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November 2009

THE WAY WE DRIVE

I've been thinking about the way I drive for several weeks - for a very good reason. Three weeks ago, while driving home from church on a Saturday night, I hit a deer on the Riverside Parkway. I slammed on my brakes but knocked the deer sprawling (it got up and ran off limping). It dented my hood and knocked out the right front headlight, which cost me \$500 and State Farm \$1,800. Ouch! For no good reason, I was attacked by a deer! Then a week ago I had another accident. Not three blocks from my home I turned a corner and a book slid off my dash. I reached out to grab the book, took my eyes off the road, and when I looked up I couldn't avoid clipping a pickup. It just scraped the rubber off the pickup's bumper, but it wrinkled my right front fender and broke my new right front headlight, which cost me another \$500 and State Farm \$1,800. Yikes! For no good reason, I was attacked by a parked pickup! Those are the first driving accidents and the first claims on my car insurance that I have had in 65 years of driving.

You might be thinking, "Glenn, you are too old to be driving. You are a hazard to parked cars and wildlife. You ought to go to a nursing home." You just keep any ideas like that to yourself. I can still drive as fast as I ever did. And since I had my cataract surgery, now I can see other cars and things (when I am paying attention). But, as I said, I have really been reflecting on the way I drive, and the way other people drive, and I want to share a few thoughts:

(1) THE WAY WE DRIVE REVEALS SOMETHING ABOUT OUR HEARTS

We drive so often that we don't consider how dangerous it is. We can get negligent, distracted, and careless. We fiddle with the radio or CD's, get involved with cell phone conversations or even text while driving. Oh, my goodness! That is insanity. (I never do that. Of course, I don't own a cell phone.) The Discovery Channel is always having specials about how dangerous sharks are to swimmers. Yeah, right. An average of eight people a year are killed by sharks. About twenty-three thousand are killed each year in the U.S. in auto accidents. Consider: 8 compared to 23,000! How many TV specials do we see warning about the danger of not buckling up our seat-belts? I remember a young married woman in my church that took her eyes off the road for a moment and took out a telephone pole. She was bruised and scratched, and the policeman told her she would certainly have been killed if she had not had her seat-belt buckled. Two years ago the 20 year old son of my dear friends was in a car full of young people that rolled on I-70 because the driver reached into the backseat to get a snack. This young man was the only one hurt, but he suffered head injuries and is now

disabled mentally and physically. He is making slow progress, and his mom and dad are believing for a full recovery. But that life-changing injury would not have occurred if he had buckled his seat-belt. A man told me one time that on the open road he would play a little game, he would try to drive by looking in the rear-view mirror. But he stopped that when he almost had an accident. (What a surprise!)

Life is very serious and very dangerous. We can get negligent, distracted, and careless. We fiddle with all sorts of unimportant and irrelevant things. We can take our eyes off the road: our relationship with the Lord, the way we are treating our spouse and children, the fulfillment of our calling from God. If we spend too much time looking in the rear-view mirror (how people wounded us in the past, and our own sins and failures), then we can't focus on the road ahead. And if we don't buckle our seat-belts by putting on the armor of God, we can be surprised by an angry deer (or lion or dragon), or by a parked pickup (we can crash into big obstructions in the road that are easily seen if we are paying attention).

(2) WE CAN DRIVE AGGRESSIVELY AND IMPATIENTLY

I confess that at times I am impatient and aggressive in my driving. That is because I am impatient and aggressive in my heart. That is opposite the Spirit of Christ. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. Impatience is a fruit of the lower nature, of the devil. At times, when people don't move when the light turns green, I think in my heart, "You idiot, green means go!" Why do I do that? Because those lesser beings are getting in the way of Mr. God. That signifies that Glenn is on the throne, not Christ. And Jesus said if you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of the judgment! Why do I preach one way and live another way? It is quite useless to beat myself up, condemn myself, loathe myself when these sins are revealed. That makes me feel guilty but doesn't bring change to my heart. The only thing that helps is to confess my sins, repent, receive God's mercy, and focus on Him. When our minds are stayed on the Lord, when we meditate on His kindness and goodness, when we meditate on the Word, when we spend time thanking and praising Him, then we are "abiding in Christ," and He continues the slow work of making us more like Him.

(3) WE CAN HURT OTHERS BY THE WAY WE DRIVE

This morning (Monday, Nov. 16) on the way home from morning prayer, Patterson Road was blocked by a huge accident: three autos tangled up and demolished, several ambulances, police cars, wreckers, etc. As I drove slowly past I looked at those cars and realized that some people's lives had been forever changed by just a moment of distraction or too much speed. Probably someone was killed. Certainly people

were maimed and disabled. And I thanked God that my moment of carelessness last week didn't result in hurting someone. That would be very difficult to live with. When we live carelessly, aggressively, impatiently, we will most certainly hurt someone, and usually it will be those we love the most, those in our own family. I resolved again to be more careful about the way I drive and the way I live. I want to bless people, help them, encourage them, and not to hurt and wound them.

