

## JONAH: SMALL GROUP LEADERS GUIDE

Though the book of Jonah doesn't contain any actual prophecies, the life of Jonah and his experiences laid out in this book definitely carry prophetic undertones. The nation of Israel had been called by God to be His people, but the people had forgotten why they had been called in the first place. The relationship God had with Israel was to be a witness to the world of the relationship God wanted to have with everyone. Instead of fulfilling that call, the Israelites developed a self-righteous hatred of the very gentile world they had been called to reach. The result was God's judgment.

### THINKING POINTS FROM STUDY

**1** In the life of Jonah we find many inconsistencies between the way Jonah lived in context to the things Jonah believed. He said to the group of sailors that he feared God, but his actions painted a different picture.

**QUESTIONS:** *Would you say you live your life completely consistent with what you claim to believe concerning God? What areas of your life would you admit aren't being lived consistently with the belief system you claim to adhere to? How can you really tell what someone believes - what they say or how they live?*

**2** One truth is undeniable concerning the story of Jonah.... Jonah hated the Ninevites, but God didn't. Sometimes we hate people for various reasons, some even justifiably, but we should always remember.... God doesn't hate the same people I do. Beyond that, He might call me to love them.

**QUESTIONS:** *Who do you hate and why do you hate them? Why do we want God to hate the people we hate, especially those who have caused us harm? Why did God choose someone like Jonah, someone who harbored such deep resentment, to reach this group of people? Who do you harbor hatred towards that God wants you to reach out and love? Is God asking you to do something that He wasn't already willing to do Himself?*

**3** The story of Jonah teaches us that repentance, though it begins in a moment, is more than a one-time event. True repentance is a lifestyle that must continue and mature. Repentance is more of a lifelong process of God's patience and grace fueled by our humility and confession.

**QUESTIONS:** *What does it practically mean to live with repentance being a lifestyle? What should a life of repentance look like? Does God demand perfection or repentance? What practical traits should repentance produce in your life?*

# DEVOTIONS

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