



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Reality—Fight or Flight? P1

“Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6).

Everyone has experienced the instinct to fight, flee, or disassociate at one time or another when faced with a perceived threat to their well-being. These three common ways mankind reacts to “danger” are involuntary biological instincts, which are all products of our fallen sin nature, since there was no need to fight, flee, or disassociate in Eden.

By preparing to fight something, we are acknowledging it is a “threat” to us and it is very real. When we prepare to flee from something, we are also acknowledging it as a very real threat to us. When we dissociate, we deny the frightening “something” exists by “zoning out” to a false “reality” or fantasy where the threat doesn’t exist. (We’ll explore disassociation more in the second part of this series).

FIGHT: The instinct to fight a perceived threat ranges from the extreme (a dog attacking your child) to the mild (your parents reducing your allowance), and we react with aggression. Similarly, many people fight God, because they do not want to accept the accountability of what that truth means for them—that they are sinners, doomed to eternal death. And so, anger is a common reaction to the Gospel.

Sometimes, even Believers perceive God as a threat to their well-being, and their reaction is to want to fight Him. In the face of God’s terrifying will for him, Job declared, *“I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue with God”* (Job 13:3). Job wanted to fight God’s will for him—*“Know then that God has wronged me and has closed His net around me”* (Job 19:6), *“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul”* (Job 7:11). Just as Job “wrestled” with God, our instinct can be to fight God’s will when we feel it threatens us.

FLEE: On the other hand, we may feel the instinct to flee a perceived threat, and this ranges from the extreme (a bear wanders into your camp) to the mild (an unwelcome visitor). In the same way, when confronted with the reality of God, some people try to get as far away as possible from confronting that reality. Why? Because liability for sin and accountability to God is truly terrifying for sinful man.

At times, Believers may also feel they want to run from God’s will. When God told Jonah to preach to Nineveh, *“Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord”* (Jonah 1:1-2). Jonah felt threatened by God’s will for him, so he tried to remove himself from it.

But God doesn’t want anyone to flee their liability for sin or the horrifying reality of this fallen life, which truly is threatening. Nor does He want anyone to fight His fearless gift of Salvation or His perfect will. In true love, God doesn’t sugar-coat the horror of our situation. He desires that we face the ugliness of this fallen, sinful reality (the purpose of the Old Testament—we are sinners, doomed to judgement, and we cannot save ourselves). Then, from that place of understanding, He wants us to entrust ourselves to Him in the midst of that terrifying reality (the Gospel—only Jesus can save us, and He will save all who put their faith in Him). We must accept reality for what it is — the truth.

For both Job and Jonah, God required them to face reality, confess the truth, and entrust themselves to Him. Job confessed that God was in the right—*“I repent in dust and ashes”* (Job 42:6b)—and he saw that God’s will was not a threat, but a greater purpose for his eternal well-being. Jonah realized he could not outrun the presence of God, and he had to make peace with His purpose (Jonah 3:3).

Reality is frightening (sin, suffering, death, hell), but it is also beautiful in Christ (grace, salvation, resurrection, glorification, eternity). May we entrust ourselves to God when “threatened” by reality, so that we abide in the Truth—not fighting or fleeing it. Amen.