(3) PRAY BEFORE YOU DRIVE, EVERY TIME

I started a habit some time ago to have a little prayer every time I get in my car: "Lord, help me to be alert as I drive. Help me not to be in such a hurry. Help me not to be aggressive and rude. Help me not to be impatient with other drivers." Then I buckle up my seat-belt. Many times I forget to have that prayer and I forget to act that way. I forgot last week when I hit the pickup. That same prayer works pretty well when we start out each day regarding the way we live.

THE STRANGEST COMMANDMENT

The Ten Commandments are a brilliant set of rules or laws about the way to live. They are sort of like the owners' manual in the glove-box of new cars. The manual tells you the way the car works. "Keep oil in the motor. Change oil every 3,000 miles. And so on." We can ignore the instructions, but eventually the motor will burn up and the car won't work anymore. We can ignore God's commandments, but things are going to stop working if we do. (By the way, can you name all ten of the commandments? And do you know where they are found in the Bible? Christians make a big deal out of the government taking the ten commandments out of public buildings, but we don't have them on the walls of our churches, we can't recite them, we don't know where they are located in the Bible, and many Christians don't live according to them. I will give you a clue: they are in the Old Testament, and they are found in two places, Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.)

The first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God, and the following six have to do with our relationships with people. The "people commandments" are easy to understand: Don't murder, adulterate, steal, lie, or envy. But the first of the set of six is a very strange law. If we were making up a set of rules for the human race, I doubt that this one would ever occur to us. It must be significant or it would not be one of the Big Ten. And remember that these are ten commandments, not ten suggestions. Do you know what the Fifth Commandment is?

It is quoted in the New Testament in Ephesians 6:1-2, and it is called "The first commandment with a promise." Here it is: "Honor your father and mother, that you may live long and that things will go well with you in the land the Lord gives you." Wow! What a weird rule! And it is one of the Big Ten! God is telling us that if we don't honor our father and mother it can affect the length of our lives and the quality of our lives. Is that important, or what!

Notice what this commandment does not say: It doesn't say to honor our father and mother if they were good, kind, loving, dependable, Christian parents. It doesn't say to honor them if

they were worthy of honor. It says to honor them. But how in the name of common sense can we honor them if they were rotten parents and rotten people? I have ministered to many people who had a horrible father or mother or both. They had a parent who was a hopeless alcoholic or drug addict, who rejected them, cursed them, beat them, lied to them, abused them, and abandoned them. Surely God would not be so unreasonable as to expect a person to "honor" such a parent? Well, apparently that is exactly what He expects, and demands. How could a person with such a lousy father or mother find a way to honor that parent?

We need to understand that God's commandments are not whimsical or foolish. They are given for our good. They explain to us how life works. If we go into life with bitterness in our heart toward a father or mother, that will pollute our hearts and adversely affect everything: our relationship with God, spouse, children, boss, and neighbors. Remember that Jesus said if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven by God, and that if you judge others (which indicates you have not truly forgiven them), then that judgment will return to you. What this means is that if you judge and condemn your father or mother, you will inevitably end up acting just like them. The abused child becomes the abusive parent to his or her children. That is scary! The wisest man who ever lived, other than Jesus, wrote as follows: *Whoever curses his father or mother, his lamp will be put out in complete darkness.* (Proverbs 20:20 AMP) *Hearken to your father who begot you, and despise not your mother when she is old.* (Proverbs 23:22 AMP) *The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out...* (Proverbs 30:17 AMP) These verses tell us that if you do not honor your father and mother you will become spiritually blind and insensitive to the voice of God.

How can a person with a lousy father or mother find a way to honor that parent? How can we do it? We may have to cry out to God to help us, and He will help us. We must choose to obey God, knowing that He has our best interest at heart. We must honor them by faith, and realize that may not alter our feelings about them at first. (By the way, to honor a father who has been terribly abusive does not necessarily mean that there will be a reconciliation and resumption of relationship with that father. See Chapter 17, Establishing Boundaries, on my website.)

I know a number of mothers and fathers who have been totally rejected by their grown children. These were good, loving fathers and mothers. They were not perfect, they made mistakes, but they loved their children. I know mothers and fathers who have been rejected by their daughters or sons, excluded from their lives, and not permitted to have any relationship with their grandchildren. Some of the children that treat their fathers or mothers that way are church members. They consider themselves to be Christians. That is so evil and wicked, such a defiance of God's law, that I wonder if they truly know God at all.

Following is a list of things that explain, Biblically, what it means to honor your father and mother:

- (a) Respect them by your words and actions. Don't speak against them. Don't curse them. Bless them and pray for them if they are still living.

