



The last cars rolled off the the assembly lines in January 1942, so that tanks, trucks and guns could be built for the war. It was not until after the war, in 1945, that cars would return to the assembly line for the 1946 models. My family's car was a blue '50 Packard, which I should have restored instead of moving to California.

During my childhood years, one of my favorite past times was making soapbox cars out of scrap materials. My mom would take a photo of every one of them. I remember naming one "Speedy Lizzy", which we called mom. I had a deep love for working on cars which was never fulfilled in my life.

I have memories of many cars. One day while riding the school bus home, I saw this Model "A" Coupe being sold for \$600. I begged my parents to let me buy that car with my savings, but to no avail. I still regret not getting it. I learned to drive my dad's '50 Chevy Pick-up in a cantaloupe patch and my brother-in-law's '59 VW Beetle. Later, I got my license at age 14, driving Dad's '50 Packard. Eventually, I purchased my first car from my brother-in-law, which was an orange and white '56 Mercury, two-door hardtop. It was a beauty! I had it until I bought a new '66 Dodge Coronet 500, with bucket seats and four on the floor, while in college.

CAR STORIES

Have you ever thought about all the stories you could tell about car adventures. They became such a part of my life that I can recall my history by the car I was riding in at the time. For instance, the drive seemed forever to grandma's house in West Texas with my sister, brother and I in the back seat. They taught me songs that I remember to this day. My dad eventually got a newer '56 Packard, and a '59 Ford during my teenage years. I recall riding home with my dad from the dealership. I was in Mike's car when he drove out to the bootlegger's house to purchase my first beer during high school. I have fond memories of my first dates in these cars ~ drive-in theaters and oldies music.

One of my friends read my testimony book "Will You Die for Me?" and teased me about all my car wrecks. I rolled over my dad's Chevy Pick-up one morning while driving to school in the rain. Actually, I wrecked only one other car, my Coronet 500, but I wrecked it four times. The first wreck was not my fault, but the rest happened while I was in a drunken-angry state of mind, medicating my pain. The fear of failure behind the anger in college would drive me to California, trying to escape the humility of not graduating on time.

My first car in California was a yellow '59 Thunderbird two-door hardtop convertible. I bought it for five-hundred dollars. That was '67 when the song "My Baby, She Wrote Me A Letter" came out. Another hit at the time was "Come On Baby Light My Fire" by the Doors. I rode all over Hollywood with the top down listening to music with my friend David. I remember the giant stuffed teddy bears being sold on the Strip with all the bright lights. In a year, the transmission went out, so I sold it for almost what I paid for it and purchased a '35 Dodge Pick-up. What I really liked about that truck was the crank on the dash where I could roll the windshield out at the bottom to let fresh air in. I'd drive down the freeway at the truck's top speed of 65 m.p.h. while listening to Jimmy Hendrix on my newly installed four-track tape deck. Those were the days.

RIDING ALONG IN MY CAR

Turning points in life can be remembered by whose car you are in, or who's riding in your car. I picked up Dennis Wilson, the drummer for the Beach Boys in my '35 Dodge outside Hollywood on Sunset. This led me to meeting Manson.

He ended up taking my pick-up, not wanting us to have any individual identities. He gave it to a man named Farmer John, who never registered it in his name. I later got it back from the impound lot, but again Manson gave it to Greg (a record producer) for favors. I loved that old truck. I left the Manson Family for three months in late '68, thinking I was loosing my mind. The Beatles' White Album was just released. I located my friend David, who picked me up in his brother's '52 Chevy. Unfortunately, I could hear Manson's voice calling me back. I returned to him in March '69, which I deeply regret, because of the crime.

My job in the Manson Family was keeping old cars running. I felt he could see my gifts when it seemed my parents did not. Of course, this was all part of the deception as our thoughts were turned against our parents by Manson's philosophy, plus deprogramming continued through his music. He could see our fears and anger which he manipulated and used for his purposes. He sent us off to commit the murders while high on speed in a yellow '59 Ford, which was a car Manson had borrowed from a friend. I guess you could say I was in Manson's car, willing to carry out his desires, but not without reservations. We never wanted to kill anyone, but we became willing to do anything for approval and to gain his acceptance.

