

Call a dog and it will break its neck to get to you.

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Dogs just want to please.

Call a cat and it will just stare at you.

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Its attitude is, 'What's in it for me?'

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II. God sometimes calls His people to serve Him in difficult ways (v.2).

III. God's call can be disobeyed, but it cannot be quietly dismissed (vv.3-4, 12).

Why Do God's People Sometimes Run from His Call?

Jonah 1:1-3; 3:10-4:2

I. What kind of person runs from God?

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A. The expected answer: unbelievers and unfaithful believers.

B. The unexpected answer: faithful believers.

1. Look at Jonah:

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a. He was a prophet of God:

... according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. (2 Kings 14:25)

b. He was entrusted with a mission from God:

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” (vv.1-2).

c. He was an unwavering believer, even in the midst of his rebellion:

And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” (v.9)

2. Look in the mirror.

II. What makes a person run from God?

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A. Why did Jonah deliberately disobey God and try to run from Him?

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A. Why did Jonah deliberately disobey God and try to run from Him?

B. Why do we sometimes run from what we know God wants us to do?

1. We are afraid.

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2. We think it's beyond our ability.

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2. We think it's beyond our ability.

3. We don't like or agree with what God is calling us to do.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

*And he prayed to the Lord and said,
“O Lord, is not this what I said when I was
yet in my country? That is why I made haste
to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are
a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from disaster.*

(Jonah 3:10 – 4:2)

III. What happens to a person who runs from God?

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A. Some experience the judgement of God because they were unbelievers.

“Had Jonah never repented, had he gone off to spend the rest of his days in Tarshish, we would be justified in concluding that his profession of faith was false and that he did not believe in the Lord. The same is true for multitudes today who say the “sinner’s prayer” or walk down the aisle at a revival but never show the fruit of a changed life.” – Richard Phillips.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)

B. Some experience the corrective discipline of God which proves they are children of God.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

*And have you forgotten the encouraging words
God spoke to you as his children? He said,*

*“My child, don’t make light of the Lord’s
discipline, and don’t give up when he
corrects you.*

*For the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes each one he accepts as
his child.”*

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

(Hebrews 12:5-11, NLT)