

# Horse Sense

In the days of the unsettled American West, bands of horses roamed the prairies and foothills. Their continued existence depended on their God-given fright-flight instincts. They could outrun any predator. Bears had claws, wolves had teeth, but horses had keen senses which early alerted them and set their hooves to pounding out distances of escape from the enemy.

The Bible speaks of horses as being swifter than eagles, running with the wings of the wind, and certainly, artists' sketches and western movies have imprinted the beauty of their flying hooves and flowing manes in our minds, along with the message that there is safety in running. While flight had been the horses means of survival in the wild, the settlers moving west would soon demand something different of them. Town and ranch life depended on horses that could be harnessed and trained to do the work of the West; so they were rounded up, broken, and set to tasks.

My experience with horses began a few years ago. We were amazed at how easily they spooked. A fluttering plastic bag or the slam of a door was all it took to startle them. But as we watched the riding instructor work with them, we began to observe an unanticipated beauty that far exceeded that of the wild creature running to survive. Surely nothing is so magnificent as a well-trained horse - obedience at a touch, concentration to task, and repression of inborn fright stimuli. If our horses were not worked regularly, we noticed something else. Rather than enjoying their "time-off", they seemed to miss the human contact and eventually sought us out.

As is so often the case, God uses my everyday observations to teach me corollary truths. Sometimes even we Christians think that running will solve our problems. We get skittery and nervous when we sense the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing change our way. But God says, "*Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.*" He ever attempts to gentle us through His goodness and patience. But most importantly, once the hand of God has touched us and fed us, we can never be the same. There is something in us that desires His continued fellowship. "*Deep calleth unto deep.*"

To any reader of this story who has thrown back his head, jerked at the reins, and even had a good run, the Lord says, "*Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.*" "*His compassions faileth not. His mercies are new every morning...Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.*" Wild and free may have been beautiful once, but now it is time to give the reins of your heart back to the Lord. Try reading Psalms 139. "*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ... If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me...For thou hast possessed my reins...*"