

**Wheels:** Steve G. writes by e-mail: *“I finally got my 1952 Ford down to a shop to have the engine overhauled last Friday and the manager brought up the idea of a modern engine as a choice to think about. He asked me again tonight if I would want to drop a newer engine in it instead of the original flathead V-8. I like it original, but I also would enjoy the modern touch of a modern engine so I can feel more comfortable about taking longer drives in it. What do you think?”*

**Halderman:** Good question. If the engine is overhauled, the vehicle is being kept as it came from the factory. This means that it will retain its value as an old car. However, if you replace the engine with a newer engine, then the vehicle has lost its factory stock condition and is now called a *street rod*. This may or may not change its value. If the engine is replaced, I see several advantages and disadvantages:

**Advantages:**

1. Keeps stock operation and function of the original value
2. No need to replace the transmission or other drive train parts

**Disadvantages:**

1. Engines parts may be hard to find or costly.
2. Time and cost involved in removing and overhauling the engine.

If a newer engine is installed, you have the benefit of improved starting and drivability as well as an engine for which parts can be easier to find. My advice would be to replace the entire drive train from a late model vehicle such as from a wrecked Ford Mustang or full size Ford. This way you get a modern engine and transmission.

Another possible solution is to remove the body from the frame and place the body onto a frame of a newer vehicle that has the same or almost the same wheelbase and width. I have a friend in California who had a 1948 Plymouth but he did not like how the car drove. It was equipped with old drum brakes in the front instead of today’s disc brakes and an older style steering and suspension system. He discovered that a Dodge Durango had about the same wheelbase and width. He removed the body from the old chassis and installed it onto the frame of the donor vehicle. He is now driving an old car that rides and drives like a new car. There are lots of options and keep checking around until you find the plan that works best for you, your budget, and how you plan to use the vehicle.

