

ARE YOUR TIRES HEALTHY TO DRIVE THROUGH LIFE WELL?



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Today, as so many disagree on so much, is there anything we can all agree on? One fact that cannot be disputed by anyone is this: We are all going to die.

Recently a couple of my friends have lost precious loved ones. I didn't have the opportunity to meet them both but I did have the privilege of reading their obituaries, getting a glimpse into who they were, what was important to them, and even what they believed, to a degree.

It made me wonder what my obituary might say. What would my loved ones write about me?

Have you ever considered this? What would others say about you? What would you want them to say? Would what is written align with what you would want to be written? Do all the aspects of your life coincide with what you want to be remembered for?

Are you an open book—is what you see, what you get? Or do you have secret parts of your life? Do you hide things from others? If someone were to pick up your personal cell phone right now, what would your search history say about you? What apps are downloaded to your device? What would your screen time reveal was important?

Are there misalignments in your life like this—meaning who you are on the outside, wanting others to see, does not align with what is on the inside—what is really true? Is there so much of a misalignment that you don't even know if or how things could ever be properly aligned?

Our days are numbered. We never know when our last day will come. What if it was tomorrow? Are you ready? What legacy will you leave? Will you be remembered in the ways that you want even if your loved ones get a glimpse of hidden things in your life? Or are there things you'd like to change—either in what is seen or unseen?

We all have a story—chapters of our lives we may not be proud of, pages with sordid details others may or may not know about, paragraphs that make us want to cringe, and words we are not proud of. We all have things we would do differently if we could—whole sections of our books that we might want to draw a sharpie marker through or rip out entirely. But we don't get to undo the story that has already been written.

That being said, I ran across this quote by C.S. Lewis, "You can't go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending".

What needs to be changed in your life? How can you begin to change?

Write your obituary. Use words that describe the person you want to be remembered as. Maybe your life embodies goodness and you are writing what others would already say. Or maybe there are things that need to change in order to make them real and true. When your obituary is complete it is time to consider every area of your life—do the words you want to be spoken of you truly align with your real words, thoughts, and actions? Or do you need to make some adjustments, changes, and/or major repairs?

Might we use an example of a vehicle to "drive" my thoughts home?

Let's look at the tires of your vehicle. You need all four tires to be healthy to get you where you need to go. If one has a hole or is flat, that's a problem. If you run over a sharp object, that's a problem. If they are worn, bald, or have uneven wear, that's a problem.

Now, what if each tire represents a different part of you—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual? In order to drive through life well, each of these needs to be addressed.

Let's start with the physical. Your body needs adequate nutrition, rest, and exercise to tread through life well. If you are feeding it junk, not getting exercise, and sleeping poorly, you are not serving that tire well. Ultimately under-inflation and over-inflation are both going to affect the health of that tire and could cause problems with the way you drive.

Under-inflation: Have you ever been "hangry"? That is, so hungry that you're angry, irritated, or on edge? Do you like the way you treat others in this state? Do you exercise regularly? Do you choose healthy foods that fuel your body well? Or perhaps you go to an extreme and deprive your body of food so that you can attain a thinner outward appearance. Might this be you?

Over-inflation: Do you lack self-control? Does food control many of your thoughts, making you be less others-centered and more self-consumed? How about over-inflated exercise or work? Do you take it to the extreme where it becomes such a priority, taking so much of your time that you cannot balance life and show others their importance?

This tire has always been a difficult one for me. The world today judges what is on the outside, oftentimes hindering people from seeing the inside. The truth is, there is a specific amount of air that needs to be in this tire—it needs to be balanced well and provide the things you need to help the other tires do their jobs well. How is your physical tire? Do you need to make any changes to make it healthier?

Next up: the mental tire. I've talked about this considerably in my last couple of articles—from "You are what you think" to "Winning with warranties and plans". Our mental tires are often ignored. Our minds need things to do! We are meant to grow mentally; our brains need to be challenged; wisdom and change come from learning a new way.

You've probably heard it said, "Leaders are readers". Who or what are you leading? Maybe a business, a group, your family, or maybe even your heart? What are you reading to do these things well? To adequately lead, we must put good into our minds. Are you putting good into yours regularly? Or are you running over nails and other sharp objects that are leading to a flat tire?

When you soak in television programs, take in the exhaustive news on CNN or Fox, scroll through your social media newsfeed, or mindlessly watch YouTube videos, how does it make you feel? Does your emotional tire begin to run over sharp objects too because of what you are choosing to put into your mental tire? Do the things you take in build you up, allow you to spread goodness to others, foster positivity, and allow you to be the best you can be, leaving a beautiful legacy?

