

Red Means STOP



This month, while most people are thinking about red hearts and red roses, I'm stuck on a very different red image: a stop sign.

You see, a few weeks ago I was rushing from a work meeting to pick up my toddler son from daycare. As was usually the case, my mind was racing almost as fast as my car was. I was thinking about how I going to meet my next deadline, when I would schedule my son's next doctor appointment, and what I was going to make for dinner—all at the same time!

So it shouldn't have come as any surprise when I accidentally did the unthinkable: I ran through a stop sign.

I immediately realized my mistake and pulled over to catch my breath and slow my racing heart. Upon gaining my composure, I began fervently praying to God, thanking Him that I wasn't hurt and that—most importantly—my son wasn't yet in the car with me.

That scare has stayed with me. It showed me that living life at a mile a minute—every day a whirlwind, every moment rushed—isn't what God intends for us. How can I properly praise Him and appreciate the many blessings He's given me, I thought, if the pace of my life only has two speeds: fast and faster?

Red is the international color for stop; stop signs and stoplights all over the world feature the bright shade. I believe God used a red stop sign that day to tell me I needed to *stop* accelerating and put on the brakes before another day passed me by. I'm now trying very hard to heed that advice.

Certainly God isn't always that literal in His communication to us, but He gives us metaphorical stop signs all the time. Does He want you to discontinue some habit or practice that isn't aligned with His will for you? Is He telling you to cease some action or way of life that's inhibiting your relationship with Him?

If so, I encourage you to hear His command and obey. Because here's the good news: When God says "stop," it's always because He has something better in mind for us. When God says "stop," it's only a matter of time before He then says "go."

Blessings,
Katie McLaughlin

