

3 Spiritual Stop Signs to Help You Steer Clear of Sinful Rage

Road rage is on the rise. It's heating up. And it's fanning the flame of stress. Even when car keys are put away, the tension remains.

This might be the reason. Studies show that irate drivers have a reason for that behavior. It has nothing to do with the highway, but everything to do with the heart.

Way before drivers sit behind the wheel, stress, tension, discouragement and fear have already settled way deep inside. And when someone cuts them off on the road, look out! All those negative emotions come tumbling out. The result? Murmuring under the breath. Shooting such dirty looks so hard they crack the windshield. And oops, our kids better not see that gesture. They're learning firsthand how we display our anger.

And what does anger do? It feeds ulcers and brings on headaches that ruin our day. The same thing happens when on the road of life. Glitches push us into the ditch of unhappiness, and we're stuck in the mud of discontentment.

Let's start over. Before beginning the trip through the events of the day, consider these three stop signs:

Stop Sign No. 1: Love the Unlovable

Huh? Lord, do you see those crazy drivers on the road? And those who wronged us so deeply? Love them? Don't think so.

Hard? No, it's not hard. It's impossible to love those who cut you off; make illegal, dangerous turns and put you and your family in danger. And how about others who inflict emotional

wounds? We want to hang them, not love them.

God hears that complaint. And with patience only He has, He still says: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" (Matt. 5:43-46).

Recently, a man was interviewed after his imprisonment and torture because of His Christian beliefs. As he was beaten, he had a prayer, "Lord, I don't want to be in two prisons—this one and the prison of anger and resentment. Help me to love those who are torturing me."

Eventually, as he walked out of that prison, wounded and broken, he carried the power of forgiveness that restored him, healed his wounds and made him strong enough to carry on with his ministry.

Stop Sign No. 2: The Power of Our Words

Did you ever hear the boomerang power of our words? The curses we speak toward others come right back to us with tension into our own muscles. Ranting about others' mistakes fuels our own stress. Rage toward others comes back to us with added negativity. And with an angry attitude out of control, we bring peace to a screeching halt.

"He who has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (Prov. 25:28).

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov. 16:32).

In self-control, there's power. In self-restraint, there's strength and there's health because "Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones" (Prov. 16:24).

Choosing to live healthier lives, we embrace a different approach. When others don't deserve it, we dish out kindness. When others don't care, we still do. And when others bring us down, we stand on the power of God.

Stop Sign No. 3: Humility Brings Freedom

Blushing a bit, I confess. Foolishly thinking I possess more wisdom and have more experience, I've elbowed my way in the crowd and declared my thoughts. Happy the day when God spoke to me and said, "Let nothing be done out of strife or conceit, but in humility let each esteem the other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3).

We want to do that; we really do. We desire to be humble, honorable. But how can someone who is so wrong, so foolish, so outrageous in their actions be better than we are?

Thinking they're not, we prepare our attack, stand in position and make our point. We speak our mind and assert our position.

But that's when God asserts His own position, calling us to have a gentle spirit, a humble attitude and to be loving in our response.

Considering others better than ourselves requires humility in our approach, wisdom for our thoughts and obedience to God's commandments. The book of Matthew records this account of a lawyer who asked Jesus about which was the greatest commandment: "'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt.

22:36-39).

Loving others no matter what isn't a sign of weakness. Rather, it's a display of a valiant, courageous warrior holding the flag of triumphant victory.

Who has wronged you today and needs your loving attitude?

Let's Pray

Father, thank You for showing me a way out of angry thoughts. I praise You for the path You showed me to a calmer life and a loving approach to others. In Jesus' name.

Who has wronged you today and needs your loving attitude?
{eo}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .