

CHECK HEART SOON

Joel 2:12-17

The Message v.12: “But there’s also this, it’s not too late—God’s personal Message!— ‘Come back to Me and really mean it! Come fasting and weeping, sorry for your sins!’”

Liam overheard something on the playground that made him freeze. “Ask Liam” Wanda suggested to Labron.

“Na...he’s been way too crabby lately.”

Liam looked around at his fourth-grade classmates. *I’m not crabby!* he protested to himself. *I’m just angry that the guys don’t pick me for the recess soccer game. I’m not a great soccer player, but I’m decent.* He picked up a basketball and dribbled it to the free-throw line. *The last game, I DID tell Labron off after we lost.* He shot the ball, and chased it after it bounced off the rim. Standing where players shoot lay-ups, he tried shooting again. A thought popped into his mind, *I never apologized to Labron...Is that why he doesn’t want to play with me now?*

Warning lights advise people of impending trouble. The traffic stop light’s warning color is yellow. If ignored, you’ll run a red light. The trouble could be that you run into another car, a police officer will pull you over, or perhaps you’ll escape bad consequences *this time.*

A car has warning messages which advise the driver that something’s not right. “Check engine” may flicker on the dashboard if coolant, steering fluid, or oil levels are

low. If ignored, car trouble could cost much more to correct than if the warning was heeded quickly. Cars don't take jokes well. If left unchecked, warning messages will result in some item shutting the car down.

God warns people when they wander into danger zones, too. Judah's prophet, Joel, warned the Hebrews to pay attention to their spiritual dashboards. Prosperity lulled them to get smug, content, and self-righteous. While their self-sufficiency was high, their faith was simmering on low. They didn't see the danger when simply following laws. Their hearts were empty of passion for their Lord. So God sent locusts. After their crops were ruined, they flocked back to God.

Oh! I suppose that I have been crabby! Liam admitted to himself. "Labron, wait up." Liam called, as they returned to class. "I am sorry for blaming you after we lost the last soccer game. It wasn't your fault."

"Really?" Labron wondered, looking into Liam's face. "With you on my team, we can beat them next time!"

Take Home Nugget

If people are avoiding you, try checking your heart. Flashing lights warn and demand attention soon. Repenting of sins tunes hearts into perfect working order.

Conscience's conviction is God's warning light

Checking heart soon will heal its blight.

J.D. Griffith