

The Book of Jonah

Jonah 1:1-3

Leader Check-in

What do you already know (or think you know) about the story of Jonah? What expectations do you have for this study?

Discover

Read Jonah 1:1-3. What purpose did God have for sending Jonah to Nineveh? What does this tell us about God?

How would you expect a prophet to respond to God's word? What is surprising about Jonah's response?

If you were Jonah, what reasons might you have for not obeying God?

Reread Jonah 1:1-3. Why do you think the narrator chose not to reveal Jonah's motive for running from God at this point in the story?

Read Psalm 139:7-9. What does this passage show us about Jonah's attempt to flee God's presence?

Fully Own

Has God ever called you to a place or person that made you uncomfortable? How did you respond?

Read Psalm 86:15. Do you want God to be as loving and gracious to your enemies as he is to you? Why or why not?

What do we reveal about ourselves when we fail to love the "unlovables" in our lives the way God has loved us?

Who is God calling you to show compassion toward today? What is behind your theology that keeps it from becoming faithful obedience?

Challenge

Before you start each day this week, stop and ask God to give you the boldness to love those who feel unlovable in your life.

The Book of Jonah

Jonah 1:4-6

Leader Check-in

What happened as you attempted to love the unlovable this week?

Discover

Have you ever experienced a “divine interruption” from God? Looking back, how did this experience benefit you?

Read Jonah 1:1-6. Who demonstrates more faith in this story, Jonah or the captain? How can you see God using the sailors and the captain in this story?

In what ways did Jonah need to “wake up”? How can you relate to Jonah’s current situation?

What does the storm represent in the story of Jonah? Have you ever considered that a storm in your life could actually be evidence that God is *still* pursuing you?

Compare Jonah 1:1-6 to Matthew 8:23-27. What similarities do you see between the two stories? What differences? Had you noticed the parallels between these stories before?

Fully Own

What has God broken up in your life to draw you back to Himself? What might He be breaking up today for your good?

Has God ever spoken to you through an unexpected person or situation? What happened?


What challenges are you currently facing? How might God be working through that situation to wake you spiritually?

Read Ephesians 5:14. What does this passage convey about Christ? Is it comforting to know God is still there even though we might be spiritually “asleep”?

Does God have to bring divine interruptions into your life often? Why or why not?

Challenge

As you go about your week, pay attention to the interruptions to your routine. Make a conscious effort to view them as God-given opportunities to grow in your faith.



The Book of Jonah

Jonah 1:7-16

Leader Check-in

How has God been using the book of Jonah in your life over the last two weeks? Where are you being challenged to grow? In what ways have you been encouraged to live differently?

Discover

Read Jonah 1: 7-16. What are some of the ways Jonah 1:7-16 contrasts Jonah's character with that of the sailors?

What does the scene with the sailors casting lots teach us about God? How does it reveal His sovereignty?

Re-read Jonah 1:7-9. How does Jonah's behavior compare to the way he describes himself and God? Why is this significant?

Take a closer look at Jonah 1:10-16. What are some words that you would use to describe Jonah's inner life?

What do the sailors see that Jonah does not? Where do you see God's heart for the lost in this passage?

What does the story of Jonah teach us about the impact of our disobedience? About the importance of repentance?

Fully Own


Consider James 2: 14 in light of Jonah 1:7-16. Why is it important that our lives actively reflect what we believe?

Take a minute. How have you worked to make your beliefs coincide with your actions? Where could you improve?

In what areas of your life are you currently resisting God's desires for you? How might your resistance be affecting your community?

Challenge

Think about a mature believer in your life and invite him or her to speak in honest love about where they see you spiritually. More importantly, invite him or her to point out any ways they see you resisting God's call in your life.



The Book of Jonah

Jonah 1:17-2:10

Leader Check-in

As you were praying about God's desires for your life this week, what were some things that he put on your heart?

Discover

Read Jonah 1:17. What would have happened to Jonah if God had not "appointed" a fish to swallow Jonah?

In what ways has Jonah's story changed your thinking about the way God pursues his relationship with us? Why does God continue to pursue Jonah?

Read Jonah 2:1-9. What is the focus of Jonah's prayer? Do you believe he has had a total change of heart? Why or why not?

How does Jonah's prayer in **Jonah 2:1-9** compare to **Psalms 51**? What differences do you notice? Which prayer of repentance seems most sincere?

How would you describe Jonah's character at this point in the story?

Read Psalm 136:1. How has God demonstrated his lovingkindness in the story of Jonah so far?

Fully Own

God is incredibly patient with Jonah. How does that encourage you on your journey with Christ?

How does a defensive attitude about our failures reflect a lack of repentance?

Read Romans 2:1-5. What is keeping you from true repentance today? In what ways can you identify with Jonah's counterfeit attempts?

Has someone sinned against you? Have they refused to own the pain they caused? Or falsely repented? How is God leading you to respond to that person?

Challenge

Read Jonah 2 followed by 1 John 1:8-9 at least four days this week. After doing so, ask God to reveal to you any false repentance in your life for the sake of healing.

The Book of Jonah

Jonah 3:1-5

Accountability/Leader Check-in

How easy or difficult was it for you to study Jonah 2 and 1 John 1:8-9 multiple times this week?
What did God reveal to you in the process?

