

When I was younger, I couldn't wait to drive a car. Sometimes, when it was parked, I would climb into the driver's seat, scoot it all the way forward so my little legs could reach the pedals, and pretend that I was maneuvering the machine at exhilarating speeds. The dashboard was an exciting display of buttons that sometimes was imagined to belong to a race car or the cockpit of a rocket. I would push every button, twist every knob, switch the blinkers, pump the pedals, and jerk the steering wheel frantically to make it through that well-imagined narrow curve just ahead. Surely driving must be the most fun thing in the world!

Now, however, why doesn't the driver's seat have the same enchantment? My perspective has changed through experience. In driver's education, listening to "scare-you-out-of-driving-recklessly" lectures, I learned the dangers of irresponsible driving. As I drove for the first time, I realized that it takes a lot of practice, skill, and alertness. Noticing my brave mother's white knuckles firmly gripping the seat, I learned that it's a good idea to slow down before curves – something I had to develop a knack for. I now know through experience that driving is more than zooming along pretend roads. I have gained valuable new experiences, which have changed my perspective.

In all of life, experience forms perspective. Things that we learn or happen to us come together to become pieces in the great sphere of our perspective. What is perspective? It is a personal viewpoint, a way in which we analyze and understand the world around us. It is a value system that manifests itself through our actions. For example, an antique collector might pay a large sum for what I might sell at a garage sale. Why? Because through a lifetime of experience,

the collector developed an interest in and knowledge of antiques, therefore looking at them from a perspective of having a higher value. Perspectives can be right, wrong, or, as in the case of the antique collector, simply personal taste.

Though much of our perspective develops without our even trying, we can control many of the ways we view the world. The things we choose to watch, read, or listen to all play a part in forming our perspective. Because our lifestyle and actions manifest our perspective so accurately, it is imperative, as the book of Proverbs says, to “keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” As we are constantly presented with an insurmountable amount of information, we must carefully guard our hearts in order to only absorb what is right. However, we can’t, and fortunately don’t have to, do it alone. Philippians 4:7 reads, “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The ‘peace of God’ cannot be obtained without God’s Spirit dwelling in us, Who will guard our hearts and help keep our perspectives pure and Biblical.

As you are going through life, gaining experiences and being exposed to all sorts of propaganda, I would like to encourage you to take seriously how you analyze and come to conclusions about each issue. You have a perspective about every topic in life, whether you realize it or not. Without careful attention, and the help of God’s Spirit, our perspective can quickly warp, manifesting itself through our actions and being detrimental to our lifestyle and character. Let us be ready, as the letter to the Corinthians says, for “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

Does someone else want to drive?