

DEVOTIONAL

JOURNAL





Illustrated by Luke Lang



INTRODUCTION

For the next three weeks we will be embarking on a series of messages based on the book of Jonah. Not only adults, but students and kids too! Jonah is such a well-known story, but is filled with layers of learning that can reveal truths that are very relevant to our lives today.

This resource will help you and your family walk through this series together.

For each of the three weeks of messages, you will find a **Pre-Devotional** and a **Post-Devotional**.

The Pre-Devotional is meant to prepare your heart for the upcoming message you will hear and the Post-Devotional will assist you in applying the truths you have heard into your daily life.

Our lead pastor, Farrell Lemings, and campus pastors, Jeremy Taylor and Paul Glenn, have each contributed to this devotional.

Work through the pages of this devotional with your family around the dinner table, over coffee with friends, or at your life group. We pray this resource will provide an opportunity for great discussions and a fresh understanding of this insightful and action-packed book of the Bible.



THE COST OF DISOBEDIENCE

PRE-DEVOTIONAL

By Paul Glenn



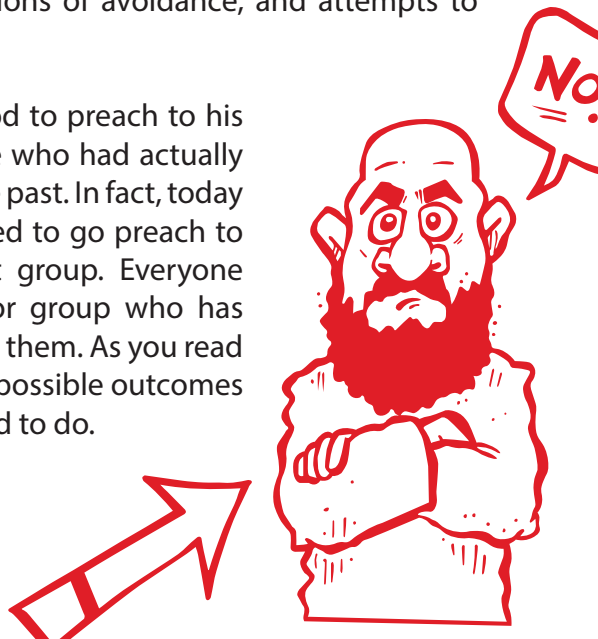
Everyone has faced a situation where they had to do something they didn't want to do. In fact, it happens in every season of life. When small children don't want to go to bed or don't want to eat their food, they throw a tantrum. They kick, cry, and scream trying to get the instructions changed.

When teenagers don't want to go to school, attend church, or participate in family events, they will argue, pretend to be asleep, or simply sit in silence refusing to move. If the situation involves something they really don't like, they may even run away.

And as adults, people do all of these in varying forms of socially acceptable ways. They stop participating, fake appointments, lie to be excused, or work long hours to be too busy.

Sometimes as believers, we are invited by God to participate in something we don't want to do. The challenge is, God sees through all our excuses, actions of avoidance, and attempts to ignore His instructions.

Jonah is being invited by God to preach to his nation's greatest enemy; one who had actually done horrible atrocities in the past. In fact, today this might be like being asked to go preach to ISIS or a white supremacist group. Everyone has experienced a person or group who has either hurt them or threatens them. As you read consider the gravity and the possible outcomes of what Jonah is being invited to do.





Read: Jonah 1

How have you responded when faced with a situation you didn't want?

Five horizontal lines for writing.



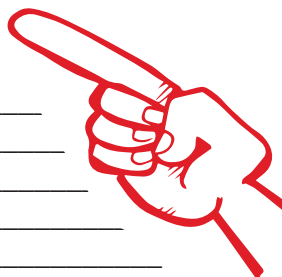
What is God asking you to do that you are avoiding?

Five horizontal lines for writing.



What would you rather do than obey the Lord? Why?

Five horizontal lines for writing.



Why are you really avoiding it? Why won't you do it?

Five horizontal lines for writing.



