



LIFE GROUP STUDY MATERIAL

# JONAH

*THE MISSIONARY HEART OF GOD*

**SESSION #1:  
WHEN GOD'S WILL & OUR WILL COLLIDE**

## SESSION #1

# WHEN GOD'S WILL AND OUR WILL COLLIDE

### LESSON AIM

To help believers see God's mission, recognize their place in it, and respond to His call.

### VIDEO LESSON

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak6jyE8FBNI>

### SCRIPTURE READING

#### Jonah 1:1-17

**1** Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." **3** But Jonah rose 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, away from the presence of the LORD. **4** But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. **5** Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. **6** So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish." **7** And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. **8** Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" **9** And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." **10** Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

**11** Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. **12** He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." **13** Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. **14** Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." **15** So they

picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. **16** Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. **17** And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:1-17 ESV

## INTRODUCTION

In this series, we explore the missionary heart of God through the book of Jonah. This short narrative reveals God's desire to reach people far from Him and His invitation for us to join His mission. Jonah shows that God places His people strategically to accomplish His purposes, yet it also exposes something personal: the moments when God's will and our will collide. When we resist or run from God's plans, the book of Jonah reminds us that the safest and most meaningful place is at the center of His will, even through challenges or discomfort. As we study chapter one, we see that the true hero of the story is not Jonah, but God Himself.

### Three truths about God

#### 1. God is on a mission.

The story opens with God sending Jonah. God is already moving toward a broken city, planning redemption for people who do not even know they need it. He is active, intentional, and committed to reaching the nations.

#### 2. God places His people strategically.

Jonah's assignment is no accident. God chooses him, not for his perfection but for God's own purpose. Jonah is positioned, gifted, and called for this moment. Likewise, God places us in our workplaces, families, communities, and churches intentionally for His mission.

#### 3. God pursues us when we run.

Jonah resists God, but God does not walk away. He interrupts, confronts, and ultimately rescues His prophet. God pursues Jonah with the same determination that He shows toward Nineveh. Our disobedience does not cancel God's pursuit.

## Four Movements in Jonah Chapter 1

### 1. God's Mission (Jonah 1:1–2)

God initiates the story with a clear calling. He sends Jonah to a city that is in spiritual crisis, inviting him to participate in God's redemptive work. God's mission is deliberate, compassionate, and already underway.

### 2. Jonah's Mutiny (Jonah 1:3–16)

Rather than obeying God, Jonah runs in the opposite direction. His disobedience reveals how fear, pride, and resistance can easily draw us away from God's will. Even in Jonah's rebellion, God shows his heart of love and exposes the tension between human will and divine purpose.

### 3. God's Mercy (Jonah 1:4, 7, 15, 17)

Despite Jonah's disobedience, God does not abandon him. Through the storm, the casting of lots, the calming sea, and the great fish, God pursues him. These miracles show that God's mercy is active, persistent, and committed to restoring both His prophet and His mission.

### 4. Our Mission (Application)

Jonah's story is a mirror for our own lives. God is still on His mission, still placing His people strategically, and still pursuing us when we run away. This chapter invites us to reflect:

- What is the cry around me?
- How has God equipped me?
- What step is God calling me to take in His mission today?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Instructions for group facilitators:** Every group is different. You may modify the discussion questions to suit your group and you do not need to use all the questions in the group discussion.

**Question 1:** When you read Jonah chapter 1, do you notice Jonah's choices or God's actions more? Why do you think the author highlights that?

**Question 2:** How does the story of Jonah illustrate that God is always on a mission, even when people are unaware of their need for Him?

**Question 3:** Considering how God positioned Jonah for Nineveh, in what ways does God strategically place people today? How similar or different is God's positioning for us compared to Jonah?

**Question 4:** What was the tension between Jonah's will and divine purpose when he ran away? If we run away from obeying God, what could be the tension and what is the root cause for running away?

**Question 5:** What are some examples from your own observations where God has pursued people persistently, even when they resisted Him?

**Question 6:** How can understanding God's pursuit and mercy change the way we respond to His calling in our own lives?

**Question 7:** What practical steps can we take to align ourselves more closely with God's mission in our families, workplaces, or communities?

## NEXT STEPS

Take time this week to reflect on the needs around you. Ask God how He has uniquely equipped you to respond and what specific step He is calling you to take in His mission. Consider one practical way you can participate in God's work this week, whether that is through praying, offering encouragement, serving someone in need, or sharing His love in your community. Remember, the safest and most purposeful place to be is at the center of God's will. Do you know someone who could benefit from this lesson? Share what you have learned and encourage them to join the next session with you.