

## “Easy” Fixes

At one point of my life, I was a fair mechanic. Though having never worked specifically as one, I had “turned wrenches” on practically everything from single-cylinder two-stroke “weed-eaters” to replacing engines, transmissions, clutches, hydraulic motors, and such on passenger vehicles, “big” trucks (the kind with huge diesel engines and air brakes), bulldozers and construction equipment, and lots and lots of farm tractors... which became the primary source of my “reputation.” So, brethren (and even folks that knew me from the community) often asked for my help with their “tractor problems.” On one such occasion, an elderly brother from church sheepishly asked if I could come out and “take a look” at his tractor. His grandsons had been “bush-hogging” (using a tractor with a heavy duty mower to clear bushes, brush, and small trees) shooting lanes down through the woods for the upcoming deer season when the normally faithful green machine died suddenly and refused to restart. Though it still had all the necessary fuel and fluids and the engine would “spin,” he explained, it simply declined to come back to life. Though with great difficulty, they had retrieved it from deep in the woods and managed to even push (or pull) it back into the barn, and had subsequently tried “everything we know” to revive the beast, nothing worked. As he told me what to him was a baffling and lamentable tale, I thought I already knew what was wrong. But, I agreed for him to take me to and see if I could resuscitate the beloved but deceased family member.

He parked in front of the old barn and obligingly opened the gate for me. As he was reclosing the gate to keep the curious cows out, and thus had his back to me, I immediately spotted what I had suspected to be the culprit - the wire that had been jerked from its terminal on the fuel shut-off valve on top of the injector pump by the brush “the boys” had traversed. I quickly stuck the bare wire back in its previous location and hit the starter button. The “old girl” immediately roared back to life. Astounded, he whirled around and completely abandoned closing the gate. “What did you do?” he managed to close his gaped mouth long enough to ask. Being the sometimes “devilish” preacher that I am, “I laid hands on it and healed it!” was my quick retort. It only took a couple of minutes more to permanently secure the wire back to its former position and function. My “work” was done. It was an “easy fix,” but he still insisted on taking me back into town and buying my lunch in grateful appreciation. What they had “worked on” for several days to a couple of weeks took mere seconds to repair to full working order. The difference between their efforts and mine was simple: **experience** – I not only knew how the fuel system and “kill switch” on that particular model worked (electrical power from that little wire was required to open the valve on the injector pump thus allowing life-giving fuel to flow), I had seen and repaired the exact same issue previously on other tractors!

One of my favorite *proverbs*, perhaps because it reminds me of this story and makes me smile, is Proverbs 14:6b, “... **knowledge is easy to him who has understanding.**” Though the proverbial sage assuredly did NOT have tractor fuel injection systems and kill switches in mind, the principle is the same. Sometimes, if not oftentimes, our most baffling, troublesome, continual, and even infuriating problems in life are “easily fixed” by a little “*knowledge*” and “*understanding.*” And from whence does this “*knowledge*” and “*understanding*” derive? Well, tractor/mechanical issues aside, it

comes from God *generally*, and His word *specifically*. Without the benefit of His omniscience, even life's "little" problems become "BIG," bewildering, and impenetrable.

When our lives become a "continual exercise in crisis management" fueled by one seemingly insurmountable problem after another, it may well be that many if not most of them may be "easily fixed" by simply drawing upon the "*knowledge*" and "*understanding*" provided by God in the divine text.

So rather than pleading for the removal of all of these problematic "issues," ask Him for "*knowledge*" and "*wisdom*" to properly *understand* and *deal* with them, cf. Jas.1:3,5.

Furthermore, and in keeping with our illustrative narrative above, you might also enlist the help of someone who has "been there" and "done that" before themselves. It might be an "easy fix" for them with their *knowledge* and *understanding* of God's operator and repair manual, and the *experienced* they've gained from it. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org))