

JONAH

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR AND SETTING

The story of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish (the text does not say it was a whale) is one of the most famous incidents in the Old Testament. It illustrates how far God was willing to go to ensure that His wayward prophet took the message of repentance to the people of Nineveh.

This large city was the capital of Assyria, a violent pagan nation despised by the Israelites. Yet the Ninevites repented when they heard of God's impending judgment, whereas the Israelites kept ignoring similar messages sent to them. Thus the book was a challenge to the self-righteous and limited attitudes of the Israelites.

It is unclear whether Jonah wrote this book that bears his name. If he did, then it would have been written in the eighth-century A.D., perhaps during Jeroboam II's reign over the northern kingdom.

Most people are so familiar with the story of Jonah that nothing in it surprises them anymore.

Jonah is one of fourteen Old Testament books that open with the little word "and." These books remind us of God's "continued story" of grace and mercy. Though it's comprised of sixty-six different books, the Bible tells only one story; and God keeps communicating that message to us, even though we don't always listen too attentively. How long-suffering He is toward us!

What is the Book of Jonah about? Well, it's not simply about a great fish (mentioned only four times), or a great city (named nine times), or even a disobedient prophet (mentioned eighteen times.) It's about God! God is mentioned thirty-eight times in these four short chapters, and if you eliminated Him from the book, the story wouldn't make sense. The Book of Jonah is about the will of God and how we respond to it. It's also about the love of God and how we share it with others.

KEY VERSE

Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of understanding; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord

KEY IDEA

Obedying God's will, brings blessing to us, and to others through us, disobedience brings discipline.

PERSONAL PROFILE: JONAH

Name means: "Dove."

Not to be confused with: The father of Simon Peter (Matt. 16:17).

Home: Gath Hopher (2 Kin. 14:25), a city about 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee, in the territory of Zebulun.

Family: Was the son of Amittai.

Occupation: Prophet in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 793–753 A.D.).

Best known today as: The prophet who survived being swallowed by a fish before preaching repentance to Nineveh

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

That Jonah was an actual person in history is verified by 2 Kings 14:25, where we find his prophecy that Jeroboam II would expand his kingdom. This message certainly made him a popular preacher. But when God called Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, then the prophet rebelled. History tells us that the Assyrians were a cruel and heartless people who thought nothing of burying their enemies alive, skinning them alive, or impaling them on sharp poles under the hot sun. "If the city of Nineveh is going to be overthrown, then let it be overthrown," argued Jonah. "I would rather disobey God than see my enemies saved from judgment." In the four chapters of his book, Jonah traces his experiences and the lessons that he learned.

Those who consider the Book of Jonah an allegory or a parable should note that 2 Kings 14:25 identifies Jonah as a real person, a Jewish prophet from Gath Hopher in Zebulun who ministered in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.). They should also note that our Lord considered Jonah a historic person and pointed to him as a type of His own death, burial, and resurrection (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32).

The reign of Jeroboam II was a time of great prosperity in Israel; the nation regained lost territory and expanded both its boundaries and influence. But it was a time of moral and spiritual decay as the nation rapidly moved away from God and into idolatry. Jonah's contemporaries Hosea and Amos both courageously denounced the wickedness of the rulers, priests, and people. It's worth noting that Hosea and Amos also showed God's concern for other nations, which is one of the major themes of Jonah.

While Jonah had a ministry to Nineveh, a leading city in Assyria, he also had a ministry to Israel through this little book. He discovered God's compassion for those outside Israel, even those who were their enemies. God had called His people to be a blessing to the Gentiles (Gen. 12:1-3), but, like Jonah, the Jews refused to obey. And, like Jonah, they had to be disciplined; for Assyria would conquer Israel and Babylon would take Judah into captivity. Jonah's book magnifies the sovereignty of God as well as the love and mercy of God. Jehovah is the "**God of the second chance**," even for rebellious prophets!

THE CITY OF NINEVEH

- A prominent Assyrian city on the east bank of the Tigris River about 280 miles north of Babylon.
- Founded by Nimrod, along with Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen (Gen. 10:11–12)
- Rivalled Babylon for beauty and splendor with its royal palaces, temples, broad streets, public gardens, and an impressive library containing more than 26,000 clay tablets—one of the largest in the ancient world.
- Defended by an outer wall and an inner wall 100 feet high and 50 feet wide.
- Irrigated by the Khasr River, whose flow was controlled by a dam built by Sennacherib (c. 705–681 A.D.), and also by a large aqueduct that carried water from a second dam thirty miles away.
- Target of prophecies by Zephaniah (Zeph. 2:13–15) and Nahum (Nah. 1:1; 3:1), who warned of the city's ultimate destruction.
- Destroyed in 612 A.D. by a siege of Babylonians, Scythians, and Medes, who penetrated its defenses when sudden floods eroded the walls
- Quickly became a mound of ruins that was ignored until just a century ago

THE CITY OF TARSHISH

- A city or region whose exact identity and location are unknown, though many believe it to have been in southern Spain, possibly the same as Tartessus.
- Apparently had access to the sea, as several references to Tarshish in the Old Testament indicate ships and seafaring (2 Chr. 9:21; Is. 23:1). The “ships of Tarshish” were renowned in the ancient world (Ps. 48:7), and may have been ocean-going vessels named after the port of Tarshish.
- Known for its trade in metals (Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:12).
- Listed among the “coastlands afar off” from which the Lord promised to gather His people (Is. 66:19), a prophecy that may have had implications for the spread of the gospel (see “Is. 66:18–21).

STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON

The lessons are broken down into six days worth of study, each requiring about 15-20 minutes a day to complete. The emphasis is not only on studying the passage, but also how to practically apply these principles to our lives today. It’s important to complete the whole lesson each week to get the most out of it. In your small groups it’s important for you to share what the lord has shown you in the past weeks study.

Three features of this study are Scripture memory, Thought for the Day, and Bible Journaling. It’s important to hide God’s word in our hearts through memory. A simple system is used to memorize one verse per week. A Thought for the Day is noted before each day’s study. Use this encouraging thought to reflect on daily. Journaling is a great one on one time between you and the Lord. Writing down your thoughts as the Lord reveals them is a great way too not only enjoy them yourselves, but also to share them with others. These following three steps are helpful in making your Journaling time most productive.

1. OBSERVATION:

Discover the basic facts, Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. As you read the Scriptures and follow the flow of the study, observe and record the facts that are the key to what is being taught.

2. INTERPRETATION:

As you read the facts, to help in understanding the meaning, ask yourself:

- a. What did the teaching or event mean to the people of that time?
- b. What is the teaching?
- c. What can we learn?
- d. What does it mean to us today?
- e. What lessons are being taught?

3. APPLICATION:

After you learn what God's word is saying and understand what it means, now it's time to apply it to your life. As you Journal, write down what the Lord is saying to you, through the study, and note how you can apply it to your own life.

Day six in your study is noted as a journaling day. However, as you go through your study during the week feel free to start any time. If the Lord gives you one of those gold nuggets write it down, and share it with your group.

It's ok to use additional study helps such as commentaries, resource books, tapes, internet bible study helps, just don't let it prevent you from the best information resource of all, the Bible. Daily ask the Lord to speak to you and teach you through His word, then get into your study.

JONAH

Lesson 1 - Jonah 1

God's Patience with Jonah

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers

Jonah the prophet disobeyed God's call (Jonah 1:1-3).

Jonah got into trouble because his attitudes were wrong. To begin with, he had a wrong attitude toward the will of God. Obeying the will of God is as important to God's servant as it is to the people His servant's minister to. It's in obeying the will of God that we find our spiritual nourishment (John 4:34), enlightenment (7:17), and enablement (Heb. 13:21). To Jesus, the will of God was food that satisfied Him; to Jonah, the will of God was medicine that choked him.

