

Speeding Christians

I blamed the car, since it didn't slow down when I let off the accelerator. I blamed my wife, since she had compelled me to speed up. I blamed the police officer, since he could (and in my mind should) have just overlooked my marginal excess of the speed limit. My first (and last) speeding ticket was issued in March of 1996, as my wife and I returned home from her younger sister's funeral in Timmins, Ontario. At the time, I was angry and looking for something or someone to blame – that is, something or someone other than myself. A few years later, that day's "mishap" became a fit illustration in a sermon entitled "Whose To Blame?"

There is a problem among Christians today which many have cast a blind eye to. The highways on which we drive are increasingly becoming race tracks, and there are Christians who, without so much as a thought, have buckled in and pulled on the racing gloves. Friends, let us consider today whether a child of God can drive in excess of the posted speed limits and retain the hope of heaven.

Let's begin with the customary justifications for speeding. I know and have used many of them in times past:

1 - it is unsafe to drive the speed limit, since everyone else is moving so fast;

2 - the police don't pull people over for doing 15-20 km/h over the limit;

3 - the limit should be increased (and I heard that it will be soon);

4 - it's better than being late for church (work, school, etc.);

5 - the posted speed is only a guide;

6 - I can't help it, I've got a heavy foot.

Let us quickly answer each of these "justifications" (a.k.a. excuses).

1 – Reworded, that would read, "everybody else is doing it." It is true that the majority of people speed, but it is ludicrous to reason that we must also, lest we place ourselves and others at risk of injury. Studies by insurance boards, vehicle manufacturers, and law enforcement agencies reveal that speeding is a major factor in injuries and fatalities on the road.

2 – The fact that officers don't always enforce the law is not a justification to break the law. With that reasoning, if police cease arresting those who commit theft under \$100, it is then okay for us to steal, so long as we don't exceed \$100.

3 – Perhaps the limit should be increased, and perhaps it will be in time. That does not change what the limit is for the present.

4 – The solution is to leave earlier, not speed.

5 – The posted speed is a "SPEED LIMIT," not a "SPEED SUGGESTION."

6 – The speedometer is there for a reason. Pay attention to it, and adjust your foot accordingly. (BTW, cruise control is a wonderful invention!!)

Friends, we need to understand that speeding is a sin. Notice:

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:1-2).

"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:1-2).

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men..." (1 Peter 2:13-15).

We have a God directed responsibility to keep the laws of the land in which we dwell. On what basis shall we exclude speeding? What kind of example are we to the people we are trying to teach the gospel if we have blatant disregard for such a simple law? Perhaps some will think nothing of it, but know assuredly that some will be quick to point out this hypocrisy in the child of God. And what shall we do – justify our disobedience and continue to play the hypocrite?

I was recently dressed down by a fellow Christian for my stand against speeding. I heard a number of the "justifications" listed above. A long time ago, the prophet Isaiah penned, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). Malachi tells of the LORD's weariness with Israel, for they said, "...Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them" (2:17). May we not try to justify ourselves in wrongdoing and accuse those who do what is right. Let us all carefully consider our manner of life before the Lord.

I used to be a "speed demon." Speeding gave me a rush; it was fun (sin is fun, otherwise no one would do it). Several years passed from the time I became a Christian until I finally realized that speeding is sinful. The feeble "justifications" I consoled myself with were no match for the clear obligation God's command lays upon me to keep ALL the laws of the land in which I dwell. My heart used to skip a beat at the sight of a police car sitting with radar. I'd jab the brakes and hope not to see a set of flashing lights in my rearview mirror (Rom 13:3-4 – TN). No more!

Friend, won't you take off the racing gloves and let off the pedal, and no longer resist the ordinance of God?

By William Stewart