




# HORIZONS



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**Whether There is Enjoyment in Bitterness**

Whoever you may be  
Pray for my soul. Speak my name  
To Him, for in my bitterness  
I hardly speak to Him: and He  
While He is busy killing me  
Refuses to listen.  
- Thomas Merton.

## Horizons

### Concept

Language and concepts have become blurred these days.

The word freedom has lost its vitality.

Facts? These are easily ignored.

Analogy? A lost art so badly misused.

Storytelling and narrative? You don't have the time.

Persuasion? There is only reinforcement and retrenchment.

Bishops become inept politicians.

The Pope is ignored. His urging to rediscover our needs greeted with suspicion.

I just want to provide the three classic pastoral case types for women in distress. Freeze, Fight or Flight. She may go through one, or all, experienced in parallel or in sequence.

So I will be as brief as possible.

Fill in what is missing from your categorical concepts but it would be better to let the fruition be the actions of the Spirit.

## Freeze - Hagar and Ishmael

Scriptural.

Early the next morning Abraham got some bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. Then, placing the child on her back, he sent her away. As she roamed aimlessly in the wilderness of Beer-sheba, the water in the skin was used up. So she put the child down under one of the bushes, and then went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away; for she said to herself, "I cannot watch the child die." As she sat opposite him, she wept aloud.

God heard the boy's voice, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven: "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not fear; God has heard the boy's voice in this plight of his. Get up, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand; for I will make of him a great nation."

Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and then let the boy drink.

Genesis 21:14-19

There are many components to this story and several of them troubling. Apologists can invent any number of creative theological imperatives and prerogatives. Yet the essentials are:

Hagar had given up, she froze. She had no horizon but the death of herself and her son. She sat a bowshot away, basically abandoned her son, that she might not see him and his agony.

How did this change?

1. The Lord spoke.
2. The resources she needed were provided.

Hagar was reminded of her **dignity** and her **autonomy** and given what she needed to keep her son alive.

Autonomy is self-rule.

Dignity is being valued and respected for your own sake.

God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.

Was the well already there? How does she find it?

Who gave her water?

## Horizons

### Fight – Slavery Infanticide

#### Historical

We do know, through others, that sometimes enslaved women would kill their own children, because they didn't want them to grow up in the system. But we can't officially say that here, because we don't know why these children died. But that is something that we do see in history: women making this really, really unimaginable decision because they understand, especially if they have young girls, what it would be like for them.

How the Word is Passed, Clint Smith, Little, Brown and Co, 2021, p 82.

What horizon did she see?

What horizon belongs to her?

## Horizons

### Flight – No More

Fictional

Kay: “Michael, you are blind. It wasn’t a miscarriage. It was an abortion. An abortion, Michael. Just like our marriage is an abortion. Something that’s unholy and evil. I didn’t want your son, Michael. I wouldn’t bring another one of your sons into this world. It was an abortion, Michael. It was a son. A son. And I had it killed. Because this must all end. I know now that it’s over. I knew it then. There would be no way, Michael, no way you could ever forgive me. Not with this Sicilian thing that’s been going on for two thousand years.”

(The Godfather Part II)

What was her horizon?

Horizons

### Effective Aid

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 CORR 4:18.

What we are looking at is the horizon. What is her horizon?

The approach was remind her of her dignity and her autonomy.

And give what she needed to keep her son alive.

**Autonomy is self-rule.**

**Dignity is being valued and respected for your own sake.**

### Listening

Active listening in the Spirit will yield healing benefit.

### Transportation

In this time, Uber is a great gift for a woman who is in crisis. It has an amazing effect o reigniting a sense of dignity and autonomy.

### Education

Helping the boyfriend or husband with completing his education (GED or vocational) completely changes the horizon.

### Wage Replacement

Replacing wages for a basic 'maternity leave' where he benefit does not exist.

### Food, Shelter and Health Care

All these are coordination efforts as these services are generally available. Documentary evidence is a key enabling asset.

### Conclusion

Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and then let the boy drink.