Jonah's wrong attitude toward God's will stemmed from a feeling that the Lord was asking him to do an impossible thing. God commanded the prophet to go to Israel's enemy, Assyria, and give the city of Nineveh opportunity to repent, and Jonah would much rather see the city destroyed. The Assyrians were a cruel people who had often abused Israel and Jonah's narrow patriotism took precedence over his theology. Jonah forgot that the will of God is the expression of the love of God (Ps. 33:11), and that God called him to Nineveh because He loved both Jonah and the Ninevites.

Jonah also had a wrong attitude toward The Word of God. When the Word of the Lord came to him, Jonah thought he could "take it or leave it" However, when God's Word commands us, we must listen and obey. Disobedience isn't an option. "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46, NKJV)

Jonah forgot that it was a great privilege to be a prophet, to hear God's Word, and know God's will. That's why he resigned his prophetic office and fled in the opposite direction from Nineveh. Jonah knew that he couldn't run away from God's presence (Ps. 139:7-12), but he felt he had the right to turn in his resignation. He forgot that "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29, NIV). At one time or another during their ministries, Moses, Elijah, and Jeremiah felt like giving up, but God wouldn't let them. Jonah needed Nineveh as much as Nineveh needed Jonah. It's in doing the will of God that we grow in grace and become more like Christ.

Jonah had a wrong attitude toward circumstances; he thought they were working for him when they were really working against him. He fled to Joppa and found just the right ship waiting for him! He had enough money to pay the fare for his long trip, and he was even able to go down into the ship and fall into a sleep so deep that the storm didn't wake him up. It's possible to be out of the will of God and still have circumstances appear to be working on your behalf. You can be rebelling against God and still have a false sense

of security that includes a good night's sleep. God in His providence was preparing Jonah for a great fall.

Finally, Jonah had a wrong attitude toward the Gentiles. Instead of wanting to help them find the true and living God, he wanted to abandon them to their darkness and spiritual death. He not only hated their sins—and the Assyrians were ruthless enemies—but he hated the sinners who committed the sins. Better that Nineveh should be destroyed than that the Assyrians live and attack Israel.

Jonah the Jew becomes a curse instead of a blessing (Jonah 1:4-10).

God called the Jews to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3), but whenever the Jews were out of the will of God, they brought trouble instead of blessing. Twice Abraham brought trouble to people because he lied (vv. 10-20; 20:1-18); Achan brought trouble to Israel's army because he robbed God (Josh. 7); and Jonah brought trouble to a boatload of pagan sailors because he fled. Consider all that Jonah lost because he wasn't a blessing to others.

First of all, he lost the voice of God (Jonah 1:4). We don't read that "the word of the Lord came to Jonah," but that a great storm broke loose over the waters. God was no longer speaking to Jonah through His word; He was speaking to him through His works: the sea, the wind, the rain, the thunder, and even the great fish. Everything in nature obeyed God except His servant! God even spoke to Jonah through the heathen sailors (vv. 6, 8, 10) who didn't know Jehovah. It's a sad thing when a servant of God is rebuked by pagans.

Jonah also lost his spiritual energy. He went to sleep during a fierce storm and was totally unconcerned about the safety of others. The sailors were throwing the ship's wares and cargo overboard, and Jonah was about to lose everything, but still he slept on. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Prov. 24:33, NIV).

He lost his power in prayer (Jonah 1:5a, 6). The heathen sailors were calling on their gods for help while Jonah slept through the prayer meeting, the one man on board who knew the true God and could pray to Him. Of course, Jonah would first have had to confess his sins and determine to obey God, something he wasn't willing to do. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18) If Jonah did pray, his prayer wasn't answered. Loss of power in prayer is one of the first indications that we're far from the Lord and need to get right with Him.

Sad to say, Jonah lost his testimony (Jonah 1:7-10). He certainly wasn't living up to his name, for Jonah means "dove," and the dove is a symbol of peace. Jonah's father's name was Ammitai, which means "faithful, truthful," something that Jonah was not. We've already seen that he wasn't living up to his high calling as a Jew, for he had brought everybody trouble instead of blessing, nor was he living up to his calling as a prophet, for he had no message for them from God. When the lot pointed to Jonah as the culprit, he could no longer avoid making a decision.

Jonah had already told the crew that he was running away from God, but now he told them he was God's prophet, the God who created the heaven, the earth, and the sea. This announcement made the sailors even more frightened. The God who created the sea was punishing His servant and that's why they were in danger

Jonah the rebel suffers for his sins (Jonah 1:11-17).

Charles Spurgeon said that God never allows His children to sin successfully, and Jonah is proof of the truth of that statement. "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:6, NKJV).

We must not make the mistake of calling Jonah a martyr, for the title would be undeserved. Martyrs die for the glory of God, but Jonah offered to die because selfishly he would rather die than obey the will of God! He shouldn't be classified with people like Moses (Ex. 32:30-35), Esther (Es. 4:13-17), and Paul (Rom. 9:1-3) who were willing to give their lives to God in order to rescue others. Jonah is to be commended for telling the truth but not for taking his life in his own hands. He should have surrendered his life to the Lord and let Him give the orders. Had he fallen to his knees and confessed his sins to God, Jonah might have seen the storm cease and the door open to a great opportunity for witness on the ship.

It's significant that the heathen sailors at first rejected Jonah's offer and began to work harder to save the ship. They did more for Jonah than Jonah had been willing to do for them. When they saw that the cause was hopeless, they asked Jonah's God for His forgiveness for throwing Jonah into the stormy sea. Sometimes unsaved people put believers to shame by their honesty, sympathy, and sacrifice.

However, these pagan sailors knew some basic theology: the existence of Jonah's God, His judgment of sin, their own guilt before Him, and His sovereignty over creation. They confessed, "For You, O Lord, have done as You pleased" (Jonah 1:14, NIV). However, there's no evidence that they abandoned their old gods; they merely added Jehovah to their "god shelf." They threw themselves on God's mercy and then threw Jonah into the raging sea, and God stopped the storm.

When the storm ceased, the men feared God even more and made vows to Him. How they could offer an animal sacrifice to God on board ship is a puzzle to us, especially since the cargo had been thrown overboard; but then we don't know what the sacrifice was or how it was offered. Perhaps the sense of verse 16 is that they offered the animal to Jehovah and vowed to sacrifice it to Him once they were safe on shore.

The seventeenth-century English preacher Jeremy Taylor said, "God threatens terrible things if we will not be happy." He was referring, of course, to being happy with God's will for our lives. For us to rebel against God's will, as Jonah did, is to invite the chastening hand of God. That's why the Westminster Catechism states that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." We glorify God by enjoying His will and doing it from our hearts (Eph. 6:6), and that's where Jonah failed.

Jonah could say with the psalmist, "The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death" (Ps. 118:18, NKJV). God prepared a great fish to swallow

Jonah and protect his life for three days and three nights. We'll consider the significance of this later in this study.

Day One

Thought for the Day

Matt.11:28 *Come onto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*

The trouble with many Christians is that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but we do not believe Him.

Lord, may I never take the truth of your word for granted or overlook its vital power in my life. Strengthen my faith so that I will not only believe in you, but also apply your truth to my life and live by it daily.

Read Jonah chapter one and answer the following questions:

1. Read Jonah chapter 1 and pick out the verses that reflect the sovereignty of God. Psalm 135:6 is a good passage for defining what the sovereignty of God means. What verses did you pick?
2. Why should this doctrine be important to us? We need to know that God is all-powerful. How does this affect your daily life? What about in times of calamity and personal tragedy?
3. Do you need to fret over your circumstances when you know that God is in control? Provided you are in God's will...our enemy will never prevail. What does Job 9:12 teach about this?
4. Paraphrase Daniel 4:35 in your own words and explain how it applies to us.

