

THE BOOK OF

Jonah

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

Going Down

OPENING QUESTION

Describe a bad vacation you've experienced sometime in the past.

READ **Jonah 1:1–17.**

1. When have you run from God?

- A. When I was afraid I wouldn't be able to do what I wanted to do.
- B. When God wanted me to go someplace I didn't want to go.
- C. When God convicted me to do something I didn't want to do.
- D. During an altar call.
- E. When I was around a bunch of heathens.
- F. When I was with a bunch of church people.
- G. When I tried to find myself instead of what others wanted me to be.
- H. I've never run from God.
- I. Other.

2. Where is a good place to hide from God?

- A. Somewhere that is very, very dark.
- B. Wherever worldly people gather.
- C. Inside a theater.
- D. At church.
- E. Staying super busy.
- F. Someplace that is quiet.
- G. Anywhere that's noisy.
- H. Social media.
- I. Other.

3. What causes people to "fear for their lives"?

- A. Whatever is the current threat in the news cycle.
- B. When anyone pulls a gun.
- C. Earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, fires, or floods.
- D. The dark.
- E. Losing their financial security.
- F. God.
- G. Uncertainty regarding eternal life.
- H. Police (or lack of police).
- I. Other.

4. What was Jonah's testimony?

- A. I want to see the world.
- B. I've got nothing to say.
- C. I worship the God of heaven, the sea, and the dry land.
- D. All of you should be more like me.
- E. Give your life to God right now.
- F. I'm here as a representative for God.
- G. Will you forgive me?
- H. I have no right to even give a testimony right now.
- I. Other.

5. What do the prayers in this chapter reveal?

- A. Pagans pray more than Jonah does.
- B. Desperate situations lead people to pray.
- C. There's more than one reason to pray.
- D. The exact formula isn't that important.
- E. God doesn't answer all prayers the same.
- F. Pray, but still take action yourself.
- G. Prayer is the only thing you can really do.
- H. Prayer works.
- I. Other.

6. What do your prayers reveal?

- A. Not much.
- B. I have lots of needs and wants.
- C. I have lots of wants.
- D. I tend to pray more when there's an emergency.
- E. My prayers are more about me than about others.
- F. I do a lot of listening rather than talking.
- G. My prayer life stinks.
- H. I hardly ever listen when I talk to God.
- I. Other.

7. What does God want you to do that you might not want to do?

8. What testimony do you have for strangers? for friends?

The Prayer of Jonah

OPENING QUESTION

When have you prayed for God to get you out of a jam?

READ **Jonah 2:1–10.**

1. When did Jonah pray to God?

- A. When God told Jonah to do something Jonah didn't want to do.
- B. As soon as the storm began.
- C. Right after the pagan sailors asked for Jonah's testimony.
- D. When the captain ordered Jonah to pray.
- E. When Jonah wanted direction from God while on the boat.
- F. When Jonah was thrown into the water.
- G. After a full day inside the belly of the fish.
- H. Once he fully submitted to God.
- I. Other.

2. What do you think it was like for Jonah to be in the belly of the fish?

- A. Dark, wet, and slimy.
- B. Stinky and crowded.
- C. Ideal for personal reflection.
- D. Perpetual sea sickness.
- E. Better than any ride at an amusement park.
- F. Similar to Daniel being in the lion's den.
- G. He couldn't get his ears to pop at deep levels in the sea.
- H. Calm and peaceful.
- I. Other.

3. What would you include in your prayer if you were in the fish's belly?

- A. Help! Get me outta here!
- B. You did this to me, God.
- C. I did this to myself, and I admit it.
- D. I really wish that I could be in church right now.
- E. I'm never going to obey You again.
- F. Let's sing some praise songs.
- G. I'll always obey you from now on.
- H. Dear Jesus, thank you for this food.
- I. Other.

4. What Psalm or song would you turn to in a crisis like this?

- A. *Psalm 23* – The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- B. *Psalm 120*: – I took my troubles to the LORD.
- C. *Psalm 88* – Don't abandon me. Save me so I can praise you.
- D. *Psalm 18:1-6* – God saves me from death and destruction.
- E. *Psalm 32:7* – You are my hiding place.
- F. Great is Thy Faithfulness.
- G. Amazing Grace.
- H. Other.

5. Why would Jonah mention the temple twice in his prayer?

- A. He wanted to attest to both an earthly and heavenly temple.
- B. He wanted to be where God is worshiped in obvious ways.
- C. He hoped to get out of this big fish.
- D. He acknowledged God as supreme.
- E. It's easier to pray at church than elsewhere.
- F. The temple encapsulates God's plan of salvation.
- G. There's magic with the temple.
- H. Other.

6. What sacrifices and vows have you made?

- A. Nothing comes to mind.
- B. I don't make sacrifices.
- C. I don't make vows.
- D. I've made lots of sacrifices throughout my life, such as _____.
- E. Vows are super-serious—like when a person gets married.
- F. That's what "fox-hole" Christians do to get out of an emergency.
- G. I will do some of that in the future.
- H. Other.

7. Who has played a role in one way or another in your salvation?

8. The LORD ordered the fish to spit up Jonah on the beach (*vs. 10*), and it happened. What would you like the LORD to order today?