Discover

Reread Jonah 3:1-3 and 1:1-3. How do the two parallel? What are some similarities? Are there any differences?

Read Jonah 3:4-5. Do you find Jonah's message to be compelling? What stands out to you about Ninevah's response to God's message?

After reading what Jonah says to the Ninevites, what does his message reveal about the way he feels towards them? Why is heartless obedience so dangerous?

How are you inspired by the response of the Ninevites in **Jonah 3:5**? What does their response tell us about their spiritual disposition?

Fully Own

Share about a time in your life when God gave you a second chance even though you feel you didn't deserve one. What did it teach you about His character and his love for you?

Read Colossians 3:12. Who do you struggle to have compassion for in your life? How might hearing their story affect the way you perceive them?

As you reflect on your life and relationships, can you say that you live out Central's Mark of Ownership, *Found People Find People*?

Where is God calling you to step out in obedience? What does heartfelt obedience look like in this circumstance?

Challenge

Despite his disobedience, God offered Jonah a second chance. How can you do the same for someone in your midst? Consider the resources God has blessed you with and list out three ways you can use them to help provide a second chance for someone.

The Book of Jonah

Jonah 3:6-10

Accountability/Leader Check-in

What opportunities did you have this week to give someone a second chance? How did you respond?

Discover

Read Jonah 3:6-10. How did the “king of Ninevah” respond to Jonah’s message? Why do you think the Ninevites responded this way? What were they realizing about themselves?

In what ways do we cry out to God for help “with strength”? How might a response like the Ninevites’ look in a more modern setting?

Read Jonah 3:10. Would you consider this result a happy ending? Why or why not? What can you predict about Jonah’s response to this turn of events?

At this point in the story how are you feeling about Jonah? What do you like or dislike about him?

Read 2 Peter 3:9. God is always open for repentance. In your opinion why do you think it is so hard for us to do this? Does our relationship with God affect how we repent?

Fully Own

How does God’s response to the Ninevites encourage you today? Does it correct a wrong view of Him that has kept you from repentance? Why or why not?


Read Proverbs 28:13. In your personal experience has failing to repent your sins a secret held you from growing? If so, how?

Read Psalm 139:23-24. After reading this passage what do you feel? Is it scary for you to ask God to search your heart? If so, ask yourself why. Share with your group.

Where in your life do you feel God is calling you to repent? Do you have any reservations about doing this?

Challenge

Set aside some time this week to evaluate your spiritual life, much like you would in any other performance evaluation. What are you doing well? Where are you struggling?



The Book of Jonah

Jonah 4:1-4

Leader Check-in

How did your spiritual self-evaluation go this week? What did God reveal to you about your areas of strength and your areas of struggle?

Discover

Read Jonah 4: 1-4. How does Jonah's response to the Ninevites' repentance differ from God's response (Jonah 3:10)? What does this difference reveal about the character of Jonah?

Take a closer look at Jonah 4:2. What is the real reason that Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh? Why might the narrator have waited to share this detail until now?

Consider the quote: *Bitterness is the fermenting of unforgiveness and anger.* How does Jonah's attitude demonstrate this truth?

Read Jonah 4:3-4. What does Jonah ask of God in response to the Ninevites' repentance? Where do you discern God's tenderness and kindness in his reaction to Jonah's ugliness?

Fully Own

When have you experienced God's compassion extended to those you do not like?

What circumstances has God used in your life to reveal your true view of His character? How has He graciously intervened to surface the disconnect between what you claim to believe and what your actions communicate?

Consider God's question to Jonah in **Jonah 3:4**. Is God asking you the same question? Where has bitterness blinded you from the reality of God's love and compassion for everyone?

Read **Hebrews 12:14-15**. Where have you allowed bitterness to take root? What is God inviting you to do in response?

Challenge

Think of someone in your life you struggle to love. After doing so, write down three ways you can serve them compassionately this week. Make a point to follow through on at least one by next week.

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Jonah 4:5-11

Leader Check-in

Share one of the three things you did this week to serve someone in your life that is hard to love.

Discover

Reflect on all you have learned from the story of Jonah. What key themes, phrases, or words would you use to describe the purpose of this book?

Read Jonah 4:1-6. What are you noticing about God's character as he interacts with Jonah? Are you surprised by Jonah's behavior? Why or why not?

Read Jonah 4:7-11. Why does God take issue with Jonah in this passage?

Based on your understanding of this passage, what is God trying to teach Jonah by appointing the plant, the worm, and the scorching wind?

Does the ending of the book of Jonah provide you with closure? Why do you think the book ends the way that it does?

Fully Own

Read Titus 3:3-7. As you reflect on your life, how have you experienced God's grace and mercy? How could those experiences change the way you view others—especially those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Read Luke 19:10. Do you have the same priorities as Jesus? In what ways is God calling you to grow in compassion for the lost today?

Think of some people in your life that you may dislike, who are they? How can you put their needs ahead of your own?

Challenge

Take time over the next few days for the following activity:

Make two columns on a piece of paper. In one column, think back on the book of Jonah and write down all of his ungodly characteristics. In the other, write out the perfect characteristics of Jesus in contrast to Jonah. After doing so, see where your life lines up and ask God to lead you into greater Christ-likeness.