5. We believe that our Lord is all-powerful and willing to perform any good thing. Does 2 Samuel 22:31 comfort the man who seeks God's will for his life?

Write out 2 Samuel 22:31: " _____

 _____."

Scripture Memory: This week's memory verse is Romans 1:16. Repeat it several times each day, and by the end of the week, you will be surprised how well you have memorized it

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Day Two

Thought for the day

1 COR. 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

The Christian life is a taste of the first fruits of the great harvest which is to come

Lord, I become so involved in this life and this world that I forget that it is a preparation For eternal life with you in your kingdom. Help me keep things in perspective.

Read Jonah chapter 1 and answer the following questions:

1. Jonah is called to go and serve the Lord. He received a divine call to minister to others. Does God call us today? Use some bible verses to support your answer.

2. Matthew 10:7-20 is an outline of what we can expect if we are engaged in the Lord's service. Name what these things are and more importantly...ask yourself, "are they a part of my life today?"

Note: Circle the Y or the N to indicate whether this particular verse is in operation in your life. Use this time for your own reflection.

Y/ N 1) Verse seven says that we are to _____?_____.

Y/ N 2) Verse eight is equivalent to spiritual warfare. All of us should be engaged in spiritual warfare through prayer and intercession on a regular and planned basis. Do you have a regular prayer routine that can heal people, deliver them from their bondage and bring them to salvation?

Y/ N..3) Verses nine through ten teach that we can travel light knowing that our Lord will provide for our needs.

The servant of God can count on support from the Lord's people. What is your role in this according to 2 Corinthians 9:7?

Y/ N..4) Verses eleven through fourteen highlight our goal of evangelism. Are we commanded to evangelize? Are all of us evangelists? How do we balance out Matthew 28:19-20 with Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-12? For help on this, fill in the blanks below.

Matthew 28:19--20 teaches our responsibility to _____?_____.

Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-12 help us to define our role in God's work here on earth. They teach: _____

What role do you play in advancing God's Kingdom? Name a specific action.

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the ----- of Christ, for it is the -----of God to ----- for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Day Three

Thought for the Day

Ps 146:5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God,

The ultimate treatment for pain is to treat the disease, not the pain.

Lord, may the pain of doubt or discouragement or failure send me to my knees before you rather than to some fleeting pleasure that will temporarily satisfy. My only true comfort and hope are in you.

Read Jonah chapter 1 and answer the following questions:

1. All of us are called to play a part in advancing God's Kingdom. The real question is; how does He call and prepare us? Look up these verses and apply them in your answer.

Ezekiel 36:27-

Acts 1:8-

2. Remember that God sent someone our way to share the gospel with us when we were unsaved. What if that person decided that he did not want to share with us because he deemed us as not good enough to receive the good news?

Just as God directed that person to us, we in turn are called to go to others. Some of the people we encounter may not be very lovable or receptive...maybe as some of us once were!

1) Apply Psalm 66:16 to this situation.

2) James 5:20 teaches that you will have to deal with what kind of people?

3. Use 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 as a discussion format for dealing with difficult people when we witness. What is Paul's advice to us?

4. How would you apply 1 Corinthians 9:19 to your Christian witness? Be specific with at least three applications:

1) _____.

2) _____.

3) _____.

5. The foundation of our witness is _____? _____ according to 1 Timothy 4:16.

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the ----- of Christ, for it is the ----- of God to ----- for everyone who believes, for the -----first and also for the -----."

Day Four

Thought for the Day

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

We have the privilege of being like Him. We may even have the honor of suffering for His Name.

Lord, forgive me for complaining. No matter how large the difficulty seems, it pales to insignificance before the cross. Set your joy before the cross. Set your joy before me, Father, and help me to move forward from this day with New Hope, strength, and new power.

Read Jonah chapter 1 and answer the following questions:

1. It is so important to realize that God has called all of us into His service. What happens if God calls us and we don't obey? Write out your answers next to each of the verses below. Apply each verse to your answer.

1) Proverbs 21:13

2) Matthew 7:24-27

3) Luke 12:36-48

2. What happens to those who turn away from the truth you have shared? Use each of these verses for your answer.

1) Ezekiel 33:9-

2) Acts 28:27-28-

3) Hebrews 2:3-9-

3. How would you use Ezekiel 33:11 in a conversation with an argumentative and bitter person?

3A. Apply Proverbs 15:1 to question number three.

3B. The biblical definition for "tactfulness" is found in Proverbs 25:15. What is this definition?

4. Our Christian calling requires that we walk _____ according to 1 Thessalonians 2:12.

5. 2 Timothy 1:9 describes our calling. Paraphrase what this verse teaches. Leaders: How would you illustrate the meaning of this passage?

"Christianity is not just a high-sounding ritual which we perform on Sundays. Christianity is abiding by biblical standards of personal holiness and in turn seeking to bring holiness into the society in which we live."

Charles Colson

See: Rom 6:22; 2 Cor 1:12; 2 Cor 9:10-13

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

"For I am _____ ashamed of the _____ of Christ, for it is the _____ of God to salvation for everyone who _____, for the _____, first and also for the Greek."

Day Five

Thought For the Day

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Beautiful things come and go, but we are immortal; we are not only creatures of time, but of eternity.

Lord, thank you for the lessons I see around me each day in your creation. Thank you for your provision in every area of my life.

Read Jonah chapter 1 and answer the following questions:

1. God's calling is a privileged calling. Can we really flee from His calling? Read Psalm 139:7-12 before you answer.

2. Apply Jeremiah 23:24-26 to the carnal Christian who thinks God does not care about how he acts in the world.

3. What is the deception of a person who is running from God? What lye has he fallen for? Use Psalm 10:11 in your answer.

4. Why is Proverbs 15:3 a constant reminder for us to live up to our calling?

5. We have some encouraging words in Proverbs 15:5. Describe what they are.

6. When we get in trouble; God will be our refuge in these ways:

1) Isaiah 41:10-

2) 2 Corinthians 1:10-

3) 2 Timothy 4:18-

Memory verse: Romans 1:16 By now you should know this week's memory verse by heart. Try writing it down by memory.

Day Six

PERSONAL APPLICATION

For instructions on how to Journal see pages 4-5 in your introduction section, note your thoughts in the following section

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

JONAH

Lesson 2 - Jonah 2

God's Mercy Toward Jonah

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers

From an experience of rebellion and discipline, Jonah turns to an experience of repentance and dedication, and God graciously gives him a new beginning. Jonah no doubt expected to die in the waters of the sea, but when he woke up inside the fish, he realized that God had graciously spared him. As with the Prodigal Son, whom Jonah in his rebellion greatly resembles (Luke 15:11-24), it was the goodness of God that brought him to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Notice the stages in Jonah's spiritual experience as described in his prayer.

He prayed for God's help (Jonah 2:1-2).

"Then Jonah prayed" (2:1) suggests that it was at the end of the three days and three nights when Jonah turned to the Lord for help, but we probably shouldn't press the word "then" too far. The Hebrew text simply reads, "And Jonah prayed." Surely Jonah prayed as he went down into the depths of the sea, certain that he would drown. That would be the normal thing for any person to do, and that's the picture we get from verses 5 and 7.

His prayer was born out of affliction, not affection. He cried out to God because he was in danger, not because he delighted in the Lord. But better that he should pray compelled by any motive than not to pray at all. It's doubtful whether any believer always prays with pure and holy motives, for our desires and God's directions sometimes conflict.

However, in spite of the fact that he prayed, Jonah still wasn't happy with the will of God. In chapter 1, he was afraid of the will of God and rebelled against it, but now he wants God's will simply because it's the only way out of his dangerous situation. Like too many people today, Jonah saw the will of God as something to turn to in an emergency, not something to live by every day of one's life.

