

Car Horns and Icy Glares

One Tuesday morning years ago, I had a “traffic incident” on my way to lead ladies’ Bible study. I started the drive frustrated with myself because I left the house late. Then two stoplights from my destination, the driver of the only car in front of me sat through the green light without moving. While busily chatting with her passenger, she missed the opportunity to turn left. I “patiently” waited behind her for the next green light.

When the light changed to green again, she continued to chat, but failed to drive. So I hit my horn. And no, not a friendly, quick toot. It was a long, irritated blast. She slowly began to move and we both barely made it through the intersection before the light changed again.

As soon as I had the chance, I darted around her, tossing back one of those icy glares as I sped by. I approached the last light and got in the right lane to make my turn. I glanced in the rearview mirror. “Distracted Driver” was also in the turn lane. One block from church, a horrible possibility hit me. What if Distracted Driver was also headed to my church?

A community group also met in our church building on Tuesday mornings. She would see me go in and know I was one of those “Christian” women. I slowed to make the turn into the church parking lot. Another furtive glance in the rearview confirmed my fear. Distract Driver was turning too. I quickly scooted into the one remaining parking spot close to the doors and she made her way further down the lot. I ducked inside the building and into my classroom before she had time to get her seatbelt unfastened.

The Holy Spirit swiftly convicted me. Instead of extending grace, I acted with impatience and anger. My behavior negatively impacted the name of Jesus. Instead of sharing the grace of Christ that day, I was just another example of a graceless Christian.

God woos people to Himself with grace. Yet far too often our witness is anything but gracious. Sometimes our ungracious behavior reflects poorly on Jesus. Sometimes, our verbal witness lacks grace. And still other times our spiritual conversations simply fail to connect with the hearer.

Christians have experienced God’s grace in abundance yet sometimes we fail to share the Gospel of grace in a gracious way. God’s Word encourages us to be graceful witnesses, to behave and speak in ways that connect with others and honor Jesus.

What specific changes can you make in your behavior or speech to be a more gracious witness?

This post is adapted from Kathy Howard's new Bible study Lavish Grace: Poured Out, Poured Through, and Overflowing. Lavish Grace is a 9-week journey with the apostle Paul that helps readers discover God's abundant grace for their daily lives and relationships. You can find out more about Kathy, her speaking and writing, and find free resources at www.KathyHoward.org.