

What Shall We Do?: Resisting, Repenting, Realigning

I do resistance training every day, I resist going to the gym

A superconductor walks into a bar. The bartender says, We don't serve your kind here. The superconductor leaves without resistance. My goal is for us is that we leave today without resistance.

**Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”**

Repent, Change your mind or reconsider or have a different thought or realign. Jesus said, “But what do you think?” **Matthew 21:28 “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ 29 He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.**

The belief system of each son was revealed to himself by his actions. Each son reconsidered. The first thought, work for father or do my own desire. His gut response was no, me first, do my desire. But then he reconsidered, he repented, he had another thought and put aside his first response allowing the relationship with the father to guide the decision. The second, knew the right answer was yes and gave it without giving consideration. But as he considered the cost, he decided it wasn't worth it and did not go. Both changed their minds. One realigned with Father, one resisted Father. Changing our mind can be so hard when we are holding onto controlling our lives. Both boys started out with what James calls a double minded state. A resisting state.

At Pentecost, Peter told the people to repent and receive the Holy Spirit. Four years later Stephen says: **Acts 7:51 “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.**

When we do something to our neck that makes it stiff, it is hard to look in other directions.

The nature of our old man is to resist. Antipipto, anti = opposite or opposing, pipto = fall, to fall opposing. This word fall, it the same word in **Matthew 4:9 when the Devil says And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”**

Fall opposing. We can fall into someone or something to push then back. Think football. Or we can fall away from someone. We all know people who have fallen away. One is active resistance and another is active passivity. Stephen's speech in Acts 7 is setting up a story to show how common it is for people to resist God.

Resistance stands in the way of repentance.

**2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.**

The Phillip's paraphrase says: Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We even fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ.

Stephen was pulling down strongholds of thought by showing how God initiates then we either respond or resist. Acts 7:

Promise: Acts 7:3 ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’

Response: 4 “Abraham went out”

Resistance: 9 “And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt”

Response: But God was with him (Joseph) and 9 delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom..

Promise: 17 But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt...And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

Resistance: When Moses defended his people, 25 he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

Promise: 30 Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, 31 When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32 saying, ‘I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and dared not look. 33 ‘Then the Lord said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.

Response: 31 Moses drew near

Resistance: 35 “This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer

Promise: 37 “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’

Resistance: 43 You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch

Response: 45 Joshua brought them into the land, David found favor, Solomon built a temple. Then Stephen says: Acts 7:51 “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers.

Resistance: They stoned Stephen to death.

We resist as we look out after our own self interest. That is where the twisting of sin comes in. We most often justify our thoughts, words and actions. The twisting is in this, God or someone who loves or cares for us, tells us something uncomfortable but helpful. But we can chafe against it because we don’t want to hear. God may be speaking to us to show a better way, to save us from a problem, to get us out of a ditch. But we won’t have it. We are comfortable where we are.

Think about it when you present a great idea that you have and a person corrects part or all of it. How do you feel? Defensive, Resistant? This is the same sort of resistance we can feel toward God when He prompts us to do or not do something. God desires that we reconsider His design for us.

**Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? The same God, the God of the Old Testament says, Hos 2:14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to her.**

God's kindness leads us to repentance, to reconsider that His way is better than our way. Leading a person to repentance is one of the kindest things God or we could do. Done without shaming is a loving act as Paul wrote:

**1 Cor 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.**

Being led to repentance is a rich gift. What does being led into repentance look like?

**Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

God has good works prepared for us to do. Should that cause us to turn aside from our thoughts to His thoughts? We need only to agree with God and by His guidance, step into what He has prepared. He is the potter, we are the clay, why should we resist what the infinite Creator desires for us?

Repenting, is turning from our thoughts and having another thought, namely God's thoughts. It can be a major shift, but it might be a minor correction. When I was invited to help a campus ministry, during a concert it turned out there were free tickets. I agreed to help thinking Rhen and I would help then go to the concert. As I listened to God further and I made a minor correction, I chose to invite Derrick, my grandson, so he could meet the ministry leader who has Bible studies on the Santa Fe campus where Derrick attends. As Derrick was leaving the event, I asked him how the evening went. He said he really enjoyed being there and meeting the people who came to our table. He was glad he came.

Continual small shifts in thinking (repents) can be much easier than large shifts. Having a different thought has to do with growing in our relation with God. Relationships are not built nor do they crumble in a day. As a song Steve has played says, It's a slow fade. Eighteen 10-degree-turns away from God puts us in a position to have to make an 180 U-turn. One small 10 degree shift puts us back in line with God. Mama told me not to come. So I listened.

Repentance, reconsidering, or having a different thought has a very positive side. God is the maker of new things. I made the decision to invite Derrick as I was prompted by God who was doing a new thing. Doing new things means that He makes things that I can never make or think up by myself. That is why we should let Him guide us into these new things. **Isaiah 42:9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."**

**Matthew 13:52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."**

God has given you a treasure box, which has old things that He has shown you, how to love and be kind, how to resist evil. Old tools that He has ingrained in you. But He has also given you new treasures which you know nothing about. Treasures to be brought out at this moment and used. They are treasures and are costly. The key to opening these new treasures is repentance, reconsidering, having a different thought, that is God's thought.

**John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**

You are not going to make it alone. He is the source of every good creation. Why not have a different thought? His thought.

**Luke 9:3 And Jesus said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.** Take nothing physical for your journey is just an outward representation of "don't take your own thoughts either". I will teach you a new thing.

Where do we get the heart that can reconsider? We must be persuaded.

**2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.**

God used Nathan in 2 Sam 12 to persuade David.

David had sinned with Bathsheba and arranged for her husband to be killed.

Nathan did not tell David directly that he had sinned. He appealed to David's righteousness. He told a story of another man who acted unjustly. This moved David's heart to ask who is the man. Nathan responded, you are the man.

Then David says: Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Then David asks God to do a creative work in his heart. Asking God to persuade him further.

First we put our hearts in a position to be persuaded, by admitting that there are areas where we need God's persuasion.

**2 Timothy 2:23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**

Challenge

Ask God, where do You want to persuade me.

He may tell you then or wait until an opportune time. Listen.

Change my heart Oh God song

**Jude 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. 24 Now to Him who is able to keep [m]you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.**