Jonah was now experiencing what the sailors experienced during the storm: he felt he was perishing (1:6, 14). It's good for God's people, and especially preachers, to remember what it's like to be lost and without hope. How easy it is for us to grow hardened toward sinners and lose our compassion for the lost. As He dropped Jonah into the depths, God was reminding him of what the people of Nineveh were going through in their sinful condition: they were helpless and hopeless.

God heard Jonah's cries for help. Prayer is one of the constant miracles of the Christian life. To think that our God is so great He can hear the cries of millions of people at the same time and deal with their needs personally! A parent with two or three children often finds it impossible to meet all their needs all the time, but God is able to provide for all His children, no matter where they are or what their needs may be. "He who has learned to pray," said William law, "has learned the greatest secret of a holy and a happy life."

He accepted God's discipline (Jonah 2:3).

It wasn't the sailors who cast Jonah into the stormy sea: it was God. "*You* hurled me into the deep . . . all *Your* waves and breakers swept over me" (v. 3) When Jonah said those words, he was acknowledging that God was disciplining him and that he deserved it.

How we respond to discipline determines how much benefit we receive from it According to Hebrews 12:5-11, we have several options: we can despise God's discipline and fight (v. 5); we can be discouraged and faint (v. 5); we can resist discipline and invite stronger discipline, possibly even death (v. 9) or we can submit to the Father and mature in faith and love (v. 7). Discipline is to the believer what exercise and training are to the athlete (v. 11); it enables us to run the race with endurance and reach the assigned goal (vv. 1-2).

The fact that God chastened His servant is proof that Jonah was truly a child of God, for God disciplines only His own children. "But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons" (v. 8). And the Father chastens us in love so that "afterward" we might enjoy "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (v. 11).

He trusted God's promise (Jonah 2:4-7).

Jonah was going in one direction only—*down*. In fact, he had been going in that direction since the hour he rebelled against God's plan for his life. He went "down to Joppa" and "down into the sides of the ship" (1:3, 5). Now he was going "down to the bottoms of the mountains" (2:6); and at some point, the great fish met him, and he went down into the fish's belly (1:17). When you turn your back on God, the only direction you can go is down.

What saved Jonah? His faith in God's promise. Which promise? The promise that involves "looking toward God's holy temple" (2:4, 7). When King Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, he asked God for this special favor (1 Kings 8:38-40):

Jonah claimed that promise. By faith, he looked toward God's temple (the only way to look was up!) and asked God to deliver him; and God kept His promise and answered his call. "I remembered [the] Lord" (Jonah 2:7) means, "I acted on the basis of His commitment to me." Jonah knew God's covenant promises and he claimed them.

He yielded to God's will (Jonah 2:8-9).

Now Jonah admits that there were idols in his life that robbed him of the blessing of God. An idol is anything that takes away from God the affection and obedience that rightfully belong only to Him. One such idol was Jonah's intense patriotism. He was so concerned for the safety and prosperity of his own nation that he refused to be God's messenger to their enemies, the Assyrians. We shall learn from chapter 4 that Jonah was also protecting his own reputation (4:2), for if God spared Nineveh, then Jonah would be branded a false prophet whose words of warning weren't fulfilled. For somebody who was famous for his prophecies (2 Kings 14:25), this would be devastating.

Jonah closes his prayer by uttering some solemn vows to the Lord, vows that he really intended to keep. Like the psalmist, he said: "I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble" (Ps. 66:13-14.). Jonah promised to worship God in the temple with sacrifices and songs of thanksgiving. He doesn't tell us what other promises he made to the Lord, but one of them surely was, "I will go to Nineveh and declare your message if you give me another chance."

Jonah couldn't save himself, and nobody on earth could save him, but the Lord could do it, for "salvation is of the Lord!" (Jonah 2:9) This is a quotation from Psalms 3:8 and 37:39 and it is the central declaration in the book. It is also the central theme of the Bible. How wise of Jonah to memorize the Word of God; because being able to quote the Scriptures, especially the Book of Psalms, gave him light in the darkness and hope in his seemingly hopeless situation.

JONAH 2:10

"And [the fish] vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." What a disgraceful way for a distinguished prophet to arrive on shore! In chapter 1, the sailors treated Jonah like dangerous cargo to be thrown overboard, and now he's treated like a foreign substance ready to be vomited up from the fish's body. But when Jonah ceased to be an obedient prophet, he cheapened himself; so he's the one to blame. We can be sure that he was quite humbled as he once again stood on dry land.

Day One

Thought for the Day

Eph.5: 16 " Redeeming the time because the days are evil"

We all have time! The whole secret of success is to take that time and give it to matters of the soul instead of to other things

Lord, so many things do distract me from my time with you and the study of your word, even things that seem good and important at the time. Enable me to discipline my life and order my time according to your priorities

Read Jonah chapter two and answer the following questions:

1. List at least three events that took place in this chapter.

2. Paraphrase verse seven in your own words. Can you remember a time in your life when this verse may have applied to you?

3. What does verse eight mean? Compare this scripture with Ruth 2:20.

4. Our mercy is grounded in _____? _____ according to Jeremiah 16:9.

5. Verse nine reads: "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." How do we sacrifice with the voice of thanksgiving? See Hebrews 13:15 before you answer.

6. Use Romans 12:1 as an application for Hebrews 13:15.

Scripture Memory: This week's memory verse is Romans 12:1. Repeat it several times each day, and by the end of the week, you will be surprised how well you have memorized it.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Day Two**Thought for the Day**

Heb. 11:13 “ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth”.

The perseverance of the saints is not a religious hope, it is an absolute certainty

Lord, thank you for your promises and the fulfillment of those promises revealed in your word. Thank you for the example of the heroes of faith who have gone before. Strengthen my faith in the assurance of your promise so that I, too, may persevere.

Read Jonah chapter 2 and answer the following questions

1. Verse nine states: "Salvation is of the Lord." Salvation saves us from _____? _____ and it saves us for _____? _____ according to Revelation 21:4-5 and Revelation 21:7-8.

2. The conditions for receiving salvation are:

2A. _____? _____ is required according to Romans 10:9.

2B. We have a responsibility to act upon what Romans 10:9 says. What responsibility does James say we have in James 1:21?

2C. Endurance is a necessary part of our faith. Matthew 10:22 illustrates what kind of situation we can expect as God's children. What is it?

2D. We have something that the world does not have. 2 Timothy 3:15 teaches we have _____? _____.

3. Is the God of the Old Testament a God of wrath as some people maintain? Read Zephaniah 3:17 before you answer.

4. Salvation of men is so important to God that He is willing to _____? _____ according to 2 Peter 3:9.

Memory verse: Romans 12:1.

"I beseech you therefore, _____, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Day Three

Thought for the Day

Matt 7:24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

The Sermon on the Mount fines us all somehow, somewhere. There is no possibility of escape; it searches us out in all our hiding places and brings us into the light of God

Lord, shine your light of truth into all the dark corners and hiding places of my life, for only as I see the reality of my sin do I comprehend the magnitude of your grace

Read Jonah chapter 2 and answer the following questions:

1. Among one of the reasons Jonah did not heed God's call to go to Nineveh was: He probably felt the people were beyond hope. Does judging people cause us to fall short in doing God's work? Explain your answer

2. What does Matthew 7:1-2 say about the consequences of our nature to judge other people? .

3. The book of Jonah is a beautiful story of God's love for a wretched and sinful people. Compassion is a good word to describe God's feelings toward the people of Nineveh. Write out a biblical definition of what compassion means. Psalm 86:15 might help you with your definition.