- (b) Obey them in the Lord (for young people before they marry and have homes of their own). (Eph. 6:1-4)
- (c) Support them financially if they need your help. (1 Tim. 5:8, Mt. 15:1-6) Jesus called the Pharisees that would not assist their parents hypocrites.
- (d) Forgive them and don't judge or condemn them. (Mt. 6:14-15; 7:1)

Let me share an experience that was a great blessing: Several years ago during a mission trip to Mexico I preached one night at a church near Xochimilco. (I love that Indian name, pronounced "So-she-mill-co." It is called the Venice of Mexico, and has many lakes and canals and flowers. But I digress.) The church service was one of those difficult experiences. I preached about honoring your father and mother and the importance of forgiveness. There was very little response, and as we drove back to the Bible College I felt very discouraged. About a week later Pepe Quiroz received a call and related to me the following story. A lady who had attended that service was convicted by my message. She said that when she was a girl she had rebelled against the harshness of her mother, and had run away from home when she was 15 years old. She had not seen or heard from her mother in 38 years. She laid awake most all night and felt that God was telling her to find her mother and ask her forgiveness.

The next morning she caught a bus to the city where her mother had lived 38 years before and started trying to find her. Eventually she learned that her mother was still alive and she got an address. She found the apartment house in a poverty stricken area. She climbed up the stairs, knocked, and her mother came to the door. Her mother was sick and living in utter poverty. They fell into each other's arms and started weeping and begging forgiveness. Her mother said she had become a Christian about 20 years ago, and that every single day she had been praying for contact and reconciliation with her daughter. The daughter said, "Mother, you are coming home with me, and I am going to take care of you." She brought her home with her on the bus, and she wanted us to know about this.

I can't ever remember a time when I was more blessed as the result of a sermon. Glory be to God! Let us resolve, with the help of God, to honor our father and mother.

JESUS WAS DIFFERENT

- (1) Jesus claimed He came down from Heaven. He is the only leader of a world religion who has ever made such a claim. Mohammed claimed to have peeked into heaven one time. St. Paul said that He made a visit to Heaven. Many people have had near death experiences and visited Heaven. But Jesus said that Heaven was His home, and He came down to earth.
- (2) Jesus claimed to be God. He is the only one who has ever made such a claim, except various nutty people. According to the Bible, that is the reason He was crucified. He was guilty of blasphemy, according to the Pharisees, for making this claim.
- (3) Jesus claimed that His miracles proved He was God. He said, "If you don't believe me, believe the miracles I have

done." He healed the blind and deaf and lepers. He walked on water and calmed the storm. He raised the dead. He is still doing miracles today.

(4) Jesus claimed to be without sin. He said, "Which of you can convict me of a single sin?" Sin includes our thoughts, words, deeds of commission and omission.

(5) Jesus claimed to be humble and lowly in heart, yet He never apologized for any mistakes or for hurting someone's feelings or for misunderstandings. The reason was that He never made any mistakes and if some got their feelings hurt or there was a misunderstanding, it was not His fault.

(6) Jesus claimed to be the only way to Heaven. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and life, no one comes to the Father but by Me." He said He was the Door to God, the Shepherd of the Sheep, the Ladder to Heaven, the Mediator between God and man.

(7) Jesus claimed that He would rise from death, and that at the end of time He would return on the clouds of Heaven and call His own to Him, and that He would judge the living and the dead. Jesus is not a dead example but a living Savior!

Jesus was the most important Man who ever lived. He was and is the most intelligent person who ever lived, the wisest, and the most holy. Who do you say He is? Do you know Him as your Savior and Lord? You can't stay on the fence about this question. Jesus said, "He that is not for Me is against Me." Make up your mind!

A GEM FOR MEDITATION

1 Cor 6:9-11 AMP says: ***Do you not know that the unrighteous and wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled); neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revelers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed clean (purified by a complete atonement for sin and made free from any guilt of sin), and you were consecrated (set apart, hallowed), and you were justified (pronounced righteous, by trusting) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit of our God.***

Charles Spurgeon said, "If your faith hasn't changed your behavior, it will never change your destiny!" This is to say, if our Christianity hasn't changed us and caused us to stop sinning and start acting like Christ we cannot expect to spend eternity with Christ.

FINALLY

I have been praying a lot lately for an anointing on the church so that we can bring healing to the huge number of people who have mental/emotional problems: autism, bipolar, ADD, Alzheimer's, etc. So many kids and people of all ages are coming down with these diseases, and they are so devastating. They wreck families emotionally and financially. And for the most part, there are no answers and no healing.

Jesus healed all who were sick. He healed blindness, leprosy, epileptic seizures, demonization. He healed all who came to him. That must include every kind of sickness: physical, emotional, and mental. God must surely desire that His church bring healing to all of these conditions now, in this age. Will you join me in praying that God will give us wisdom, authority, and power to bring healing in these areas?

MEXICO TRIP

I'm planning to go to Mexico City for 2 weeks starting December 2. Please pray.

God Bless,

Glenn

Web-site: www.glennbrownministries.com

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