THE COST OF DISOBEDIENCE

POST-DEVOTIONAL

By Paul Glenn



Every day each one of us has to face the consequences of our decisions. Deciding to hit the alarm snooze button a few times may result in being late to work. Driving more quickly than the speed limit, while trying to make up for leaving the house late, may result in a speeding ticket.

But consequences aren't necessarily bad. They are simply outcomes, effects, or results of something occurring earlier. The consequences of hard work can be a promotion. The consequences of practicing proper nutrition and getting plenty of rest can be a healthy body. The consequences of obeying traffic lights and road signs can be safety for all on the road.

The same is true with our spiritual life. The consequence of confessing Jesus as Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead is eternal life. The consequences of daily prayer and Scripture reading can be a deep understanding of God's Word and a rich devotional life. Uniquely, it is our spiritual life that actually has the ability to minimize possible negative consequences in our other choices and decisions. Because of our spiritual life, we don't have to make decisions alone. We are able to rely on the Holy Spirit for direction. Hearing His voice, and having the courage to follow His instructions, should be our daily aim.



Read: Jonah 1 (again)

How are you asking the Holy Spirit into the decisions you make each day?



How do you hear the Spirit's promptings?



How were things different when you had the courage to obey what you heard Him say?



A STORY ABOUT GOD

PRE-DEVOTIONAL

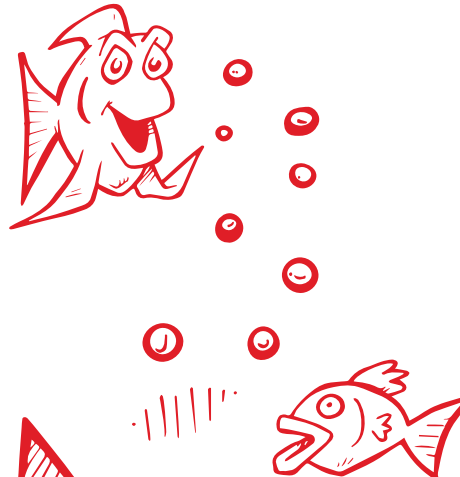
By Farrell Lemings



When we think of the story of Jonah we most often think about a man who ran from God. As a result of his disobedience, there were consequences and ultimately a course correction. A second storyline in the book of Jonah is the wicked Assyrians who deserved to be punished because of their actions. Both Jonah and the Assyrians were given a second chance. But as we look to the book of Jonah it is really a book that reveals the heart and passion of our heavenly Father.

What is your view of God? Do you see Him as a God who is angry and waiting to punish you when you fail? Do you see Him as a Deity far removed from your everyday reality? Do you view Him as a God of mercy and grace who longs to restore us to right relationship with Himself?

A proper view and understanding of God is critical. If we don't properly understand who God is and how He responds to humanity then we will not rightly relate to God. Dr. Bill Bright wrote, "A false view of God leads to sin and corruption—and many times cruelty and great human tragedy. On the other hand, a proper understanding of God leads to a life of blessing for oneself and many generations to follow."

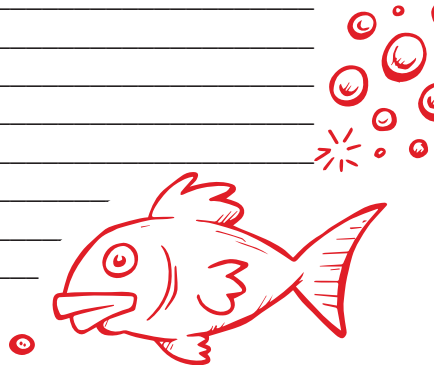


Take a few minutes and read the four short chapters in the book of Jonah and look for God at work. As you read, note the different attributes of God that are revealed as He responds to both Jonah and the Ninevites.

