

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12

## Putting the Brakes On

READ EPHESIANS 4:14-21

**Bible Thought:** *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. . . . Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:22-24, NIV).*

AS I WAITED at a signal, I heard his tires squealing, just before he hit my car. While assessing the damage, the truck driver confessed, "This beast never has had dependable brakes!"

This is the problem, not just of the truck driver, but of all of us. In the area of self-control, our brakes are sometimes faulty. Who has never overeaten? Watched that midnight movie, knowing that he shouldn't stay up so late? Purchased more on credit than could be justified? Gossiped or complained? Lost his temper?

These are just a few examples of how we fall short of the Bible requirement of a controlled life. However, we excuse ourselves, saying, "Oh, but I *am* self-controlled. It's just that sometimes my brakes fail a little!"

This failure is nothing new, existing from Eden onward. In New Testament times multitudes gave themselves to every appetite. Paul says, however, that we Christians must put away such pre-conversion behavior, for we have died to uncontrolled desires, lying, bitterness, anger, slander, and other emotional upheavals. We have put on Christ and through His power, we are learning to put the brakes to all that we think, say and do.

Hymn: "Purer in Heart, O God"

*Lord, grant us a special measure of self-control over our besetting sins. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

—GLOVER SHIPP, Belo Horizonte, Brazil