

4. FREEDOM AND ROAD RULES

Driving around Khartoum is more fun than driving in England, which is my home country. Here, I am able to start a new lane if my lane is full, even if it means traffic three or four cars wide on the road.

Here, I am allowed to go the wrong side of a roundabout (circle) or a divided road, sometimes I am even directed to do so by a policeman. Here, I have the right of way if my vehicle is the biggest or if I get to the junction first. Here, I can change from lane to lane freely without signalling my intention. I can also push my way into moving traffic if I don't mind being shouted at for a few moments.

The question naturally arises: 'Why have any road rules at all?' The answer is surprising, unless you think about it for a bit. Rules actually give everybody on the road greater freedom.

People often think that rules stop freedom. In fact the reverse is true. Rules encourage a spirit which gives everybody freedom, as long as everyone keeps them.

I believe 'Christians can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us'. It is a matter of my choice. Remembering I live in the sight of God: will I choose to do what is right or will I choose to do what is wrong?

On a traffic light red means 'stop' while green means 'go'. Drivers know from experience during electricity cuts, there is little freedom at road junctions when people try to go as they want to whatever the colour of the light! The presence of police at busy junctions, trying to make sure the rules are obeyed, is aimed at keeping all the traffic flowing.

God wants Christians to follow the Holy Spirit's prompting and to obey his rules. The Bible teaches us to live as Jesus did, in the only way which pleases Father God. When we love God and we love our neighbour in the way the Creator intends, we promote God-given freedom in our society.

Both Old and New Testaments urge parents to teach their own children to learn and to keep God's laws. Jesus told us we display our personal love for God as we live by his commandments.

The rules of Christian living, applied by a person keeping in step with the Holy Spirit, are an attractive witness to those who stand by and watch. They speak more clearly than any words we say.

What do people see and hear from your life?