

WHEN I CHALLENGE HIS WILL, GOD RESPONDS

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If I insist on challenging God's known will for me, he will respond in order to get my attention.

When I challenge God's will I hear and understand his Word (1:1-2), I refuse to obey it (1:3a), I have no conscience about that choice (1:5b-6), I dig my heels in even as he pushes on me (1:7-12)

And God responds by allowing me to challenge him (1:3b), circumstances that impede my plans (1:4-5a), people around me to be affected by my choices (1:13-16), with a way out despite my continued stubbornness (1:17)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever taken the 7 minutes to read through Jonah? What did you think of this story? What catches your attention?
2. Look over the outline for this sermon again. What point(s), if any, seems most applicable to your life? Why is it important right now?
3. Have you ever tried to run from God? What kinds of things make running from the Lord seem like a better option than obedience?
4. Is it discomfoting to you that a person with a clear conscience and a person with no conscience can both sleep well? What does it look like when someone has no conscience about the wrong choice they are making?

5. Are you aware of a situation that was clearly God's discipline in your life? What did he want to turn you away from? Where did he lead you after the discipline was finished?

6. It's clear from the text that Jonah's choice to run from God put other people at risk. How have you felt when you experienced the consequences of another person's disobedient choice? What have you done when you realized your wrong choices were affecting others?

7. How did you respond the last time God presented you with a way out? Do you think that your responses reveal stubbornness or submission? Why do respond that way?

8. It's a very transparent moment when Jonah says throw me overboard (v. 12). He's not choosing to obey, he's choosing to put his life at further physical risk. He concedes to what he thinks is God's negative judgement on his life. What else may lead a person to want to sacrifice themselves instead of submitting to God? (*How do we know from the rest of the story that dying was not the way out God intended Jonah to take?*)