take judgment out of play. So should we.

James 3 is a great chapter about speech and wisdom. The different types of wisdom we struggle with as well. This is an area that I need much prayer in. I have set many a forest on fire by my tongue ([James 3:6](#)). It is so important to be self-controlled with the tongue. Once the words are out they cannot be brought back. The latter part of Chapter 3 speaks to two types of wisdom. For me it is so easy to be worldly in my thought process. Much of it is due to the fact that I am prideful and independent by nature. At times I do not solicit the necessary feedback for spiritual wisdom ([James 3: 17-18](#)). How often do you get advice on the critical spiritual decisions in your life? Check your oil for worldly vs. spiritual wisdom. Spiritual is very pure and full of mercy. Check your oil in these areas: is the engine light on?

James 4: Submission to God and one another. Pride vs. Humility! Pride is disastrous and destroys. God clearly opposes the proud. Humility is the answer to all quarrels, disagreements, relational reconciliation, etc. Humility shows the highest regard for God. It imitates Jesus at his core. "Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!" ([Philippians 2:8](#)). We are all messed up and we all make mistakes. If we humble ourselves, we will be lifted up. This is a promise from God ([James 4:10](#)).

James 5: Encourages us to be givers and not takers. Being suburban Christians we still live better than most around the world. This is another area in my life where I am checking my oil. I must give all that I am and have to glorify God. James is challenging us to live selfless lives ([James 5:1-6](#)). [James 5:7-12](#) is very challenging as many of us are in the face of suffering. James encourages the Christians again to hold on. God is near. He uses an example of the prophet Job who faced some severe trials just to hold on. He is encouraging all of us to be men and women of our word ([James 5:11-12](#)). He also reminds us again that God is a God full of compassion and mercy. The latter part of James 5 is a wonderful way to close a book of this nature. The spiritual engine light may be on and our oil levels are low. James tells us how to turn off the spiritual engine light. He simply says in [James 5:16](#), "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective". He again uses another prophet, Elijah, as the book closes to display God's enormous love, compassion and mercy. After we have changed our oil and tuned ourselves up we will be able to help restore others to the faith. James concludes with an awesome verse in which he says, "remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error from his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins" ([James 5:20](#)).

Brothers and sisters, thanks be to God for his love and incredible mercy. In conclusion: **CHANGE YOUR OIL AND TURN OFF THE ENGINE LIGHT, BECAUSE GOD IS WITH US.**

# The Gifts of the Saints

By Peter Berry

*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.* (Philippians 4:12-13)

2009 has been a difficult year for many, due to poor health, financial stress, or job loss. Our congregation has certainly seen the effects of the past two years in the housing and job markets, and the number and severity of needs among us has grown to reflect the issues in the world around us.

But we are the saints, the Christians – surely among us we can find those who will provide help for the needy. Who has been able to help our brothers and sisters through their illnesses, unemployment, or other difficult times this year? You have!

Through our benevolence contributions at midweek services and your contributions to our food bank, YOU have enabled our ministry to assist those in need with paying for groceries, prescription medications, rent, sending children to The Swamp, water and electricity bills, medical insurance premiums, doctor's bills, car insurance payments

In 2009, we were able to provide funding assistance to help nine of our children make it to The Swamp for fun, learning, friendship, and what sometimes becomes a defining spiritual moment in their lives. Overall we have been able to provide over \$14,000 in direct benevolence assistance to our brothers and sisters so far this year in over 50 separate gifts, as well as an additional \$2,600 to support adoptions and orphanages. Furthermore, the ongoing availability of the food pantry has been stretching the food budgets of some of our families all year long. Each of the 50+ individual gifts has made a brother's or sister's life better – your giving makes

a huge difference to at least one person almost every week!

How can we do this? Although we certainly have some individuals in a position to contribute large sums of money when the need arises, the vast majority of the funding comes from individual contributions of under \$20 at a time. I Corinthians 12:14 tells us “*Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.*” It is through the hundreds of small contributions from the whole body that we have been able to meet so many different needs this year. And this strengthens the church, for Paul further states in verse 26 of the same passage that “*If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*” Our individual contributions given out of compassion help alleviate the suffering of others within the body, and so reduce the suffering of the whole.

From where I sit as one of your benevolence deacons, I have been able to see the amazing generosity of the church whenever a need arises, week after week, year after year. I have never yet gone hunting for donations of money, food, or time to meet a need and come up empty. Most of you have heard me repeat this thankfulness and appreciation of your giving hearts, and I repeat this frequently because not many of us get to see the giving in action; many of our most charitable members are also the slowest to take any credit.