I am guilty of shredding my tires! I have gotten so wrapped up in social media or news that it brings all sorts of negative emotions to the surface and often times

it takes both my mental and emotional tires right out of commission. When we only have one spare, can you see how not taking care of the mental tire can cause quite a problem in getting you to where you want to be? It hinders living out a life to be proud of for sure. I've had to make some major changes with this tire and have learned that it's glorious and brings much peace when I take care of my mind.

This leads right into the third tire—the emotional tire. I could probably talk about this tire and the problems that can come about in a whole year of articles because of all that it encompasses! Our emotional tire can lead to significant tread wear or even baldness (ha!) to the point where wires are sticking out and we become a shaky and unsafe mess!

We need to be constantly assessing the emotional tire. We need to talk about feelings, not stuff them. We need to speak truth to ourselves and continually assess our perspective.

Do you ever talk to yourself? I do, all of the time. There are times when I'm at work that Linda will hear the conversation I am having with myself because we share an office. The benefit of this is that, later in the day when I'm talking to myself again, she may have the answer for me because of what I said earlier. I love this—it's so helpful!

The emotional tire needs a lot of talking to. First, we need to talk to ourselves—working through our feelings, sorting through what is true and what is not, learning how to move forward in truth, and not emotion. For instance, we can have a feeling of anger without responding in anger (Eph. 4:26). This takes practice, growth, and often times doing new things.

What new things do you need to do with your emotional tire to prevent baldness and shakiness? Maybe you need a good friend or even a professional to help with this tire. Just as mechanics help install new rubber tires, counselors or psychologists can help with your emotional tire. Great benefits come from seeking professional help and sometimes that is exactly what's needed in order to make this tire healthy.

Finally, there is the spiritual tire. If I could write about the emotional tire for a year's worth of articles, then this tire would take decades. If you know anything about me, then you know, without a doubt, that Jesus is my Savior and King and I am not ashamed of the gospel. I have been persecuted for my beliefs but that is to be expected when so many disagree on so much.

Perhaps, if you'd like to know my thoughts on this tire, you can read some of my past writings. For the sake of this article, I would like to keep it simple.

I believe every one of us has a God-shaped hole in our spiritual tire. This hole has the potential to affect every area (all of the tires) positively or negatively. Which of your tires needs help? If you do not know God, have you ever considered giving Him a try? Maybe you've tried fixing your tires on your own but fall back into old habits and need a new way. Might you be open to seeing how God can help? If you do know God, does the way you think, talk, and act align with His Word and truth?

Both of these are hard—trying a new thing to trust a God you don't yet know and aligning your life to reflect

Jesus—so you can share Him with others. This is our ultimate purpose here—living a life of goodness in order to share Him with others.

My friends, I've tried it both ways. I have such sin in my past that I did not feel worthy of a God-patch in this tire. But when I finally gave Him a try and then began aligning my life with His will, that is when something unbelievable happened. That is when, instead of patching my tire, he gave me new perspectives, desires, and new ways—he changed all my old all of my tires, giving me brand new ones—spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional!

You see, each of our tires affects the other tires—some more profoundly than others. But here is the secret: when the big God hole is taken care of, when we find Jesus, we get brand new amazing all-season tires, with great tread, that become capable of getting us through any storm of life safely.

But is that enough? Here's the deal. Any of us can believe in God. We can go to church, hang out with churchy people, and live "pretty good" lives. However, with any new set of tires, we also need to check our alignment. New tires are great, but if they are not aligned properly, they will wear unevenly, affect other parts like the suspension, and ultimately become prematurely worn.

However, when we check our alignment and make changes and adjustments, our performance becomes remarkable.

There's a song I hear on my music stations often: Only Jesus. It speaks of a legacy. A portion of the lyrics are:

Make it count, leave a mark, build a name for yourself

Dream your dreams, chase your heart, above all else

Make a name the world remembers

But all an empty world can sell is empty dreams

I got lost in the lie but it was up to me

To make a name the world remembers

But Jesus is the only name to remember

And I, I don't want to leave a legacy

I don't care if they remember me

Only Jesus

And I, I've only got one life to live

I'll let every second point to Him

Only Jesus

I've decided, that is what I want my obituary to say. I want the name above all names to be remembered—Only Jesus. My name, it likely won't be remembered in generations to come. But maybe, just maybe as I travel down the road of life, with these four great tires, in proper alignment, someone else might see mine and decide to get new tires too—and maybe if that person gets new tires with great alignment, they can keep passing on the only legacy that matters. Only Jesus.

If your tires are bad—you have the opportunity to change them in order to change the ending of your story. Will you join me in doing so? Together we can drive down the road with great tires, in every changing season, checking our alignment along the way and constantly making adjustments to be sure they are in proper alignment—both in life and our vehicles.

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