



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 224.0

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Reality—Dissociate? P2

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

There are three main ways fallen man reacts to a perceived threat. We fight, we flee, or we dissociate. Like our experience with biological fight-or-flight instincts, we all have also dissociated from the “truth” of a “danger.”

In extreme situations, when people cannot escape a terrifying or horrifying situation, the mind naturally can dissociate from what is happening (as in shock). The person “detaches” themselves from the truth of what the body is experiencing, physically or emotionally, because it is overwhelmed. This is not voluntary. Afterwards, they may not even have any memory of what happened to them, although their body is traumatized.

In the mid-range of the spectrum, we may involuntarily dissociate when we are overstimulated by media, noise, or other stresses. This can cause sensitive people to “zone out” from their surroundings in a daze. On the near end of the spectrum, however, we all have the voluntary ability to dissociate as a means to cope or manage stressful realities or conflicts. For example, perhaps your dad was chewing you out as a kid, and you “zoned out,” because it was uncomfortable to you—later, you can’t even recall what he was saying to you. That is a mild form of dissociation. You “checked out” from an uncomfortable reality to a more comfortable fantasy that was “safe.” When we dissociate, we deny the “threat” exists by “zoning out” to a false “reality” where the “threat” doesn’t exist—we make it unreal for ourselves. But we’re only fooling ourselves, because reality still exists. In our overstimulated, crisis driven world, many people are dissociating, choosing pleasant fantasies and escapism over unpleasant realities.

But God doesn’t want us to dissociate when confronted with the horrifying reality of sin, which is a truly threatening reality. God wants

us to be in truth, accepting reality as it is.

Many people deny the existence of God, because they do not want to face the stress and anxiety of what His reality would mean for them. They “zone out” to fantasies where sin doesn’t exist and God doesn’t exist. Accountability is unpleasant! Even Believers can struggle with dissociation because of the terrifying reality of life and our sinful desires.

David, for example, knew God’s law required adultery and murder to be punished by death. Yet, he detached himself from this reality, convincing himself his fantasy was exempt. David denied the reality of his sin by pretending the truth didn’t apply to him. Similarly, we know sin is wrong, but we do it anyways, because it is the fantasy we want to be true—a reality without God. But it isn’t real.

After his sin was exposed, David let go his fantasy, faced the consequences of his actions, confessed the truth, and entrusted himself to God. God requires everyone to face reality sooner or later—here or hereafter. God doesn’t sugar-coat the horror of our fallen situation. He wants us to face the ugly stress and horror of this fallen, sinful reality (this is the Law—we are sinners, doomed to judgement, and we cannot save ourselves), for *“the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin”* (Rom. 3:22a). Then He wants us to entrust ourselves to Him in the midst of that terror (this is the Gospel—only Jesus can save us, all who put their faith in Him), *“so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe”* (Rom. 3:22b). *“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth”* (Ps. 145:18).

May we not dissociate ourselves from the horror of this fallen reality or the true nature of God and His expectations—not making way for sin by “zoning out” to fantasies where He doesn’t exist. And may we entrust ourselves to God’s salvation and help, which is the only way to be reconciled to His peace. May we praise God for His work through Christ in saving us from the reality of sin! Even so, Amen.