

Cleaning Gutters

It's that time of year again. In order to prevent last Fall's leaves, Winter's debris, and Spring's showers from clogging the gutters and flooding May's flowers, those gutters need to be cleaned. I confess that this is not a job to which I look forward or necessarily enjoy, nor do I know anyone who does! But it is, nonetheless, a necessarily important duty. Failure to keep up with it leads to overflows that rot fascia boards, eaves, and even rafter ends. But such seemingly mundane tasks provide time for spiritual reflection, so please consider that...

Cleaning the gutters **doesn't require:**

- X Any **specialized knowledge or discernment** to know it needs doing- anyone with eyes can see leaves in them, or weeds growing from them;
- X Any **specialized skill**- anyone with basic mobility and balance can do it;
- X Any **specialized tools or equipment**- a ladder and fingers will do, though a putty knife or scraper is helpful; or,
- X Any **specialized highly technical instruction** – just get the muck out and wash up.

It **does require:**

- ✓ An **“It's MY responsibility” mentality**- they're *my* gutters on *my* house, therefore cleaning them is *my* job;
- ✓ An **“I can do this” mentality**- *I* can see that it needs doing, *I* have the ability to climb a ladder, and *I* have or can easily get the required tools (ladder and hands or a scraper);
- ✓ A **willingness to work and get dirty**- it's a sometimes stinky and always dirty job that requires the considerable efforts of moving the ladder, climbing up and down it numerous times, as well as actually getting the leaves, gravel (from asphalt shingles), and general muck and mess out; *I* can't do this particular job by pushing a button or swiping an App; *I*, the gutters, and my tools are going to need a good washing to complete the job;
- ✓ A **willingness to do a job repetitively**- no matter how well *I* do it *this* time, it will need doing *again*- if “time” remains, Fall leaves and Spring rains will require that *I* repeat the cleaning.

Now, let's make some important **spiritual applications** from this seemingly mundane task:

- **The muck in my gutters is sin in my life.** It doesn't take any *specialized knowledge* or *discernment* to recognize its presence, or its eternal consequences, *“for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,”* Romans 3:23; and *“the wages of sin is death,”* Romans 6:23. Rather than allowing the “storms of life” to flow harmlessly away, this *muck* and *mess* of *sin* causes them to back up and flood my soul with cares of “this” life rather than the next.
- **Cleaning the muck from my gutters is my responsibility.** God has done His part-
 1. He *loved me* (and *everyone else*) enough to show me the *dirty*ness of my sin in His Word, Romans 7:7;
 2. He manifested His *grace to me* (and *everyone else*), Romans 5:8-10; 20-21; and,
 3. He provided the opportunity for *my* (and *everyone else's*) *cleansing* through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, Romans 6:1-11.

But I have to do *my part* too:

1. I have to *acknowledge the sin* (muck) in *my gutters*- and thus *my need of cleaning*, John 9:35-41;
2. I have to *accept responsibility for it* and be willing to *do* something about it, Acts 2:37b-38;
3. I have to *climb the ladder* of His love and grace that elevates me to the place where, Titus 2:11-13;
4. I can do *my part* of the requisite *cleansing*, Acts 22:16; and,
5. I have to *keep on cleaning* as *the need arises*, 1John 1:8-9.

These things **don't require** any *special discernment*, any *special tools* (besides the *ladder* of God's *love and grace*, Titus 2:11-13), any *special skills* (cf. Acts 10:34-35), or any *highly specialized/technical instruction* (just *believe and be baptized*, Mark 16:16). They **do require** me to *accept responsibility for* and *be willing to do my part* to clean "my gutters," to be willing to *get dirty* and *work hard* to clean them, and to be willing to *do it all again* when the need arises. Now let's all go and clean our gutters- the *spiritual ones at least!* (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)