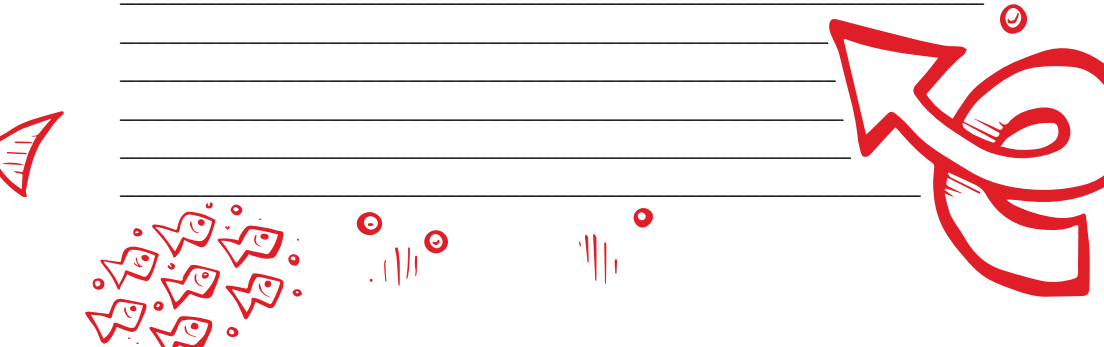
How would you define God's action to Jonah's rebellion?



What was God's response to the wicked Ninevites when they repented?



How do you think God responds to you when you fail or rebel?



A STORY ABOUT GOD

POST-DEVOTIONAL

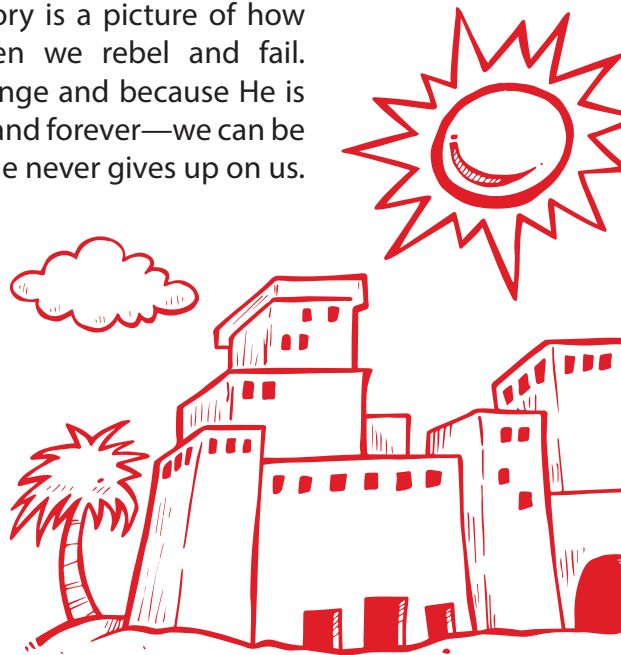
By Farrell Lemings

This past week we saw God at work in Jonah's story. Both Jonah and the Ninevites deserved judgement, but instead of getting what they deserved they received God's mercy. If you think about it, Jonah's story is really like our own.

Within Jonah's story we see God's outrageous love for humanity and His pursuit of people who are on a path of destruction. He performed several supernatural acts to capture Jonah's attention, so that Jonah would carry a message of repentance to the Ninevites. We also see God's grace at work as He gave a second chance to Jonah in the midst of his disobedience and rebellion. As Jonah delivered God's message, the people of Nineveh repented and received God's mercy. Rather than experiencing what they deserved, they were forgiven and saved from destruction.

What we see in Jonah's story is a picture of how God responds to us when we rebel and fail. Because God does not change and because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever—we can be encouraged to know that He never gives up on us. He continues to pursue us.

The book of Jonah is so much more than a story about a hard headed man and a big fish. It is a story that reveals the love, mercy and grace of God—a God who never stops pursuing us and never gives up on us.



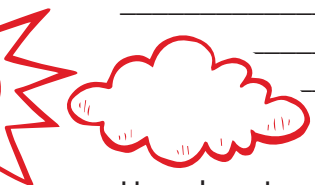
Have you ever openly rebelled against God like Jonah? If so, how do you think God responded to you in your disobedience?



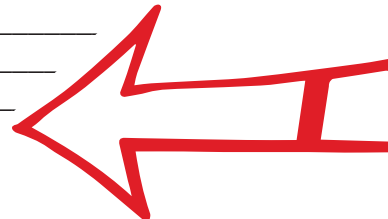
In what ways in your life have you experienced God's mercy?



