



When Resistance is Futile

Andy Stanley

Scriptures: *Jonah 1:1–2:1, Proverbs 3:11-12*

Idea: You can run from God, but you can't outrun God. He's not trying to pay you back, but to win/bring you back.

Introduction

How many of you ever ran away from home? Came back? It was kind of silly, looking back. But at the time . . . we had plans. We would show 'em. Unfortunately, the focus was always on what we were running *from*, not so much *to*.

I won't ask you to raise your hands . . . but have you ever run from God?

1. When I speak of running from God, I don't mean packing your bags, though that may be part of it for you. I mean moving out in a direction that is other than what God has for you, or remaining in a situation you shouldn't.
2. For some, it's deciding there is no God . . . allows you to dumb down your conscience.
3. Or maybe it's overt . . .
 - Staying in a relationship you know God wants you out of.
 - Getting out of a relationship God wants you in.
 - Purchasing something you have a feeling isn't right.
 - Resisting God's call to ministry.
 - Refusing to pay someone what you owe him or her.
 - Refusing to apologize, take responsibility.
 - Living a lie of some kind.
4. I don't mean you never pray, but there are certain issues you avoid. Your conscience is killing you.
5. You hesitate to come to church because . . . awkward.

For the next three weeks, we are going to work our way through the story of a famous runner—Jonah. Is this a true story? It's written in a historical context: Nineveh, not Narnia. Jonah was a real person.

Jesus referred to Jonah as a historical figure in Matthew. We've figured out how to keep people alive underwater for six months . . . this was only three days. But even if it's a myth with a point . . . the point is relevant for all of us.

Jonah was an Old Testament prophet with a difficult assignment. Old Testament prophets had it tough. They were like the Army Rangers. They were sent into troubled regions to tell the people in power exactly what they did not want to hear, but exactly what they needed to hear. We all had people like this. We called 'em parents. Now you call 'em