



Jonah – Week One

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Overview

During this new series, we'll take a look at some of the greatest *Comeback Stories* of the Bible. You'll be encouraged knowing that *it's not too late and you're never too far* for God to use you in a mighty way. We begin with Jonah who made a comeback from disobedience to significance.

Discussion Questions

Jonah 1:1-3 reads *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

Jonah realizes that if the people of Nineveh repent from his warning, God will be faithful to forgive them of their cruelty. Believing the Ninevites undeserving of forgiveness from God, Jonah runs away in disobedience.

- Jonah doesn't think the Ninevites deserve to be saved. What does this imply about how he views his own salvation? Ask yourself, "are there any biases, resentment, or prejudices that keep me from sharing the love of God with people?"
- Share a time when you physically or figuratively ran from God's will for your life.

The God of "Another Chance"

After a great storm arose at sea, the sailors discovered that Jonah's disobedience to God was its cause. Reluctantly, they threw Jonah overboard where he was swallowed by a large fish. After three days in the fish's belly, Jonah prays to God who, in His loving mercy, rescues Jonah.

- Jonah's "comeback" story starts with his crying out to God. Do you find it difficult to pray to God amidst a storm of your own making? How can we expect our heavenly Father to respond when we honestly seek Him?

Jonah 3:1-2 continues with, *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."*

Not only is God the God of a *second* chance, He's the God of *another* chance, and another, and another...Our merciful God responds to true repentance. **Matthew 5:7** adds, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."*

- Share a time when you demonstrated mercy to someone who "didn't deserve" it.

Jonah's story progresses with his journey to Nineveh where he obeys God and preaches repentance. In response, the entire city cries out to God in brokenness. The same compassionate mercy He showed to Jonah, God now extends to a repentant people.

- Which resonates most with you: God's mercy or the people's turn from wickedness? Explain.

Three Keys to Become a People of "Another Chance"

1. **Obey God--even when you're confused or conflicted.**

Decide to obey God regardless if you're scared, don't agree, or don't understand. *The measure of your maturity in Christ is the time and distance between God speaking and you responding.*

- Can you think of a situation in your life in which God is waiting for your obedience? What would result if you made up your mind to obey today?

2. **Expect good fruit.**

Because of Jonah's obedience, people repented and lives were changed. When we obey, God shows up, the Holy Spirit can begin to move, and anything is possible!

- Give an example of when you or someone you know obeyed God when it didn't make sense and the result was more than imagined.

3. **Start with the heart--every day**

After God's relenting judgment over Nineveh, Jonah responds poorly in **Jonah 4:1**, *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.*

- What did Jonah's response reveal about his heart? How can we make sure our heart is pure before God?

Life Challenge

If God has revealed any areas of disobedience, don't wait. Call out to God and repent. Then obey what God is speaking to you.

Prayer

Father, we are amazed at Your compassionate love and mercy toward me. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to save me from my sin and rebellion! Because of Your sacrifice for me, I choose to extend that same mercy to others. Reveal any areas in which I have been disobedient that I may repent and choose Your ways. Today, I choose to obey You even when I'm afraid or I don't understand for You are infinitely worthy! Pray for the specific needs of the group.