

# How the Holy Spirit Can Help You Rise Above Your Road Rage

Anytime I get in my car for whatever scope of outing I may have planned, to some level of awareness, I deliberately engage in the following “coaching up” run-through:

- I will not tailgate someone, regardless of what my perspective is on what they did.
- I will not “give someone the eye” when I pass them, regardless of what has taken place.
- I will not chase anyone down, regardless of what they do.
- I will not “submit a hand gesture,” regardless of how I feel.
- I will not intentionally slow down if someone is tailgating me.

Is there any other situation where we as Christians “lose our witness” which compares to being behind the wheel on the streets of our communities? What is it about being in our vehicles, simply driving from point A to point B that causes us to, so often, become irrationally demonstrative towards our fellow drivers? Are we in any way comparable in being as aggressive in any other activity in our lives as we are on the open highway?

Teachers, secretaries, school board members, plumbers, church elders, presidents of companies and yes, pastors, the religious affiliation or educational level being of little consequence, so many people are “ticking time bombs” on the streets of our cities. There can be an array of speculation as to why, but regardless of our justifications, we really need to figure out how to legitimately “chill out.”

OK, I understand that to say, “On your mark ... get set ... change!” will not be effective as it generally is in no other

circumstance, but for us to be “different” than the world and to honor Him who lives within us, we need to do something. It’s embarrassing to the name of Christ to have someone inflict some form of road rage upon another person, and as the perpetrator speeds away, everyone who witnessed this exchange sees a bumper sticker that says, “Honk If You Love Jesus” or some such Christian sentiment.

There are already so many areas where syncretism in the church has caused remarkably similar activity as it relates to our society, causing “the church” to be more subculture than counterculture. And please do not think I am preaching to all of you bad, immature Christians out there, because, as you may have already concluded by my opening discourse, there is a reason I must coach myself specifically when getting in my vehicle. Each of those issues I mentioned are specific areas I need to still pay a certain amount of attention to, because they are particular experiences I have bumped into over the years. I am not positive as to why this was/is my predisposition, but it certainly has caused some distressing altercations, some of them, truth be told, not too many years ago. Today, after various strategic and applied endeavors, this is no longer such an overwhelming issue for me. Do I get frustrated on the highway? Of course, but I don’t lose control, and I don’t believe my fellow drivers recognize any obvious indication that I am feeling upset.

It would likely require substantial and possibly unavailable personal capital as well as considerable couch time with a professional to reasonably establish why we may struggle in such a specific way, so if none of that is reasonable, please permit me some recommendations/strategies that may effectively help mature your perspective as it has mine.

- Foundationally, my relationship/intimacy with the Lord has become substantial. As a lifetime Christian, I have heard people repeatedly tell me over the years that I needed to do this or I needed to do that to be a better

Christian, however instead of adopting a legalistic approach, I essentially focused on James 4:8. I decided that I wanted God to be close to me, so I drew close to Him. I generally did whatever it took to enhance the intimacy I had with Him. I am now a better sheep (John 10:27), and I much more noticeably “hear” his voice and do what He says. It is, in principal terms, a very functional and flourishing relationship now.

- When I get in my car, I turn on Christian radio or audio availabilities, whether that be music or teaching. I find something meaningful, and I genuinely pay attention. If I can really focus on the message, the exteriors of my immediate perceived circumstances are not so critical to my responses. My red flag is if I recognize frustration, I immediately refocus on the specifics of the message I am listening to. As I am a normal man, I fortunately have complexity in multitasking in this regard
- As I step into my vehicle, I will often give myself a little pep talk—you know, I coach myself up. I say something to the effect of, “Come on now, make yourself proud on this trip;” or “This is not a competition;” or “Keep in mind, what we are doing is simply traveling from here to there.” I try to prepare my perspective to remember what this common endeavor is actually all about.
- Several years ago, as I was reading through Matthew 5: 43-44 ( ... “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ...”) I recognized that my primary enemies were actually those “idiots” in the other cars; those people who apparently did not appreciate my personally held position of “center of the universe” and responded in ways that seriously irritated me. So, in my process of pursuing Christlikeness, I began taking this biblical mandate seriously; that I needed to act in loving ways to those I felt hostility with on the highway. Then I began thinking, “What would that look like in various

scenarios?”

- Here are a few specific ideas as to how I now try to adhere to His admonition in this regard: When someone cuts me off in traffic:

1. I will back off and will not tailgate to show my irritation.
2. If I do eventually pass them, I will not stare them down.
3. I will not mouth any words that I hope they can make out.
4. I will not make any gestures with any body part.
5. When someone stays in the passing lane on a two-lane highway, going the same speed as the traffic in the right lane until the passing lane ends:
6. I will not tailgate while they are in the left lane, mindlessly going slower than necessary to pass cars in the right lane.
7. If I do eventually pass them, I will not stare them down.
8. I will not mouth any words that I hope they can make out.
9. I will not make any gestures with any body part.
10. When someone tailgates me:
11. I will continue driving the appropriate speed and not tap my breaks.
12. If there is a place to pull over, I will do so.
13. I will not stare them down when they pass.
14. I will not mouth any words that I hope they can make out.
15. I will not make any gestures with any body part.

So team, please allow me to coach you up just a little:

- Make every effort to keep in mind that simply driving from point A to point B is the fundamental objective.
- The overwhelming majority of the time, the person who did something “stupid” is not only, not trying to upset

you, but they are likely not even thinking about you being there. Or they may have gotten some horrific news and are mentally disengaged and trying to “get there” quickly.

- This is not a competition; your objective is to get there safely and reasonably.
- This time in the vehicle may likely be your best opportunity to connect with God today, as there need be few consequential distractions.

Come on, my fellow Christ-followers; let's be different than the chaotic world in this routine daily activity. Do your best to make us all look a little more constructive in our counterculture-ness and purposefully “Drive like a Christian!”  
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