

## HOWe THINGS ARE...

Hello! So the check engine light in my car turned off! A while ago the check engine light came on. I carefully explained to the car, this is not a good time. I wished for the problem to be: I left the gas cap off the last time I got gas (it happened once before – it was a very nice \$13 problem, a new gas cap). It wasn't the problem. Gas cap was securely on.

After a week or so with the check engine light, I read a column by a woman, Ann Voskamp, talking about thanking God for everything, literally everything. I'm also reading that book, *Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* (AJ Jacobs). --Recommend reading the [column by Voskamp](#), not sure if I'd recommend the [Jacobs book](#).-- It occurs to me, this secular, non-believer guy (Jacobs) is willing to try out things. Why shouldn't I try out thanking God for everything? It feels weird. I start with "Thanks that my check engine light is on" and proceed to thank God for various random things trying not to pre-determine whether a thing is "thank-worthy" or not. Actually it doesn't just feel weird, it feels mean. As in "Thank you God that my friend Katie is in terrible pain", "thanks God that Joe's dog died" (not actual true-life examples, but you understand, if I'm thanking God for everything...).

The next night I went to a concert in downtown Charlotte. I left my house in plenty of time to get there, get lost, and drive around looking for a parking place. Once I'm in the vicinity of downtown, a few times my GPS lady tells me to turn. I turn. She starts with her "recalculating" thing. (*thanking God that I'm lost at this point*). Miraculously, I find the place (*thanking God that I found it*) and I set off now in search of a parking place. I accidentally turn down a narrow street. I see what I think is a place to turn around. I continue down the narrow street. No place to turn around. I make like a 32 point turn. The concert has started at this point (*thank God that I managed to turn around, that I am not still stuck on the narrow street, that I didn't hit any parked cars while maneuvering the turn, and that I'm missing the beginning of the concert*). Continue driving. Have now only a vague idea of where I am in relation to the concert. I find a parking spot (*thank God for the parking spot*). Get out and start walking. Only one wrong turn later, I find the place. I join up with a couple attempting to locate an unlocked door and hoping not to enter on-stage. Find a door (marked with a sign telling us not to use it), but it's unlocked and has us enter not onstage, just some disapproving looks from audience members is all. The place has super air-conditioning (schlepping around hilly downtown Charlotte in July, not so pleasant). Find a seat (*thanking God for the air conditioning, the fact that I found both a parking spot and the place, that I didn't miss the whole concert, and also that I did miss the majority of the first half*). I start wondering, "Did I lock the car?" "How bad a part of town did I park in?", "Will it be dark when the concert is over? And if so, "Was that wise?" "Should I leave now risking additional disapproving looks from fellow audience members?" along with "Will I actually be able to locate my car when the thing is over?" I envision being mugged on the way back to my car. I think what if the check engine thing, whatever that is, prevents the car from starting and I'm stuck in a bad part of town and what if the muggers took my cell phone so I can't call. Reflecting back, I'm not sure why I thought muggers would take my phone and not my keys. It wasn't perhaps my most rational thinking.

After the concert, still light outside, no problem finding car, nothing remotely scary, car starts, check engine light still on. (*now thanking God for safety, that I missed almost half the concert, that I made it to the concert, didn't get mugged, my car started, and the check engine light is on*).

Monday, I'm driving to the store. (*thank God for air conditioning in the car, working car, that the check engine light is off!* (*thank God that the light turned off and that the light was on so that I could be this happy it turned off*)... thinking I might like my thanking God for everything experiment...

For people who give on line: if you search for me on Wycliffe's website, it no longer says, "Sorry we weren't able to find any matches", followed by, "whether it's for personal reasons or security reasons, many of our missionaries are not able to post their profiles online". Yeah, the personal reasons would be, "because I thought figuring out how to post a profile online would be horribly complicated". It took maybe ten minutes and that including locating a picture to use.

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It cracks me up how often I avoid doing something and then when I actually do it, there wasn't really any reason to have avoided it. Apparently, it isn't just me. After I posted mine, I tried convincing other people at work it's super easy and they should do it too. No one believes me so far.

**Contact me:** Sheryl Howe sahowe@wbt.org  
6114A Webster Way, Waxhaw, NC 28173  
704-243-0208 or  
704-243-3562 (home aka cell phone black hole)

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