

New Driver

Read Psalm 103:8-14

I remember when my son was a new driver. He was so confident in his expertise, assured he could handle any situation (though he had no way of knowing what those situations would be). He was impatient with our parental concerns, eager for independence above all else. He said he could drive. The school said he could drive. The state said he could drive.

And he could drive, as long as it was smooth sailing. When situations were normal and all was clear, he was in control. But when the roads were crowded or unexpected demands were made, when quick thinking and experience were required, he bungled the basics. His reactions were not yet polished. His confidence suffered a sudden attack of realism, and he panicked, took chances, and sometimes used poor judgment.

For example, on his first Sunday in the church parking lot, he turned the wrong way down a one-way aisle, went too fast trying to pull into a parking space slanted the opposite direction, and scraped the side of a car. \$285 in cash (we decided not to bother the insurance company).

Reflecting on this, I realize that to God my Father, I must seem much like my 16-year-old son did to me. I've studied and experienced so much. I *know*.

But when a crisis puts pressure on my faith; when my peace of mind is blind-sided by some anxiety; when a difficult situation demands that I set aside my own concerns and be thoroughly loving, I'm like a new driver. I lack the wisdom, the instincts, the reactions. I too often panic and blow it. In the process, I risk my Father's reputation and the welfare of myself and those around me.

Yet I praise the Lord for His patience and His faithful persistence in teaching me. Though I panic, He does not. And I pray that He might help me listen more eagerly, reacting to His teaching as to loving wisdom, and not as if He were trying to meddle in my affairs or limit my freedom. I long for the day when I handle my daily demands as Christ would handle them, exercising His faith and His love.

What does a father do when his son blows it — when he makes a \$285 mistake? I explained what he did wrong, then forgave him on the spot, gladly and completely. After all, he was doing his best. I was sympathetic with his struggles. It's not easy, and I wanted to encourage him. I wanted him to succeed.

I was really rather proud of him. Still am.

Hymn: [So Unworthy](#)