I ended up in Death Valley after the murders, even literally in my mind. I was oppressed and unwilling to carry out any more of Manson's orders. We were staying at a farm house where two '46 Dodge Power Wagons were parked. They were some of the first off the assembly line after the war. I got one of the wagons running in order to escape from him, not willing to kill again. I drove down Golar Wash, out of the desert, and into a salt flat until I was bogged down. I hit the deck as an Air Force jet buzzed the flats barely above me. After hitching a ride to the airport, I called my parents for money to fly back to Texas.

MY LAST EXPERIENCE

My old girlfriend in Texas had a '66 Mustang. It was the last car I ever drove. We came home from the lake and my dad was waiting. My heart was already in turmoil. The California authorities had called my cousin the Sheriff saying I was wanted for murder. They drove me over to the Collin County Jail in McKinney. I don't recall what car my dad had purchased, but my mind was in such a fog that

I can't remember if I was in the back seat of his or my uncle's car. That was one of my last rides. I've ridden in buses for transfers and vans for medical transports, but few and far between. On those trips, I experience cars all around me, with people running around speedily. Life seems to really slow down in prison without a car, but I've been able to keep up with them on television, in magazines and newspapers. Also, I've been able to experience the cars my family members have owned in my mind. I still love cars.

I'm often asked what kind of car I would buy if I were on the streets? It would depend upon the need, but ideally, I'd like an older car from the late '30s or early '40s that I could fix up. I wouldn't be living a fast paced life, so I wouldn't need a fast car. I know for certain that I'd be in the Lord's car wherever I go, reigning over the fears, resentments and regrets of the past.

WHOSE CAR ARE YOU IN?

I pray that you are in the Lord's car, and not in a car that is going nowhere in life. My car was not a good one to get in, and my friend's cars were just as bad. It is important to choose the right car. There are a lot of cars out there that seem to be the right choice, but many of them lead to death (Proverbs 14:12).

It is crucial to watch the speed limit. Cars these days can go much faster than anyone needs to travel. It is easy to get into a wreck like I did. And be sure to not drink while driving, because you need all your senses while making choices. It is wise to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and alert. The apostle Peter said,

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are" — 1 Peter 5:8,9

Remember to stay close to home until you are mature enough to venture out into the world with Godly values. And remember, don't pick up any hitchhikers, because every wrong decision can be life changing. Instead of talking on the cell phone or texting, keep a solid relationship with your Heavenly Father in prayer, riding in His car, living in His protection and driving with Jesus at the wheel.

"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world"

— James 4:7,8

MAKE A U-TURN, PRAY...

Heavenly Father, I believe that Jesus paid the price for my sin with His blood, and he took my punishment for sin at the cross. I believe You forgave me and cleansed me from all unrighteousness, so that I can now stand righteous before You in Christ without any fear, guilt or inferiority. I believe in my heart that You raised Christ from the dead to give me a new and eternal life. I welcome You to live in my heart and to live Your life through me. Amen!

Our Web site presents to you the beauty of God's Word. We suggest, especially to those who are new Christians, to obtain a New Living Translation Bible (Tyndale House Publishers), at their local Bible book store. It is clear and precise in sharing the simplicity of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Won't you draw near to God today?

LET'S ALL BE IN ONE ACCORD!



MY LOVE FOR CARS

Message from a former
Manson family member

What Place Cars Had In My Life.

I was born in 1945. During that year a bomber struck the Empire State building; the war in Europe ended after Hitler's suicide in Berlin; Franklin D. Roosevelt died and was succeeded by Truman; Rocky Graziano was named "Boxer of the Year"; the Nuremberg war-crimes began and A-Bombs were dropped on Japan, starting the atomic age and ending the war. It was also the year automobile production was resumed in the U.S. after having been halted during World War II .

Charles D. Watson
www.aboundinglove.org