



Wake-Up Call

Life Is Never Automatic

by Tim Walker

I'm feeling pretty dumb right now. On the way home from work last night, I drove right into the back of another car.

It was at the end of the exit ramp. We were both turning right. The car in front of me, a black Honda Civic, was poised and ready to go onto the busy eight-lane road. I was watching for the opening. I thought she had taken her chance and it was my turn now. I thought wrong.

Wham.

My car wasn't damaged, and hers barely was, but I have a lovely citation as a parting gift from the police officer, one that will ensure I'll be eating peanut butter for lunch for the next two months.

It's amazing how you can think ahead so many times about all the stupid things you'll never do—everything from not eating that extra dessert to checking your zipper before you leave the bathroom. Or from not saying the mean things that occasionally pop into your head to not letting people use you as a doormat anymore. Or from making a rash purchase to using someone else for your own selfish purposes. But then, in a moment of distraction or just plain brain freeze, you do it. You make that one mistake—and it's a big one.

I wish I could take those few seconds back. I apologized profusely to the lady. I was the careless one, and she was driving safely. I could have come up with a number of excuses, but the fact is I wasn't paying attention to what she was doing.

It's no wonder I hit her car. I drive home every day on automatic. I could probably drive that route in my sleep. I know the way, and I know how long it's going to take me on an average day. And some days I'm so deep in thought that I look around and think, "Wow, I'm already here." (Usually not a good situation if you're driving.)

My brain was turned off. Unfortunately, I do that in other areas too. For example, my relationship with God gets put on automatic. Read my Bible, say a few words of prayer, then let's get the day started.

Maybe that's what the moments of crisis are for. Maybe that's what stress in my life does. It jolts me like the car accident. It reminds me that I was never created to run on autopilot. Romans 13:11 says, "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." That sounds like a call to turn off the cruise control. We were made to think and relate and feel.

What I did last night was very stupid, but I'll drive differently now. I'll be more alert. I'm going to think more about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. I don't want what happened yesterday to happen again.

Maybe that was the wake-up call I needed for other areas too.

