

Act and React

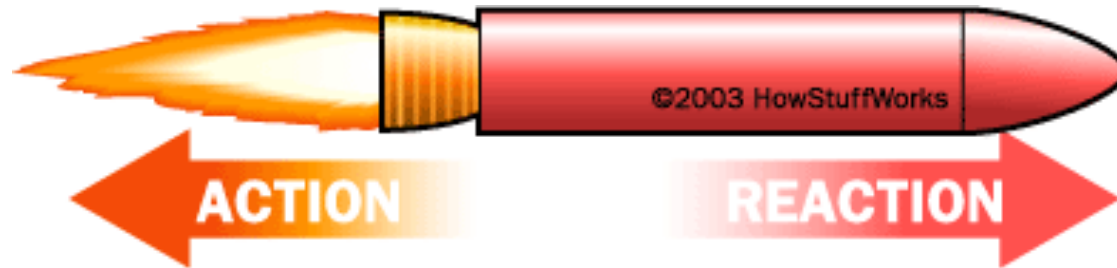
Sermon by Heard Lowry

12/13/15

Definitions (Physics)

Newton's Third Law:

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction)



But today we are not talking about Physics...

**In life, the forces may not be equal and opposite!
And they may not be balanced...**

My Definitions

Act: Behaving according to a set of rules
Staying on that course
without consideration of outside forces

React: Trying to stay on course
while responding to outside forces

The first level (act) is about me / us,
the second level (do) is about others.

Act and React: We must do both!

Golden Action (and Reaction)

So in everything,
do to others
what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12

The key is to Do Good to others,
not just to Be Good (isolated and on a shelf).

Being a hermit is not the key to being Good!

Introductory Quote

In my experience,
it's much easier to **act** like a Christian
than it is to **react** like one.

Anyone can put on an **act**.
But your **reactions** reveal
what is really in your heart.

And if you love God with all your heart,
you won't just **act** like it.
You'll **react** like it.

Mark Batterson

Example

**Think about walking down the road naturally (acting) –
then something happens to alter the pace or direction
(reaction)**

**On a rugged trail, and being pushed off balance;
we have to react to recover;
perseverance is needed to stay on track.**

Junior High School Story

Life is like a gauntlet –

Where the Evil One tries to knock us off the Way.

We cannot just walk down the line,

We have to react to other forces applied against us.

Example

Act: Throw a ball against the wall; trying to hit the target

React: Catch the rebound; unpredictable returns
so that you have to move quickly to catch it.



**Remember the pitch-and-catch
device?**

How do we React?

**What do we do when we are pushed?
In response to a slap,
do we offer other cheek?**

**“You have heard that it was said,
‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’
But I tell you,
do not resist an evil person.
If anyone slaps you on the right cheek,
turn to them the other cheek also.**

Matthew 5:38-39

Reacting to...

- Life
- Others
- God

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied:

**““Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.’**

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it:

‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

All the Law and the Prophets

hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:36-40

Reacting to Life

Naomi (pleasant → bitter) – lost her husband and sons

**“Don’t call me Naomi,”
she told them.**

**“Call me Mara,
because the Almighty
has made my life very bitter.**

[Reaction: life caused her to be bitter]

**I went away full,
but the Lord has brought me back empty.**

Why call me Naomi?

**The Lord has afflicted me;
the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”**

Ruth 1:20-21

Reacting to Life

Naomi – notice her recovery

[Naomi] asked her,

“Where did you glean today?

Where did you work?

Blessed be the man who took notice of you!”

... “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,”

“The Lord bless him!”

Naomi said to her daughter-in-law.

**“He has not stopped showing his kindness
to the living and the dead.”**

[Re-reaction: She saw God’s hand in the blessing]

Ruth 2:19-20

Reacting to God

Acts 2:36-41 [Pentecost – Peter’s sermon]

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

[Action: trying to hear about the new kingdom]

[Reaction: realizing that they must do something]

Reacting to God is connected to Reacting to Life

One reaction to God is to change direction

Reacting to God

Acts 2:36-41 [Pentecost – Peter’s sermon]

[More news of the gospel]

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

[Reaction: look how many responded!]

Reacting to God

[Saul's Conversion]

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:1-2

[Reaction to Christians: Capture all disciples!]

Reacting to God

As he neared Damascus on his journey,
suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,
“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

Acts 9:3-4

[Reaction of God: Get Saul's attention!]

Reacting to God

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

“Now get up and go into the city,
and you will be told what you must do.”

Then Ananias ... [placed] his hands on Saul, he said,

“Brother Saul, the Lord ...
has sent me so that you may see again
and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes,
and he could see again.

He got up and was baptized...

[Reaction to God: Obedience!]

Acts 9:5-6, 17-18

This change can be a complete turn-around!

Reacting to Others

The Good Samaritan (good and bad reactions)

**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,
when he was attacked by robbers.
They stripped him of his clothes,
beat him and went away,
leaving him half dead.**

Luke 10:30

Reacting to Others

The Good Samaritan (good and bad reactions)

A priest happened to be going down the same road

[Action: likely on priestly business]

and when he saw the man,

he passed by on the other side.