However, I also get to see the encouragement your giving provides to so many of your brothers and sisters; I am constantly thanked, and yet I'm only giving away God's money, money that you have given back to God for use in the ministry. I always try to remind the recipients that it is God's grace and the giving hearts of many that help them; I am truly just the messenger! However, allow me to assure the whole congregation that your gifts are received with thanksgiving and appreciation in every case. You may not see the smiles or hear the thanks, but they are there. Thank you!

## A Chapter from "Living Within the Silver Lining"

By Lisa Washington

### Lesson 24: I am able, because He made it so

It is very good to look back at your life and see where you have come from. It is a beautiful place to be, to have lived and learned in the silver lining of life. It gives you the strength and hope to move through the next dark cloud that will shadow your life. Here is what I shared with my friends and family as I reflected on what God has brought me through. May it help give you strength, hope and courage.

How do we get through hardships and pain?

Philippians 4:13 ~ **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."** Years ago I read this scripture and it gave me so much hope. Here is the definition of each word from this scripture:

**Can:** to be able to; have the ability, power, or skill to; **Do:** to perform, to execute, to accomplish, to finish or complete; **Everything:** all things; **Through:** from one to another by way of; **Give:** to deliver in, to place in the hands of, to bestow, to entrust, to guide or direct; **Strength:** to be strong; mental power, force, vigor, courage, resources, sustenance

Looking at the definitions of these words made this scripture come alive. I looked at the things I have faced in my life, and I say to them all: I am able to do this. I am able to go through the death of my family members; I am able to go through the pain of this loss. I am able to get through my son running away, and to face not knowing where he is from day to day. I am able to live my life being chronically ill, living faithfully and with much victory. The beauty and grace of God is that I have done all of this and so much more.

You are able; God has made you able. He has given you the skill, the power, the ability, the know-how. You can perform, execute, accomplish, finish and complete all

things. It comes from Him to you. He delivers it to you, He places it in your hands; He bestows and entrusts it to you. He will be the one to guide and direct you. You will have the strength, the mental power, the force and vigor, the courage, the resources and the sustenance to do everything – all things. You can endure the pain you are going through; you can handle the difficulties you are facing. You can be successful and live out the dreams He has given you. Whenever I feel afraid, or feel like I am drowning in life, I remember this scripture, but I also take a check of my own heart.

When we feel we cannot get through something, we have to ask who or what we are we trying to get through this with. If we are trying to go through life on our own power and know-how, if we are trying to get through by relying on our relationships, our spouses or any other means outside of God, then we will not make it through as God has intended. When you just feel stuck and faithless about something, who are you going to for help with your situation? Where is Jesus – is He the path you are walking on? He has to be the one who is taking you through this journey. Our families, friends and spouses are there to help us as well, but they should not be our ultimate SOURCE.

The scripture says I can do everything through HIM; we cannot do everything through human means and human knowledge. We need God. We need Jesus. We need His Holy Spirit. So, be encouraged. You can handle whatever you are facing right now. You have been provided with it all, from His hands to yours. He has entrusted you with the ability, power, skill and know-how. But it must be through Him. Look at your life and say, "I can do this, because He has given me the strength to do so."

Much light and peace to you.

### Deacon's Directory

Karl Lynn	New Members	770-979-4292
Ken Watson	Benevolence	678-376-2677
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Danny Doble	Spanish Translation	770-931-0601
Audie Flowers	Visitation	770-277-5749
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	High School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Alvin Modest	Worship	678-344-0061
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Jeff Mueller	Benevolence	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

### Contribution

7/05 - \$6,559.00

7/12 - \$8,131.00

7/19 - \$7,893.00

7/26 - \$6,963.50

8/02 - \$9,474.20

8/09 - \$12,984.69

8/16 - \$7,912.20

8/23 - \$6,355.20

### Family Group Leaders

Peter & Nancy Berry	Suwanee	678-376-1878
Steve & Barbara Collier	Lilburn	770-717-5784
Jim & Chandra Dew	Lilburn	770-330-3479
Danny & Cynthia Doble	Lilburn	770-931-0601
Audie & Jackie Flowers	Snellville	770-277-5749
James & Quiana Martinez	L'ville	678-985-5511
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Ricky & Bridgett Roberson	Snellville	770-879-0868
Joseph & Lisa Washington	L'ville	678-407-0306
Ken & Kat Watson	Suwanee	678-376-2677