

Why It May Be Time to Clean Your Spiritual Filters

I've been thinking about filters this week. Especially since the first of the month is when I switch out the main air conditioner filter.

For the past several years, I've had my home's air conditioning system serviced semi-annually. And I'm compulsive about cleaning and changing the A/C filters.

It all started a few years ago when the A/C unit began leaking—in the house. The A/C technician responded to my frantic call. Turns out nothing was wrong with the system ... that is, nothing that couldn't be corrected by cleaning the filters once a month. The A/C system had to work too hard to pull the air through clogged filters, causing algae to build up in the drainage pipe. Yup, we brought it on ourselves by not changing the filters.

This week, I also cleaned the pool filter. The first time I did that years ago, the filter actually changed color as I hosed the sand and dirt from between the accordion folds. Yucch! As the dirt flowed off with the water, I wondered why I waited so long. And also wondered how much dirt was still in the pool because the overloaded filter couldn't capture any more dirt. Lesson learned. Now the pool filter gets cleaned regularly.

And of course, we even set up spam filters on our computers to protect us from garbage emails and viruses.

Hmmm. Now I'm wondering about my *life* filters. Am I waiting too long to clean my own filters?

Have I gotten casual about what I read? Is the content of that novel I picked up for some light beach reading really what I

want to fill my mind?

Casual about what I watch? Are summer television programs merely fun “escapism,” or are they another way to clog my filters?

What are my filters, anyway?

When I think of filters, I’m reminded of an old children’s song, “Oh Be Careful, Little Eyes, What You See.” The first stanza repeats the title, with good reason. Images stamped in our minds’ eyes often originate through our physical eyes. When Jesus said, “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light” (Matt. 6:22), He may very well have been speaking about a filter.

This same children’s song also includes a stanza about our ears. Words and music are powerful influences. God spoke the world into existence with His Word. Jesus is the living Word. The words I listen to nestle deep in my soul and influence me in ways I may never fully realize.

While the first two stanzas of this song speak of what we take in through our eyes and ears, the remainder of the song speaks to what we do. We need to be careful of what we say, how we use our hands, and where we go.

What we take in through our eyes and ears affects what we say, what we do and where we go. Ultimately, it touches the state of our hearts. Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) tells us, “Above all else, guard your heart, everything you do flows from it.”

And Proverbs 4:23-27 reminds us of the relationship between the state of our hearts and what we see, what we say, what we do and where we go:

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.

Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.

Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Hmmm ... sounds a lot like that little children's song, doesn't it?

The cleaner we keep our filters, the less dirt we'll need to clean out of our hearts.

Now if you'll please excuse me, I have some filters that need tending.

How clean are your filters? {eoa}

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