

Road Rage. It is no longer just a feeling. It is so prominent in our society that it has become a thing: as in, "she was a victim of Road Rage." In one sense it's not hard to understand how we got to this point. We have huge machines capable of travelling at very fast speeds. We have an inner desire to live the life of Danica Patrick or the Andretti's (pick the one closest to your age) while driving down the highway. But I think it is more than just the "need for speed" which causes Road Rage.

Road Rage is mostly about our territorial nature. The very careful driver going 50 in a 65 zone while driving in the fast lane believes that he has as much right to that spot on the road as the next guy. But, the driver going 78 who pulls up right behind him is late, or oblivious to the speed because she is on her cell phone and she wants that same space as the slow driving guy. She thinks, "Hey buddy, get over in the other lane. I have a right to drive fast in this lane. Get into the slow lane where you belong!" (Actually, I can't print what she really is thinking, but you get the idea.)

I am a pretty fast driver. The situations which get me are not the slow drivers ahead of me. I will slow down and hope they eventually move. The drivers who trip my trigger are the even faster drivers who tailgate me while I try stay safely behind the driver ahead. I mean, really, there is NO PLACE TO GO...GET OFF MY TAIL!! And so it begins: I slow down more; I tap my brakes; we try to swerve through traffic, neither wanting to give the other an inch of "my space." My worst experience with this was when Jill and I were driving in Milwaukee and she finally told me I had to exit the freeway so we could rid ourselves of the other driver. I complied, but I would have eventually shown him! Or I would have had a lot of explaining to do to the Milwaukee police.

But, while I am not driving, I think I am stupid for acting like that and I would like to fix this flaw in my character. So, I heard a TV preacher say we should think of the "other driver" as our enemy, and apply Jesus' command to love our enemies. Interesting take on that command, but I don't think the other driver is really an "enemy". I am thinking that instead I need to think of the other driver as a child of God who needs my Christian love displayed to her. I don't mean with a sign on my car. I don't know what kind of witness a Christian sign on my car would give the way that I drive. No, I think I need to move over. I need to give up my territory to the person on my tail and give them a smile and a wave as they go speeding by. If I can think of that person behind me as my brother or sister in Christ, I can forgive them for their foolish ways and I can learn about giving up something I claim as my own because that is the sort of sacrifice Jesus would want me to make.

Don't tailgate me just yet. It will take me awhile to change my ways. But I am going to try to change. "I promise, officer!"

Shalom,

Bill