4. There are four words that describe God in Psalm 86:15. List these words with your definition next to each one of them.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Memory verse: Romans 12:1.

"I beseech you therefore, _____, by the mercies of _____, that you present your _____ a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Day Four

Thought for the Day

2 Pet .1:8 " For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do not be a weary Christian; add to your faith moral energy; walk with endurance; add to it strength and power.

Lord; prompt me to exercise the muscles of my faith so that I do not become a weary Christian. Keep me walking with moral energy and endurance

Read Jonah chapter 2 and answer the following questions:

1. Use 1 Peter 3:8-9 to formulate a biblical model for practicing compassion toward those in the church.

2. Use Luke 10:33-37 to formulate a biblical model for practicing compassion toward those in the world.

3. A person's compassion (or the lack of) is a barometer of that person's spirituality. How does 1 John 4:20 validate this?

4. How do we balance compassion with discipline when raising our children? Incorporate Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 22:6 and Hebrews 12:6-7 in your answer.

Proverbs 13:24

Proverbs 22:6

Hebrews 12:6-7

Memory verse: Romans 12:1.

"I beseech you therefore, _____, by the mercies of _____, that you present your _____ a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable to _____, which is your reasonable _____."

Day Five

Thought for the Day

ROM 6:18 " And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness".

To hunger and thirst after righteousness is the desire to be free from self in all its horrible manifestations, in all its forms

Lord, I want to be free from any desire for sin, no matter how appealing it appears, free to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Read Jonah chapter 2 and answer the following questions:

1. Why does it seem: we only remember God when we are in trouble? Paraphrase Ecclesiastes 2:1 and apply its meaning to this question.

2. Does God remember our situation and deliver us? Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 for some insight on this.

3. What is God's role and man's role in 1 Corinthians 10:13? In other words: If God will do _____, then man should respond by doing _____.

4. God has delivered many people from their problems. Read and comment on each of these verses: 1) who are these verses talking about? 2) What problems were they having? 3) Name a biblical solution for each person's problem.

Genesis 19:16

1 Samuel 17:37

Acts 5:18-19

Acts 12:7

Acts 16:26

5. What can you do to respond with obedience to God the next time you must do something good but unpleasant?

6. How can you share the gospel with others at work? Among your family? Among your neighbors?

7. How do you want to thank the Lord right now for all the remarkable ways He has delivered you?

Memory verse: Romans 12:1 By now you should know this week's memory verse by heart. Try writing it down by memory.

Day Six

PERSONAL APPLICATION

For instructions on how to Journal see pages 4-5 in your introduction section, note your thoughts in the following section:

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

JONAH

Lesson 3 - Jonah 3

God's Power Through Jonah

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers

The question is usually asked in Old Testament survey classes, "Was the great fish more relieved to be rid of Jonah than Jonah was to get out of the great fish?" Maybe their sense of relief was mutual. At any rate, we hope that Jonah gave thanks to God for the divinely provided creature that rescued him from certain death.

From a human perspective, this entire enterprise appears ridiculous. How could one man, claiming to be God's prophet, confront thousands of people with his strange message, especially a message of judgment? How could a Jew, who worshiped the true God, ever get these idolatrous Gentiles to believe what he had to say? For all he knew, Jonah might end up impaled on a pole or skinned alive! But, in obedience to the Lord, Jonah went to Nineveh.

THE MARVEL OF AN UNDESERVED COMMISSION (JONAH 3:1-2)

Did anybody see Jonah emerge when the great fish vomited him on the dry land? If so, the story must have spread rapidly and perhaps even preceded him to Nineveh, and that may help explain the reception the city gave him. Had Jonah been bleached by the fish's gastric juices? Did he look so peculiar that nobody could doubt who he was and what had happened to him? Since Jonah was a "sign" to the Ninevites (Matt 12:38-41), perhaps this included the way he looked.

What the people saw or thought really wasn't important the important thing was what God thought and what He would do next to His repentant prophet. "The life of Jonah cannot be written without God," said Charles Spurgeon; "take God out of the prophet's history, and there is no history to write."

Jonah's message to Nineveh (Jonah 3:3-4)

“Three days’ journey” means either that it would take three days to get through the city and its suburbs or three days to go around them. The NIV translation of verse 3 suggests that it would take three days to visit all of the area. According to Genesis 10:11-12, four cities were involved in the “Nineveh metroplex”: Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen. However you interpret the “three days,” one thing is dear: Nineveh was no meaningless place.

When Jonah was one day into the city, he began to declare his message: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be over-thrown.” Throughout Scripture, the number forty seems to be identified with testing or judgment. During the time of Noah, it rained forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:4, 12, 17). The Jewish spies explored Canaan forty days (Num. 14:34), and the nation of Israel was tested in the wilderness forty years (Deut 2:7). The giant Goliath taunted the army of Israel forty days (1 Sam. 17:16), and the Lord gave the people of Nineveh forty days to repent and turn from their wickedness.

At this point, we must confess that we wish we knew more about Jonah’s ministry to Nineveh. Was this the only message he proclaimed? Surely he spent time telling the people about the true and living God, for we’re told, “The people of Nineveh believed God” (Jonah 3:5). They would have to know something about this God of Israel in order to exercise sincere faith (see Acts 17:22). Did Jonah expose the foolishness of their idolatry? Did he recount his own personal history to show them that his God was powerful and sovereign? We simply don’t know. The important thing is that Jonah obeyed God, went to Nineveh, and declared the message God gave him. God did the rest.

Nineveh's message to God (Jonah 3:5-9)

In the Hebrew text, there are only five words in Jonah’s message; yet God used those five words to stir the entire population, from the king on the throne to the lowest peasant in the field. God gave the people forty days of grace, but they didn’t need that long. We get the impression that from the very first time they saw Jonah and heard his warning, they paid attention to his message. Word spread quickly throughout the entire district and the people humbled themselves by fasting and wearing sackcloth.

When the message got to the king, he too put on sackcloth and sat in the dust. He also made the fast official by issuing a decree and ordering the people to humble themselves, cry out to God, and turn from their evil ways. Even the animals were included in the activities by wearing sackcloth and abstaining from food and drink. The people were to cry “mightily” to God, for this was a matter of life and death.

When Jonah was in distress, he recalled the promise concerning Solomon’s temple (Jonah 2:4, 7; 1 Kings 8:38-39; 2 Chron. 6:36-39), looked toward the temple, and called out for help. Included in Solomon’s temple prayer was a promise for people outside the nation of Israel, and that would include the Ninevites. “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel . . . when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of You, so that all

the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You” (2 Chron. 6:32-33). Jonah certainly knew this promise, and perhaps it was the basis for the whole awakening.

Like the sailors in the storm, the Ninevites didn’t want to perish (Jonah 3:9; 1:6, 14). That’s what witnessing is all about, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Their fasting and praying, and their humbling of themselves before God, sent a message to heaven, but the people of Nineveh had no assurance that they would be saved. They hoped that God’s great compassion would move Him to change His plan and spare the city. Once again, how did they know that the God of the Hebrews was a merciful and compassionate God? No doubt Jonah told them, for this was a doctrine he himself believed (Jonah 4:2).

God’s message to Nineveh (Jonah 3:10)

At some point, God spoke to Jonah and told Him that He had accepted the people’s repentance and would not destroy the city. The phrase “God repented” might better be translated “God relented,” that is, changed His plan. From the human point of view, it looked like repentance, but from the divine perspective, it was simply God’s response to man’s change of heart. God is utterly consistent with Himself; it only appears that He is changing His mind. The Bible uses human analogies to reveal the divine character of God (Jer. 18:1-10).