In what ways do you see God's grace at work in Jonah's story?



How does Jonah's story help you see God in a different way than possibly you had thought of God before?



THE UGLY WITHIN

PRE-DEVOTIONAL

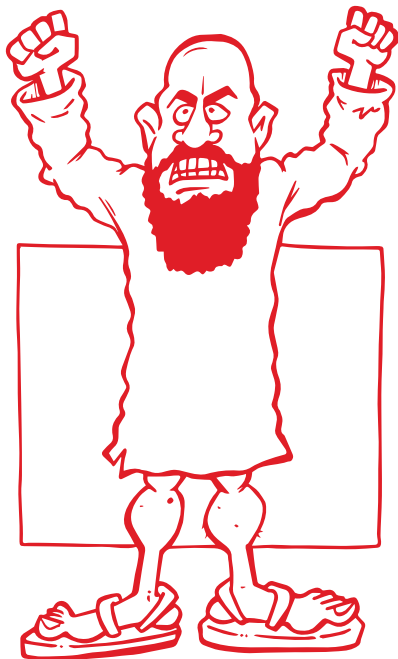
By Jeremy Taylor

There are many things that people disagree on. We disagree on politics, sports, what the best restaurants are, and on and on it goes. However, there is one thing where there is almost universally agreement - babies are adorable. They are also fascinating.

Did you know that:

- A baby cannot taste salt until it is 4 months old?
- Newborns are more likely to turn their head to the right than to the left?
- Up until 7 months old, a baby can breathe and swallow at the same time?
- Newborns prefer the cadence of their native language at birth, suggesting that some language learning starts in the womb?

Now here is where it gets interesting. Babies are universally able to hear all sounds, but depending on the culture that they are raised in, they begin to lose that ability.




For example, Japanese babies are born with the ability to hear “r’s” and “l’s” but they lose that ability to hear it later in life due to the fact that the Japanese culture does not use them! Classic case of “use it or lose it.”

In Jonah chapter 4 we find that very principle played out. Jonah is upset at God because Jonah has not created a culture of grace in his own life. And because our God is a God of grace, Jonah isn’t speaking the same language as his Creator. He has lost the ability to hear what matters.

As we head into this week's sermon in our series on Jonah, read chapter 4 and ask yourself some of these questions:

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me about this passage?





Is the culture I'm creating in my life one that allows me to hear the heart of God clearly?

GO!

What are some of the ugly things in my heart that I need to let God speak to?

With some individuals in my life, am I listening to the language of bitterness or to the language of grace?



THE UGLY WITHIN

POST-DEVOTIONAL

By Jeremy Taylor

Did you know that over \$10 billion is spent every year in the United States on cosmetic surgery? People see something that they feel is ugly about themselves and then shell out big bucks to get it fixed. People want to look beautiful. I completely understand that – I've been told I have a face for radio! We all desire to be attractive, but as we have learned in the final sermon of our series this past week, the real ugly is not that which is on the outside – it's the ugly that is within.




Jonah was struggling with the ugly sin of bitterness that caused him to become resentful to God for saving the lost. Even though Jonah was used by God to preach such an amazing sermon that brought an entire city to repentance, Jonah left the city and pouted. I don't know of many preachers who would be disappointed preaching that well! But sin had wreaked such havoc on Jonah's prejudices, preferences, and perspective. What was a beautiful work of God had become ugly in Jonah's eyes. What was once beautiful within Jonah had now become ugly. Good became evil, beauty became ugly, right became wrong. Everything had become distorted. That's what sin does – it distorts. It distorted Jonah's life and it can distort ours.



At the end of the message this week, we were left with these three questions:

What do you have to be angry about?





What right do you have to demand that God should favor you and not others?

Is God not right to show concern, grace, and mercy to _____?

Let's add one more:

What am I going to do about "the ugly within" that I may have?



After looking at these questions do the following:

- Spend at least 2 minutes being quiet and letting the Holy Spirit speak to you about those questions.
- Acknowledge what you have heard Him say.
- Commit to letting Him work in you.
- Thank Him for the way He loves and adores you.



GRACE
COVENANT

