

Red Lights!

by Ron Ledbetter

God Speaks to us all. Sometimes the message is loud and clear and sometimes it's not, but I've recently discovered, at least for me, one instance where it wasn't necessarily that I wasn't hearing; I just wasn't listening!



Have you ever been in a conversation and been so enamored with hearing your own conversation that you missed out on what the other person actually had to say? I can speak for myself here where I've totally missed something valuable by running my own mouth; all the while thinking, "hey, I'm handing out some great advice here".

There's a blue-collar comedian, Bill Engvall, who recorded a song I recently heard. It's titled, "shoulda shut up"! It was written around the fact that he keeps getting himself in trouble while in conversation with his wife. He just had to keep talking! The situation I'm describing is certainly a little different, but the message is the same. Sometimes we need to just shut up and listen. Keep this in mind while you read on.

I've been struggling in my quiet time for a while now (at least a few months) knowing that God was trying to tell me something, but I wasn't getting the message. I kept feeling like He was telling me that I was not doing enough in ministry. I even went to my pastor and told him that I keep hearing that word from God but was unclear and confused. I mean, I serve on the Emmaus board, I lead a home group, my wife and I give to several ministries and we serve on the alter ministry. In my mind I'm golden!

If you know me very well you've heard me talk openly about how bad the drivers are in San Angelo. They seemed to me to be in a great big hurry to cut you off, run red lights, require you to read their minds because all their cars are out of blinker fluid and the list goes on and on... Me, I'm a great driver and everyone else is bad! That's been my story and I was sticking to it. At least until last week when I was sitting at another one of our backed-up red lights and finally heard God loud and clear. "You big dummy"! (that's a nice way to put what my mind interpreted) You drive in this town nearly every day, belly-aching and whining about all the misdeeds of all the drivers around you, and not once have considered their needs, their lives, their problems, their families and well... you get the picture.

I sat at that red light until the guy behind me honked me out of my trance. I knew at that moment what God had been trying to tell me... "you shoulda shut up, and you would have heard me a long time ago! Wow, what a message and a wake-up call. I thanked God, asked for forgiveness for not listening and went back to the office where I did a little research. Please note that some of what I'm about to share makes a few assumptions to try and present a case, but if you'll bear with me, I think you'll easily understand that I'm not the only one God is calling to this challenge.

There's a couple of different research findings out there that suggest we (all of us) spend about six months of our life in wait at red lights. That is a lot of time to belly-ache and whine about the situation,

or a lot of time to pray. I fully believe that was God's message to me. While you're sitting here, why don't you pray for those beside you, those behind you or those passing in front of you? They all have problems, they all have families, they all need to know me, they all need to see my grace, they all deserve your prayers and not your condemnation. So, not only did I hear that, I wanted to put some numbers to it, so I could easily communicate this challenge.

If we sit at red lights for six months while we're here, and we live an average of seventy years, it adds up to about four-thousand, three-hundred and seventy hours (4,370). If you divide that into an average seventy year life, it works out to approximately sixty-two and a half hours per year (62.5) If you divide that into the twelve months in a year, it works out to about 5.2 hours per month. If you multiply that by the minutes in an hour, it works out to about 312 minutes per month at a red light. If you divide that into the average 30 days in a month, it means that we spend (on average) about ten (10) minutes per day at red lights.

Can you spare ten minutes per day to pray for other people? God told me not only that I could do that, but that it was a new mandate in my daily ministry. I may never know what God does through those short prayers for other people, but He does. What impact can possibly be made in someone's life when someone else is praying them that they are totally unaware of? What healing can be brought about? What breakthrough can materialize? What if families are restored? What if that short prayer helps them to recognize God's voice and finally get to a place of relationship with Him?

I know I can no longer sit idly by at a red light rocking to the music or griping about my inconvenience. For you... just know that as you are doing the same, (waiting at a light) I may be asking God for that very thing you're needing from Him.

There's another song I want to mention. It's by Tauren Wells and titled, "When We Pray". I challenge you to listen to it. You can easily find it by Googling his name and clicking on the song. There's a powerful message there; it says, "The world starts changing, when the church starts praying".

I want to challenge you to take this on in your life too. Ten minutes a day while you're just waiting anyway. I may be the guy behind you praying for you, but I could use a prayer now and again as well. I bet once you read this, you can't sit at a red light again without at least thinking about it.

God Bless,

Ron Ledbetter