You're Gonna Burn!

OPENING QUESTION

As a child, what did it take to get one of your parents to change their mind?

READ **Jonah 3:1–10.**

1. What was Jonah's message to the people of Nineveh?

- A. Turn or burn.
- B. God hates you the way you are.
- C. I want to be seeker-sensitive as I share a little about Yahweh.
- D. You need to be like me to be accepted by God.
- E. Please come to our church social activity.
- F. Come with me on a retreat.
- G. There's no hope for you.
- H. I don't like you, and neither does God.
- I. Other.

2. When have you prayed a prayer of desperation to God?

- A. After I have done something really stupid.
- B. When I got into trouble.
- C. I can't think of a time when I've done that.
- D. When someone close to me was facing death.
- E. When I had a big test.
- F. During a personal crisis.
- G. In a time of war.
- H. At a time of national or church crisis.
- I. Other.

3. How do you demonstrate your sorrow when you really, really mean it?

- A. Lots of tears.
- B. With extreme sadness showing on your face.
- C. Choose words carefully.
- D. Express depression in as many ways as possible.
- E. Tell lots of people about it.
- F. Take responsibility, repent, and ask for forgiveness.
- G. Give a gift.
- H. Lavish gifts and praise and pleas to those I've wronged.
- I. Other

4. Why did the king and people of Nineveh repent?

- A. Jonah was an amazing preacher.
- B. The story of Jonah's great fish experience wowed them.
- C. It seemed like the right thing to do.
- D. The Holy Spirit really did a number on their hearts.
- E. There was a consensus after much discussion.
- F. The king ordered it, so everybody had to do it.
- G. To be a good example to others.
- H. They were bartering with Yahweh.
- I. Other.

5. Why does God change his mind?

- A. He doesn't.
- B. Sometimes he gets all sentimental.
- C. Because people change.
- D. It's just a human way to describe God's omniscience.
- E. God likes to give "chancies."
- F. When the proper conditions are met, God is willing to change.
- G. God is flexible until a person's probation closes.
- H. Other.

6. When has God given you another opportunity to obey Him?

- A. When I didn't obey him the first time.
- B. After I obey, he wants to see if I'll obey again.
- C. I never get second chances from God.
- D. When I've made a mistake.
- E. When I've made a mistake and I admit it.
- F. When I give others another chance, God gives me one.
- G. When someone else had prayed for me.
- H. Other.

7. When have you changed your mind about a person or a group of people that you really didn't like at one time? What caused the change?

8. On the following continuum of Justice at one extreme and Mercy at the other, put an "X" where you would place God; put an "O" where you'd place yourself; and put a "✓" where you'd place your boss/teacher/parent.

JUSTICE

MERCY

Live or Die?

OPENING QUESTION

Describe a time when you received a gift totally by surprise?

READ **Jonah 4:1–17.**

1. What got Jonah so upset?

- A. God didn't destroy the Ninevites.
- B. Jonah being wrong.
- C. Jonah looking bad.
- D. God being merciful.
- E. The enemies of God's people being given another chance.
- F. Jonah felt ripped off because there was no fire and damnation.
- G. Jonah cared deeply about the plant that shriveled and died.
- H. There were no vegetarian restaurants in Nineveh.
- I. Other.

2. What gets you upset?

- A. God doesn't destroy sin or sinners right away.
- B. When I look bad.
- C. God being merciful or compassionate (again).
- D. When things don't go the way I want.
- E. If nothing happens when I pray.
- F. Bad people have a good life OR good people have a bad life.
- G. When someone rejects me.
- H. When I have to answer questions.
- I. Other.

3. How would you describe the God of the Old Testament?

- A. Powerful, Passionate, Perturbed.
- B. Distant, Wise, Kind.
- C. Giving, Demanding, Patient.
- D. Compassionate, Unpredictable, Warning.
- E. Relational, Revengeful, Revealing.
- F. Wrath, Mighty, Forgiving.
- G. Merciful, Protective, Punishing.
- H. Loving, Promising, Record-keeping.
- I. Other.

4. Who does Jonah want dead in this chapter of the book of Jonah?

- A. The people of Nineveh.
- B. Himself.
- C. God.
- D. God's people.
- E. Everyone who lives in cities.
- F. The cattle/livestock/animals of Nineveh.
- G. He doesn't really mean what he prays; he's just upset.
- H. Other.

5. . What's the deal with the plant in this story?

- A. God provided an unexpected gift for Jonah.
- B. God removed something Jonah expected to keep.
- C. That's just the way life is.
- D. I have no idea.
- E. Good and bad things happen apart from anything we do.
- F. We're not aware of a lot of stuff that's happening.
- G. It's a call to be merciful, the way God is merciful.
- H. We can't control our circumstances; we can control our response.
- I. Other.

6. For whom do you feel sorry in this story?

- A. Jonah.
- B. God.
- C. The people of Nineveh.
- D. The animals in Nineveh.
- E. The plant/gourd/vine.
- F. The Israelites who later were killed by the Ninevites.
- G. Nobody.
- H. Other.

7. Who in your world do you feel sorry for today? Who in your world do you NOT feel sorry for today?

8. To what extent do you have conversations with God the way Jonah did?