[Reaction: selfishly ignore]

Luke 10:31

So too, a Levite,

when he came to the place and saw him,

[Action: likely on priestly business]

passed by on the other side.

[Reaction: selfishly ignore]

Luke 10:32

Reacting to Others

The Good Samaritan (good and bad reactions)

But a Samaritan, as he traveled,
came where the man was;

[Action: likely on personal business]

and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds,
pouring on oil and wine.

Then he put the man on his own donkey,
brought him to an inn and took care of him.

The next day he took out two denarii
and gave them to the innkeeper.

[He promised to reimburse if more was needed]

[Reaction: unselfish aid at personal risk and cost]

Luke 10:33-35

Reacting to Others

Matthew 25 (good and bad reactions)

... For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

[Action: likely on personal business]

[Reaction: unselfishly aid at personal risk and cost]

The King will reply, Truly I tell you,
whatever you did
for one of the least of these...
you did for me.'

Matthew 25:34-36, 40

Reacting to Others

Matthew 25 (good and bad reactions)

... For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
I was a stranger and you did not invite me in,
I needed clothes and you did not clothe me,
I was sick and in prison and you did not look after
me.'

[Action: likely on personal business]

[Reaction: unselfishly aid at personal risk and cost]

He will reply,

'Truly I tell you,

whatever you did not do

for one of the least of these,

you did not do for

me.

Matthew 25:42-43,

Reacting to Others

We can study our Bibles,
attend church,
and **act** “right”;
but to **react** as we should
we must notice those who are in need...

- widows
- orphans
- sick
- helpless

Remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus?
Do you have your own personal Lazarus?

How Christ Reacts

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
that you should follow in his steps.

“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate;
when he suffered, he made no threats.

Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross,
so that we might die to sins and live for
righteousness;

“by his wounds you have been healed.”

~~1 Peter 2: 21-24~~

The ultimate example

Paul Copies Christ

When we are cursed, we bless;

when we are persecuted, we endure it;

when we are slandered, we answer kindly.

1 Corinthians 4:12b-13a

Conflict Between Actors

There is a conflict of **actors** (Pharisees and Christ),
which leads to a **reaction**

Pharisees were “**actors**”,
but they **reacted** badly to Christ

The Pharisees opposed change to their status quo

[a meeting of the Sanhedrin was called]

“What are we accomplishing?” they asked.

“Here is this man performing many signs.

If we let him go on like this,

everyone will believe in him,

and then the Romans will come

and take away both our temple and our nation.”

Then one of them, named Caiaphas,

who was high priest that year, spoke up,

“You know nothing at all!

You do not realize that it is better for you

that one man die for the people

than that the whole nation perish.”

So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

John 11:47-53

Christ Acts and Reacts (1)

Where did Christ (God) act –
where did He react?

Jesus came to earth for us
as a reaction to our need for salvation:

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ... God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6,8

For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son...

John 3:16

We have to keep reacting to the **acting** and **reacting**.

Christ Acts and Reacts (2)

The woman at the well, John 4:1-42

reaction to:

- 1) Samaritans,
- 2) a woman,
- 3) an outrageous sinner,
- 4) someone concerned with true worship,
- 5) someone concerned with her fellow townsmen,
- 6) someone concerned with her nation

Christ “**acts**” by asking for water

He then “**reacts**” to her questions

He then “**re-reacts**” by offering her living water
and professing to be the Christ

Christ Acts and Reacts (3)

The Syrophonecian woman, Mark 7:23-30

reaction to:

- 1) foreigner
- 2) woman

Christ “**reacts**” to her request in a negative way,
and then “**re-reacts**” to her faith
by healing her son.

Christ Reacts to Hypocrisy – John 2:13-17

Jesus entered temple, likely to preach...

He found the money changers corrupting the temple environment by cheating the people who came to worship.

He **reacted** to this hypocrisy by making a whip of cords, turning tables over, and driving out the money changers by intimidating force.

Christ Reacts to Hypocrisy – Matthew 23

Jesus had many times encountered opposition by religious hypocrites...

He **reacted** by standing up to them, and revealing the truth of what they were.

He condemned them for being:

- 1) hypocrites (do not practice what they preach)
- 2) power and control hungry
- 3) blind guides
- 4) prophet murderers
- 5) snakes

And He pronounced seven “woes” to illustrate how badly they abused the common people (whom they should have been serving).

How do We Do?

The Bible is full of so many lessons about our reactions;
in a way it is all about how we **react**...

It is easier to just **act**,
and put ourselves in a situation
where our interaction is minimal,
like a hermit, a monk on a pole
(self-control is easier
when we don't have to deal with others)

We must **react** to the needs of the Kingdom.

How do We Do?

I am guilty, of not responding, too!

We must **react** like Christ!

We must **react**, or respond to the Love of God

We must **react** with the Love of God

Christ is the catalyst
to our spiritual **reaction**...

In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:5