How deep was the spiritual experience of the people of Nineveh? If repentance and faith are the basic conditions of salvation (Acts 20:21), then we have reason to believe that they were accepted by God; for the people of Nineveh repented and had faith in God (Jonah 3:5). The fact that Jesus used the Ninevites to shame the unbelieving Jews of His day is further evidence that their response to Jonah’s ministry was sincere (Matt 12:38-41)

Day One

Thought for the Day

2 Pet 1:11 “for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

If we are unhappy and dispressed Christians it is more than likely due to lack of discipline. Let us begin to enjoy our Christian life and to be useful and helpful to others.

Lord; grant me the strength and discipline to put my faith and your truth into practice in every area of life. May I grow in grace and knowledge, and may I be a useful and helpful example of your grace to those around me.

Read Jonah chapter 3 and answer the following questions:

1. At one time or another, most of us have talked ourselves out of sharing God's word when the opportunity was there to witness. We make excuses like: I do not know enough. God will bring someone else more qualified. I'm not a pastor, what could I possibly say.

It is important to remember that God equips us for all of the work He has for us. What lesson can we learn from Exodus 4:10-12?

2. Did this guarantee instant success for Moses in all situations? Read Numbers 20:10-11 before you answer.

2A. Even men who have God's anointing can fail. How then can we hope to succeed in our walks? What is the ingredient that can guarantee a consistent walk with God? Does Galatians 5:16 offer any help on this?

3. Describe a time when you had faith that produced fruit. It may have been a special event like a life threatening encounter or an occasion where God used you in His work. Note what you did to put your faith to work:

4. See if you can come up with some words and phrases that describe and define faith.

How does it relate to:

John 15:15

John 14:18

John 13:1

5. Read Mark 11:20-24. How many times is (says, saying or speaking) referred to in verses 23 & 24? What is the role of actually speaking out the things we expect from God, so far as putting faith to work is concerned?

Scripture Memory: This week's memory verse is Romans 8:1 Repeat it several times each day, and by the end of the week, you will be surprised how well you have memorized it.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Day Two

Thought for the Day

Ps 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You

The object of the whole gospel is to bring us to the realization that there is no one apart from God.

Lord, you are always there. Even when I forget about you and try to go my own way, you are still there. You are always faithful, even when I am faithless. There is no other Savior. There is no one apart from you, oh God.

Read chapter 3 and answer the following questions

1. All of us are called in one way or another, to serve our Lord. It is those who say "send me lord" who are the men used by God.

1a. Use Matthew 10:19 to show how God will work through us so long as we make ourselves available.

2. If God called you to witness to your worst enemy...could you do it? Maybe a better question is: would you be willing to? Apply John 15:4-5 in your answer.

3. Many times we have seen God work using the most unlikely people to save the most "hopeless" people! Yet, God has been shaping the hearts of those who come to Him...and we get to do the watering. The truth is: God prepares the giver of the word as well as the receiver. Use these scriptures to illustrate this process:

2 Corinthians 12:9

2 Thessalonians 1:11

Hebrews 2:12

2 Peter 3:9

4. List three or four things in your life that you feel God requires of you to be used by Him. Are you aware of some areas that God is trying to change?

Memory verse: Romans 8:1.

"There is therefore now no _____ to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the _____-, but according to the Spirit."

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Day Three**Thought for the Day**

2 Chr 7:14 If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Until we truly humble ourselves and see ourselves as we are in the sight of God, we have no right to look for peace and happiness.

Lord, looking at the ugliness of sin and violence in our nation and our world sometimes despair. Help me not to lose heart, Father, but to faithfully do that which you have called me to do. May I be a witness to your truth in today's troubled world.

Read chapter 3 and answer the following questions

1. Name some people from the bible who repented when they heard God's word. Comment on the ministries of these people. How did God use them?

1)

2)

3)

4)

2. Often times when we see sin prevailing in our lives, we faint and our faith seems to waiver. It is hard to understand why God doesn't lose patience with us or with this present evil age. How well do we understand His ways? Comment on each one of these verses:

1 Samuel 55:8-9

Isaiah 48:9

Romans 9:22

James 5:7

2 Peter 3:9

3. We want Christ to come back right now. At the same time, aren't you glad He did not come back before you heard the gospel?

Apply these verses to God's plan of salvation:

Micah 7:18

John 1:12

John 3:15-16

Romans 1:16

4. You may convert a sinner by making yourself available for God's work. What does God say to those who want to volunteer for this process? Read these verses before you answer.

Daniel 12:3, Proverbs 11:30, 1 Corinthians 9:2, James 5:20

Memory verse: Romans 8:1.

"There is therefore now no _____ to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not _____ according to the _____, but according to the _____."

Day Four

Thought for the Day

John 7:46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Even Christ's enemies recognized His authority

Lord; give me a true sense of your power and your presence, and an awesome recognition of your authority as the living God.

Read chapter 3 and answer the following questions

1. What do the heavens say when a sinner is converted? See Luke 15:17 before you answer.

2. The time is at hand; the Lord is coming soon. What should Christians be doing in light of this?

Matthew 9:37-

Luke 10:12-

Galatians 6:9-

3. What kinds of things should we expect to receive by faith if we actually say we trust [believe, have faith] in God for? Use these verses for your answers:

Philippians 4:13, Ephesians 3:20, I Peter 2:21

4. Read John 20:26-31. How important is the role of having confidence in an as yet unseen thing to the presence of faith? In other words, must we "see" something in order to have genuine faith?

5. The last part of John 20:31 states: "That you may have life in His name." This "life" is meant to be passed on to others. What do you think Jonah's problem was? Why did he not want to hear God's call to go to Nineveh? There may have been many reasons. Name some of them.

Memory verse: Romans 8:1.

"There is therefore now no _____ to those who are in _____, who do not _____ according to the _____, but according to the _____."

Day Five

Thought for the Day

Matt 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged."

If you really want to help others, examine your attitude toward other people, face the truth about yourself

Lord, why is it so easy to see what others are doing wrong and so hard to recognize My own sins? Why am I so ready to judge others harshly and so eager to excuse myself? Forgive me face to face with the truth about myself.

Read chapter 3 and answer the following questions:

1. How does the Lord deal with the issue of our witness here on earth? Does He speak in an uncertain or doubting way about this, or is His message clear? Use these words and verses to expound on some of our Lord's comments.

Salt

Luke 14:34-35

Matthew 28:19-20

1 Corinthians 9:22

2. When an athlete is preparing himself for a contest, what kind of goals will help him to prepare for the race properly? In other words, what should he focus his thoughts on if he hopes to really win?

Read these verses and apply them to the race that you are running for our Lord.

I Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 6:12, II Timothy 4:7, 8

3. Paul struggled to win the contest God put him in.

In reality, against whom was Paul struggling against? Relate your answer to situations in your own life.

3A. Why do you think Paul seldom mentions human enemies when he talks about contending for the faith, even though there were almost always humans involved in his struggles?

4. What is the difference between struggling for the faith and struggling against someone who differs with us in our beliefs?

5. Read Jude 3, 4 and 19-23. Jude talks about some of the practical aspects of struggling for the faith. What kind of problem does the church face in its battle for the faith?

Memory verse: Romans 8:1 By now you should know this week's memory verse by heart. Try writing it down by memory.

Day Six

Thought for the Day

John Wesley encouraged his church to:

"Do All the Good You Can,
By All the Means You Can,
In All the Ways You Can,
In All the Places You Can,
At All the Times You Can,
To All the People You Can,
As long as Ever ... You can."

PERSONAL APPLICATION

For instructions on how to Journal see pages 4-5 in your introduction section, note your thoughts in the following section:

JONAH

Lesson 4 - Jonah 4

God's Ministry to Jonah

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers

If this book had ended at the last verse of chapter 3, history would have portrayed Jonah as the greatest of the prophets. After all, preaching one message that motivated thousands of people to repent and turn to God was no mean accomplishment. But the Lord doesn't look on the outward things; He looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7) and weighs the motives (1 Cor. 4:5). That's why chapter 4 was included in the book, for it reveals "the thoughts and intents" of Jonah's heart and exposes his sins.

