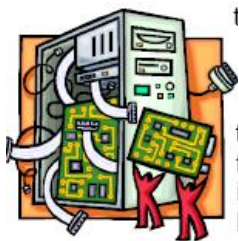


Keeping your 'heart drive' up and running

Presented By Lianne Azevedo
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Computers have been the inspiration for the last two homeschool devotionals. In August, we learned the importance of actively choosing God's supernatural operating system each day – or we default into a natural operating system which is full of corrupt and fragmented files, viruses, and power failures. In September, Lianne Azevedo gave Biblical advice to keep our "heart drives" up and running at peak efficiency.

Lianne, homeschooling mom with six kids and two grandchildren, is also a "computer geek" that fixes computers and gives computer lessons. She sees the issues that cause complete hard drive failure – and then counsels her clients how to avoid repeat failure.



Hard drive failure is inconvenient and costly, but "heart drive" failure can be devastating. Lianne used the computer analogy to illustrate ways we can keep our hearts right with God.

"To keep any computer running "virus-free" you need a plan and a commitment of time," Lianne said. "People that ignore computer maintenance will pay a price sooner or later," she said, adding that our hearts are no different.

She stressed the need to take time for daily devotions and time in the Word, for prayer, and fellowship – in church, or informally. (The homeschool support group may be one form of "maintenance" fellowship.)

When life is going smoothly, we need at least the minimal amount, but concentrated amounts may be necessary when bigger problems surface.

To keep a computer running efficiently, you have to be willing to invest in anti-virus software. To keep your "heart drive" healthy, you need to purchase study books like family devotionals, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, etc.

"The whole point of this investment is to prevent the computer/heart from breaking down in the first place," Lianne said. "The more computers you have, or the more they are used, the more maintenance is necessary." As homeschool moms, Lianne suggested that they are greatly used, often with several children, so more maintenance is needed to keep them effective. She said computer maintenance is often a "necessary evil" because of malicious viruses, but said that heart maintenance is always a positive thing. "It's not always easy to put the time aside, but it is NOT a negative activity to keep your heart spiritually healthy."

Lianne then explored the dangers that attack our hard drives and the software that seeks to detect them. First, we are assaulted by viruses everywhere we go –we usually don't go looking for them. While on our computer, they are part of our on-line experience. Sin is equally pervasive in our lives as we overhear gossip, see television in public places, see how provocatively people dress, hear profanity, or observe attitudes at the mall or our workplace.

If it's all around us, how do we recognize it, and how do we get rid of it once we do? With our computer, we need to run our anti-



virus programs all the time and make sure their definitions are regularly updated. In our lives, we need to regularly run the Word through our mind so we have a keen discernment to recognize sin. David, in Scripture, regularly prayed that God would search his heart and reveal any secret sin. Once God revealed sin, he had humility to repent. In Psalm 51, he faced his sin and prayed that God would create in him a new heart and renew a right spirit in him. Repentance catches the sin, rejects it and cleanses the heart through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Similarly, anti-virus programs seek to detect viruses, quarantine the files, clean the hard drive, and immunize it from getting the same virus again. In our culture, we often identify computer viruses more readily than sin because our “sin-definer” (Bible) sits unused on the shelf, while our anti-virus programs are run religiously. Formatting a hard drive to remove stubborn viruses may cause computer down time, but messed-up “heart drives” may keep us down much longer – and are much harder to fix.

Spy-ware and Ad-ware are two types of virus-like files that can mess up computers. The worst aspect of these files is that they hide in other legitimate programs that we want to allow on our computers. As these files accumulate on our hard drive, it makes the computer increasingly less effective. “These are files we agree to accept, but don’t realize there are unwanted programs illegally attached,” said Lianne, and she encouraged computer users to read the fine print before clicking “accept.” Sometimes sin is hidden in choices we initially think are okay, but often it’s subtle like spyware and it creeps in with good choices.

Lianne gave a personal example from the current soccer season. When she agreed to allow two of her children to sign up for soccer, she was careful to guard her Tuesday evening prayer group time and Sunday church service time. Once the season was underway, the coach changed the practice to Tuesday night, and Sunday games started earlier than originally planned.