



LIFE GROUP STUDY MATERIAL

JONAH

THE MISSIONARY HEART OF GOD

**SESSION #2:
DIVINE DETOURS: SWALLOWED TO BE SENT**

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DIVINE DETOURS: SWALLOWED TO BE SENT

LESSON AIM

To help believers see how God pursues, restores, and recommissions His people.

VIDEO LESSON

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddAr2-Qi-yY>

SCRIPTURE READING

Jonah 1:17

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 1:17 ESV

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, we will continue to explore the missionary heart of God. Through the narrative in the book of Jonah, we will explore three movements.

Three movements in the book of Jonah

1. Rescue in the midst of Rebellion

Jonah's story reveals a fourfold rebellion as he flees from God's command to preach to Nineveh, descending deep into disobedience. His rebellion is against God as a creature, a man, a Hebrew, and a prophet. Yet God's sovereign mercy pursues him through a series of divine appointments: a storm, a revealing lot, a calming sea, and a great fish. They are not to punish Jonah but to rescue him from himself. The contrast between Jonah's autonomy and God's providence shows that true freedom is not found in running from God but in returning to Him. Ultimately, Jonah's rescue foreshadows Jesus, the true and better Jonah, who fully obeyed and was appointed by God to save us from sin and judgment.

2. Prayer in the midst of Panic

The second movement shows Jonah finally praying in desperate panic after resisting God in silence throughout chapter 1. As he sinks toward death, he remembers the Lord and realizes that disobedience

brings distress, while God remains sovereign, merciful, and able to redeem. From the depths, Jonah acknowledges God's discipline and rescue, recalling the holy temple and turning back to God in repentance. This moment teaches that sin pulls us downward, but God's grace pursues us; recovery begins by remembering who God is and responding spiritually before seeking practical solutions. Jonah's descent ultimately foreshadows Jesus, the greater Jonah, who entered the depths of judgment to save us forever.

3. Deliverance in the midst of Dedication

The third movement highlights Jonah's deliverance that follows his renewed dedication to God. After confronting the emptiness of his own idols, particularly the idol of national pride, Jonah acknowledges that clinging to false gods only leads to disappointment and the loss of God's steadfast love. Letting go of these vain idols, he turns back to God with thanksgiving, surrender, and a willingness to obey, declaring that salvation belongs to the Lord alone. Jonah's repentance leads to his recommissioning: the rebellious prophet becomes the renewed prophet, moving through stages of disobedience, discipline, dedication, and finally deliverance as God commands the fish to release him and calls him again to Nineveh. This movement teaches that true transformation comes when we surrender our idols, remember God's grace, and say "I will" to His will, just as Jesus perfectly surrendered in Gethsemane for our salvation.

Jonah runs from God in rebellion, yet God pursues and rescues him through sovereign interventions. In the depths of panic, Jonah finally prays and remembers God's mercy, turning his heart back in repentance. As he surrenders his idols, God delivers, restores, and recommissions him, showing that salvation belongs to the Lord. Praise God!

Reflection questions:

1. Where am I running from what God has asked me to do?
2. What might God be teaching me through the storm?
3. What do I need to surrender to God in this season?

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: In what ways do "vain idols" still trap people today, and how can we identify the idols we personally cling to?

Question 2: How does Jonah's journey from disobedience to dedication help us understand the nature of God's discipline and mercy?

Question 3: What are some "Ninevehs" in your life—places, people, or assignments—you tend to avoid, and why do you think God keeps bringing them back to your attention?

Question 4: How have past storms shaped you spiritually, and what patterns do you notice in how God gets your attention?

Question 5: What is one specific area such as an idol, fear, behaviour, or desire that you sense God is asking you to surrender in this season?

Question 6: How might your life look different if you fully surrendered this area to God, and what steps can you take this week to walk in that surrender?

NEXT STEPS

Take time this week to reflect on your obedience. Then take one bold step of obedience toward what God has been asking of you, no matter how small it may seem. It might mean reaching out to someone you've avoided, confessing a hidden struggle, letting go of an idol, or saying *yes* to a prompting you've been resisting.

Remember God delivers, restores, and recommissions.