If in chapter 1, Jonah is like the Prodigal Son, insisting on doing his own thing and going his own way (Luke 15:11-32); then in chapter 4, he's like the Prodigal's Elder Brother—critical, selfish, moody, angry, and unhappy with what was going on. It isn't enough for God's servants simply to do their Master's will; they must do "the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6). The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart, and that's where Jonah's problems were to be found. "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry" (Jonah 4:1).

The remarkable thing is that God tenderly dealt with His pouting servant and sought to bring him back to the place of joy and fellowship

God listened to Jonah (Jonah 4:1-4).

For the second time in this account, Jonah prays, but his second prayer was much different in content and intent. He prayed his best prayer in the worst place, the fish's belly, and he prayed his worst prayer in the best place, at Nineveh where God was working. His first prayer came from a broken heart, but his second prayer came from an angry heart. In his first prayer, he asked God to save him, but in his second prayer, he asked God to take his life! Once again, Jonah would rather die than not have his own way.

Jonah's prayer lets us in on the secret of why he tried to run away in the first place. Being a good theologian, Jonah knew the attributes of God that He was "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity". Knowing this, Jonah was sure that if he announced judgment to the Ninevites and they repented, God would forgive them and not send His judgment, and then Jonah would be branded as a false prophet! Remember, Jonah's message merely announced the impending judgment; it didn't offer conditions for salvation.

Jonah was concerned about his reputation, not only before the Ninevites, but also before the Jews back home. His Jewish friends would want to see *all* of the Assyrians destroyed not just the people of Nineveh. When Jonah's friends found out that he had been the means of saving Nineveh from God's wrath, they could have considered him a traitor to official Jewish foreign policy. Jonah was a narrow-minded patriot who saw Assyria only as a dangerous enemy to destroy, not as a company of repentant sinners to be brought to the Lord.

When reputation is more important than character, and pleasing ourselves and our friends is more important than pleasing God, then we're in danger of becoming like Jonah and living to defend our one-sidedness instead of fulfilling our spiritual responsibilities. Jonah certainly had good theology, but it stayed in his head and never got to his heart; and he was so troubled that he wanted to die! God's tender response was to ask Jonah to examine his heart and see why he really was angry.

God comforted Jonah (Jonah 4:9-11).

For the second time in this book, Jonah abandoned his place of ministry, left the city, and sat down in a place east of the city where he could see what would happen. Like the Elder Brother in the parable, he wouldn't go in and enjoy the feast (Luke 15:28). He could have taught the Ninevites so much about the true God of Israel, but he preferred to have his own way. What a tragedy it is when God's servants are a means of blessing to others but miss the blessing themselves!

God knew that Jonah was very uncomfortable sitting in that booth, so He graciously caused a vine (gourd) to grow whose large leaves would protect Jonah from the hot sun. This made Jonah happy, but the next morning, when God prepared a worm to kill the vine, Jonah was unhappy. The combination of the hot sun and the smothering desert wind made him want to die even more. As He had done in the depths of the sea, God was reminding Jonah of what it was like to be lost: helpless, hopeless, miserable. Jonah was experiencing a taste of hell as he sat and watched the city.

A simple test of character is to ask, "What makes me happy? What makes me angry? What makes me want to give up?" Jonah was "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). One minute he's preaching God's Word, but the next minute he's disobeying it and fleeing his post of duty. While inside the great fish, he prayed to be delivered; but now he asks the Lord to kill him. He called the city to repentance, but he wouldn't repent himself! He was more concerned about creature comforts than he was about winning the lost. The Ninevites, the vine, the worm, and the wind have all obeyed God; but Jonah still refuses to obey, and he has the most to gain.

God instructed Jonah

God is still speaking to Jonah and Jonah is still listening and answering, even though he's not giving the right answers. Unrighteous anger feeds the ego and produces the poison of selfishness in the heart. Jonah still had a problem with the will of God. In

chapter 1, his mind understood God's will, but he refused to obey it and took his body in the opposite direction. In chapter 2, he cried out for help, God rescued him, and he gave his body back to the Lord. In chapter 3, he yielded his will to the Lord and went to Nineveh to preach, but his heart was not yet surrendered to the Lord. Jonah did the will of God, but not from his heart.

Jonah had one more lesson to learn perhaps the most important one of all. In chapter 1, he learned the lesson of God's providence and patience that you can't run away from God. In chapter 2, he learned the lesson of God's pardon that God forgives those who call upon Him. In chapter 3, he learned the lesson of God's power as he saw a whole city humble itself before the Lord. Now he had to learn the lesson of God's pity, that God has compassion for lost sinners like the Ninevites; and His servants must also have compassion. It seems incredible, but Jonah brought a whole city to faith in the Lord and yet he didn't love the people he was preaching to!

The people who could not "discern between their right hand and their left hand" (4:11) were immature little children (Deut 1:39), and if there were 120,000 of them in Nineveh and its suburbs, the population was not small. God certainly has a special concern for the children (Mark 10:13-16); but whether children or adults, the Assyrians all needed to know the Lord. Jonah had pity on the vine that perished, but he didn't have compassion for the people who would perish and live eternally apart from God.

Jeremiah and Jesus looked on the city of Jerusalem and wept over it (Jer. 9:1, 10; 23:9; Luke 19:41), and Paul viewed the city of Athens and "was greatly distressed" (Acts 17:16), but Jonah looked on the city of Nineveh and was saturated with anger. He needed to learn the lesson of God's pity and have a heart of compassion for lost souls.

THE MARVEL OF AN UNANSWERED QUESTION (JONAH 4:11)

Jonah and Nahum are the only books in the Bible that end with questions, and both books have to do with the city of Nineveh. Nahum ends with a question about God's punishment of Nineveh (Nahum 3:19), while Jonah ends with a question about God's pity for Nineveh.

This is a strange way to end such a dramatic book as the Book of Jonah. God has the first word (Jonah 1:1-2) and God has the last word (4:11), and that's as it should be, but we aren't told how Jonah answered God's final question. It's like the ending of Frank Stockton's famous short story "The Lady or the Tiger?" When the handsome youth opened the door, what came out: the beautiful princess or the man-eating tiger?

We sincerely hope that Jonah yielded to God's loving plea and followed the example of the Ninevites by repenting and seeking the face of God. The famous Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte believed that Jonah did experience a change of heart. He wrote, "But Jonah came to himself again during those five-and-twenty days or so, from the east gate of Nineveh back to Gathhepher, his father's house." Spurgeon said, "Let us hope that, during the rest of his life, he so lived as to rejoice in the sparing mercy of God." After all, hadn't Jonah himself been spared because of God's mercy?

God was willing to spare Nineveh but in order to do that; He could not spare His own Son. Somebody had to die for their sins or they would die in their sins. "He that spared

not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). Jesus used Jonah’s ministry to Nineveh to show the Jews how guilty they were in rejecting His witness. “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here” (Matt 12:41).

How is Jesus greater than Jonah? Certainly Jesus is greater than Jonah in His person, for though both were Jews and both were prophets, Jesus is the very Son of God. He is greater in His message, for Jonah preached a message of judgment, but Jesus preached a message of grace and salvation (John 3:16-17). Jonah almost died for his own sins, but Jesus willingly died for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2).

