

Question: I get so irritated by all the rude people in our world. They cut in line at stores and disobey traffic laws, driving with little regard for the safety of others. What would Jesus do?

Although we may have little control over the selfish behavior of others, we can control our reactions to what they do. Selfishness is and has always been one of the signs of our fallen world. After all, “I” is at the center of all sin. We can allow this kind of conduct to irritate us and cause us to do something we will regret, or we can maintain self-control and demonstrate a spirit of unselfishness. The latter is the behavior that Jesus modeled.

When another driver rudely cuts in front of me, my sinful nature tries to come to the surface with an equally rude and dangerous reaction. I may be tempted to honk the horn. Some reckless people might decide to ride his bumper, race around and cut in front of him, or make a vulgar gesture. I become especially disgusted when the rude driver has a bumper sticker that says, “Honk if you love Jesus.”

Instead of trying to set things right by our own wisdom and power, we must not react in kind to those who are rude and selfish. Jesus taught that we should do to others what we would have them do to us and not as they do to us (Matthew 7:12). He also taught his followers to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile, demonstrating a totally different spirit from the selfish, worldly people that surround us (Matt. 5:38-42). To the Christians in Philippi, the apostle Paul wrote: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Philippians 2:3-7).

In addition, Jesus said that when it comes to the eternal kingdom of God “many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Mark 10:31). Thus, the people of God’s kingdom must not be discouraged or overcome by the spirit of a selfish world. Those who trust in Jesus and follow his example will face hardships, but by the power of his Spirit they can shine the light of unselfishness in the midst of a world of selfishness. Let us be aggressively unselfish.

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