

How Letting 'Jesus Take the Wheel' Brings You True Freedom

The bent to promote, protect and exalt self starts early in life. One of the first phrases our children said was, "Me first!"

Because our self-centeredness is so inbred, Jesus made it clear that if we want to follow him, we must give up our "selves." Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of this verse in Luke states that we are not in the driver's seat (Luke 9:23, MSG). An analogy that helped me understand the meaning and process of laying aside myself uses this same imagery of a car: When we are born, we are given a car to drive down the highway of life. When I was 12 years old, I stopped my car and invited Christ into my life. I was sincere in accepting Christ as my personal Savior, but because of my limited understanding, I put him in the back seat, and I stayed in the driver's seat.

When I was 26, my life consisted of three small children born in three years, an extremely busy husband off delivering calves and poodles, a very old house with rats and little fellowship. It was at this time that I told the Lord that I was struggling, exhausted and overwhelmed. As I was still before Him, what I heard was this: "Cynthia, will you give the steering wheel of your life to Me? Will you move over and let me drive?"

I knew what the Lord was asking of me: "Lay aside your old self that cares only about what is good for you. Surrender your life into My care, and let Me 'drive' you on the true and right path. Only on My path will you find your true self."

For me, it was an easy choice. What did I have to lose by letting the Lord control my life? I was weary of trying to

live life in my own strength and was ready to accept God's offer. It can be frightening to let someone else drive, but I knew that God loved me, was for me and could be trusted. So I took my hands off the steering wheel, moved over and expected some monumental upheaval in my life. What happened, though, was that none of my circumstances changed; what changed was me. Everything was different. It wasn't an instant change but a progressive one, even until this day. I slowly became free from the old self that continually drove me around, demanding that my needs and welfare were most important and that life should be lived on my terms. I eventually realized that I no longer felt "put upon" by my husband, children or even God.

What I was experiencing was freedom—freedom from my old sinful self. The freedom that Christ's sacrifice on the cross purchased for us." Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ... So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free' (John 8:32-32, 36, NLT). {eoa}

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