Jonah’s ministry was to but one city, but Jesus is “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). Jonah’s obedience was not from the heart, but Jesus always did whatever pleased His Father (John 8:29). Jonah didn’t love the people he came to save, but Jesus had compassion for sinners and proved His love by dying for them on the cross (Rom. 5:6-8). On the cross, outside the city, Jesus asked God to forgive those who killed Him (Luke 23:34), but Jonah waited outside the city to see if God would kill those he would not forgive.

Yes, Jesus is greater than Jonah, and because He is, we must give greater heed to what He says to us. Those who reject Him will face greater judgment because the greater the light, the greater the responsibility.

But the real issue isn’t how Jonah answered God’s question; the real issue is how you and I today are answering God’s question. Do we agree with God that people without Christ are lost? Like God, do we have compassion for those who are lost? How do we show this compassion? Do we have a concern for those in our great cities where there is so much sin and so little witness? Do we pray that the Gospel will go to people in every part of the world, and are we helping to send it there? Do we rejoice when sinners repent and trust the Savior?

All of those questions and more are wrapped up in what God asked Jonah.

We can’t answer for him, but we can answer for ourselves.

Let’s give God the right answer.

Day One

Thought for the Day

Phil 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

The person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is one whose supreme desire is to be like Christ.

Lord, may my supreme desire be to be like you. Mold me in your image. Fill me with your love and compassion for others

Read Jonah chapter 4 and answer the following questions:

1. Read Jonah chapter four. Describe Jonah's frame of mind. Why should we be cautious in our criticism of Jonah?

2. In Jude, verses 20-21, there are some important principles we must always keep in mind if we are to have victory in our lives. What are these principles?

3. After reading Jude, what do you see as a minimum preparation to ready ourselves for the inevitable struggle for the faith?

4. Neither Paul nor Jude seems to complain about the struggle for the faith. Why do you suppose they speak so optimistically and so positively about something that seems to give some a reason to be fearful?

5. Afraid to enter the struggle for the faith? Is there preparation needed on your part to more effectively fight the good fight? List at least four obstacles in your life that you need to ask the Lord to help you with. Write down solutions next to your obstacles.

1)

2)

3)

4)

6. Define these terms:

Selfishness -

Murmuring -

Mercy -

Longsuffering -

6A. We are commanded to be patient. Comment on the application of these verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4

2 Corinthians 6:6

Colossians 1:11

2 Timothy 4:2

Scripture Memory: This week's memory verse is Hebrews 13:6. Repeat it several times each day, and by the end of the week, you will be surprised how well you have memorized it.

So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Day Two

Thought for the Day

Isa. 58:11 The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

When we are wrong with God we are wrong everywhere.

Lord, when I am not in fellowship with you, life is empty. The world offers nothing to satisfy the longing of my soul. You are the answer to every question.

Read Jonah chapter 4 and answer the following questions:

1. Sometimes we set ourselves up as judge and jury over people who are not Christians. What does the word say about this? Matthew 7:1-5, 1 Corinthians 4:5

2. In what way is God's judgement superior to ours? Read Psalm 96:13 before you answer.

3. What about Jesus' role in passing judgment. John 5:22-25 lists some things that Jesus requires of men. What are they?

4. When brothers stumble or backslide. Do we pray for them or talk about them? Note your thoughts in the application of Galatians 6:1.

5. Compare the differences between God's mercy and man's mercy:
God's mercy is: Psalm 103:17

Man's mercy is: James 1:20

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:6

So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my _____; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Day Three**Thought for the Day**

Matt 28:20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

What really matters in life is not so much the things that come to meet us, as our readiness to meet them

Lord, prepare me, through the truth in your word and through my reliance on your faithfulness, to face whatever tomorrow brings

Read Jonah chapter 4 and answer the following questions:

1. The word "Lord" means different things to many people. For some it is a negative thing, for others it has a very positive and constructive meaning. When you see the word used in the bible or see it associated with Jesus Christ, what does it mean to you personally?

2. Where did Jonah go wrong in his thinking?

Could he really run from God? Why or why not?

Why do we make the same mistake?

2. When the bible speaks about the Lordship of Jesus, what are some of the things it is referring to? See Revelation 5:12, Matthew 28:18, Philippians 2:10

3. Read I Corinthians 15:27-28. What will be the future for the "Lordship of Christ"?

4. What happens when a person says "no" to the "Lordship of Christ"?

Are they able to have absolute lordship over their own personal life?

What do you think: if we do not submit to the Lord Jesus, do we eventually end up having to submit to some other lord, such as our lower nature? Comment on this using these passages: Psalm 81:8-16, Matthew 5:13, Ephesians 4:17-19

5. Colossians 3:24 teaches that we will receive _____? _____ from the Lord.

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:6

So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my _____; I will not _____. What can _____ do to me?"

Day Four

Thought for the Day

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:6

Eph 1:12 "that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory"

Thank God that we are in His Hands. It is His way of salvation not ours.

Lord, I am so thankful that I am in your hands, that it is your way of salvation and not mine. May my only concern be to honor you; no matter what temptations or trials this day brings

Read Jonah Chapter 4 and answer the following questions:

1. Do we sometimes pray for the wrong thing? Jonah prayed "to die." When we are down we do not have to be out. The bible says we always have refuge in our Father's care. Each of these passages teach this principle, Psalm 27:5, Psalm 32:7, Psalm 71:1-5

Think of something you once prayed for, that you are now glad the Lord never answered?

2. Many of our trials go away after a period of time. When we look back, we realize that our trials were times of growth. Can you think of a recent trial that you know God used for your benefit?

What was God trying to teach you?

3. Psalm 119:67-68 teaches God is _____? _____ and God does _____? _____.

4. 2 Corinthians 4:17 says that our afflictions are working for us a _____? _____.

5. Trials pay what kind of dividends according to Hebrews 12:11?

6. Trials will come our way. When they come, what does God want us to do?

7. Hebrews 12:5-7 reminds us that when we are in trials, God deals with us as _____? _____.

Memory Verse: Heb.13: 6 By now you should know this week's memory verse by heart. Try writing it down by Memory.

Day Five

Thought for the Day

In one of the German art galleries a painting called "Cloud Lane" hangs at the end of a long dark hall. At first glance it appears to be a huge, ugly mass of confused color that is unattractive and foreboding. But when you look closer, you see portrayed on the canvas an innumerable company of angels!

How tempted we are to run in despair when clouds of trials and temptations come our way. If we would look closely at our situation through the eyes of faith, we would also see God's angels of mercy coming to our aid.

John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The Christian and the non-Christian belong to two entirely different realms. They are not only different In essence; they are living in two totally different worlds

Lord, help me to remember that while I live in this world at present, my true one is in your kingdom. Help me to be a good citizen of both worlds but to never forget where my true allegiance lies.

Read Jonah chapter 4 and answer the following questions:

1. What does God promise after a trial? 1 Peter 1:7-8 teaches:
2. In Psalm 4:1-5, David wants us to _____? _____ and to _____? _____.
3. Often times we create our own trials because we have tried to satisfy ungodly appetites. What does 1 John 2:15-17 teach about this?

4. No matter how far we run from God, it is only one step back to Him. When God takes away our sin and pardons us, it is a two-step process. What are these steps according to Isaiah 55:7 and Micah 7:18-19?

1)

2)

5. How much does God love us? Even though our thoughts are wicked and our hearts are continually evil...He loves us and wants to restore us!

Matthew 22:4-10 states God called both the _____? _____ and the _____? _____.

Revelation 19:7-9 teaches Blessed are those who are called to _____? _____.

Memory Verse: Heb.13: 6 By now you should know this week's memory verse by heart. Try writing it down by Memory.

Day Six

PERSONAL APPLICATION

For instructions on how to journal see pages 4-5 in your introduction section, note your thoughts in the following section

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

**For information regarding this study, contact Calvary Vista's Men's Ministry at
760-726-4224**