

Runner's Retribution

n/a

Ready:

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

-John 16:33 (NIV)

Set

Before we dive in with the message of today's devotion, I have to tell you a little secret. Ever want to know why runners often run on streets instead of using the perfectly good sidewalks that are just a few feet away? Great question! It's actually because we know that paved surface is better for our joints than concrete sidewalks. We run on the roads because we know our bodies will appreciate the surface of the road more than the surface of the sidewalk.

As runners, we do this with the understanding that the cars still rule the road. We do our best to hug the curbs and wear bright clothing. We veer to the sidewalks when motorists need the road and then we jump back in when it's clear. We do, however, hope motorists will exercise generosity when possible and utilize extra road space (a.k.a. scoot over) when there is no other traffic around.

This morning, I witnessed a runner's nightmare. It was about 6:15 in the morning, and I was out for a routine run on a typically quiet, four-lane road in my neighborhood. As one of "those" runners who does use the road instead of the sidewalks, I was running along the edge of the road and came upon another runner doing the same thing but going in the opposite direction. We passed each other, exchanging quick greetings as we breezed by. Not 20 seconds later, I heard a loud car horn behind me. I turned my head around and saw a little green Toyota hugging the curb and the runner scrambling out of the way.

Let me, again, remind you that it's 6:15 a.m. It's totally quiet outside. There is NO traffic; not a single car in sight—not even the sound of one. There are four available lanes, two going in this car's direction. The runner was already hugging the curb pretty well. What was all the fuss about? Well, I can't tell you that, but I can tell you that this was totally unnecessary. And it was a little bit malicious. Soon enough, the car passed me, hugging the curb and leaving very little room between my elbow and her passenger side mirror.

At least I didn't get the horn.

Poor lady. She looked like she was in her early 30s and just having a miserable morning. Of course my first reaction was anger for my fellow runner. Man, that just burned me up that she would do that! But then I got a little sad for her thinking that her morning must have been

pretty bad if she had that kind of attitude already. Who knows? Maybe her whole life is in shambles right now. After taking a minute to get perspective on the situation, I did wind up praying for her and asking the Lord to intervene in her day.

In processing it more, I know there are plenty of lessons to be learned from this. Certainly one is how to have compassion on those who wrong us.

Jesus told us that we'd have trouble in this world, and over and over in the Bible we read about people being wronged at the hands of others. It's just what happens when we live in a world that is a playground for sin. But, as Christians, these times give us awesome opportunities to be the light of Christ in this world. When we respond differently than the world expects us to, it shocks the pants off of people. When we respond out of love instead of anger, it throws people for a loop and makes them take notice. And that is when we can allude to the power of Christ in us. He gives us the love and grace that we need in order to respond out of the Spirit instead of our angry flesh in those moments. And He will use our obedient reactions to show His love for others.

Now, okay, I didn't have a chance to respond to this motorist out of love. I could have tried to chase her down and try to give her a big hug, but 1—I am not that fast, and 2—that probably would have made her more angry. Instead, I know that the prayer was a way to offer her love. And I know that the Lord will see to it that she is offered His kindness in some way as a result.

Today, whenever you come up on the losing end of someone else's sin, accept the Lord's challenge and respond out of His love. Doing so will bring you more peace than giving in to anger, and it will serve as a powerful testament to the Spirit of Him who lives inside of you.

Go

1. How did you respond the last time you were wronged by someone?
2. Did your actions reveal the love of Christ?
3. What will you do today to make sure your next response is more Christ-like?

Workout

Matthew 5:43-48
Romans 12:19
2 Timothy 4:14-18



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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