



LIFE GROUP STUDY MATERIAL

JONAH

THE MISSIONARY HEART OF GOD

**SESSION #3:
THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES**

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THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES

LESSON AIM

To discover God as the God of second chances who recommissions us after failure and responds to genuine repentance with mercy.

VIDEO LESSON

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRIUOMZtn7w>

SCRIPTURE READING

Jonah 3:1-10

1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, **2** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." **3** So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. **4** Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" **5** And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. **6** The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, **8** but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. **9** Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." **10** When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Jonah 3:1-10 ESV

INTRODUCTION

In this session, we encounter the God of second chances. Jonah, having been delivered from the belly of the fish, is not just rescued but recommissioned. This chapter records the greatest miracle in the book of Jonah: not the fish, but the mighty revival of a pagan city where people from the greatest to the least turned to God. Jesus Himself pointed to this moment, calling his own death and resurrection the "Sign of

the Prophet Jonah". Just as Jonah was transformed by his time in the fish, moving from a prodigal prophet to a preaching prophet, God desires not just a renovation of our lives, but a resurrection, so that changed people can become channels of change

Three truths about God

1. Our God Is A Good God (Jonah 3:1-4)

God's goodness is seen in how He gives the prophet a second chance. The word of the Lord came to Jonah "the second time". This demonstrates that **past failures don't disqualify future usefulness**. God does not write us off because of a mistake; He repurposes us for His glory. However, it is important to note that **grace gives you another chance, not another command**. God sent Jonah back to the exact same mission he ran from.

As Jonah entered Nineveh, he was a transformed man. The text shifts from "But Jonah fled" in chapter 1 to "So Jonah arose" in chapter 3. This illustrates that **only changed people become channels of change**. Jonah's physical appearance was likely altered by the fish's stomach acid, making him a living sign to the Ninevites. In this way, **your scars become your sermon**. He didn't need to be eloquent; he just needed to be faithful. His message was short ("Yet forty days..."), proving that **clarity always overtakes cleverness**. God's goodness is not just soft; it is truthful. **The goodness of God doesn't minimize truth, It maximizes it.**

2. Our God Is A Great God. (Jonah 3:5-9)

God is great because He has the power to convict hearts and humble kings. When the message was preached, the people of Nineveh "believed God" immediately. This teaches us to **never write off who God has written into His story**. We often assume certain people or groups are too "hard" to reach, but God is great enough to soften any heart.

The repentance in Nineveh was total, involving confession, conversion (change of attitude), and conduct (change of action). Even the king humbled himself, sitting in ashes. The people did not have assurance of forgiveness, yet they repented saying, "Who knows?" This shows that **you don't need certainty to repent, just humility**.

3. Our God Is A Gracious God (Jonah 3:10)

God is gracious because when He sees true repentance, He relents from judgment. The text says, "When God saw what they did... God relented". This establishes the principle: **When man repents, God relents**.

This does not mean God changes His mind or His character (He is immutable); rather, when we change our position, turning from evil to good, we move from under His judgment to under His mercy.

The Greater Jonah

This passage ultimately points us to Jesus, the "Greater Jonah" (Matthew 12:41).

- Jonah ran away from his mission; Jesus ran toward His mission.
- Jonah was thrown into the sea for his own sin; Jesus was thrown into the sea of God's judgment for *our* sin.
- Jonah offered a temporary reprieve; Jesus offers eternal redemption.

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: Share a time in your life when you were grateful for a "second chance," whether from a parent, a boss, or a friend. How did that experience impact your relationship with them or your future behavior?

Question 2: Read Jonah 3:1–3. The text notes that the word of the Lord came to Jonah "the second time." What does the fact that God issued the exact same command ("Arise, go to Nineveh") tell us about how God deals with our past failures and His call on our lives

Question 3: In this lesson, we learn that "Grace gives you another chance, not another command". Why do you think God sent Jonah back to the same difficult mission rather than giving him a new, easier assignment? What does this teach us about the nature of God's purposes?

Question 4: In verses 5–9, the repentance of Nineveh involved fasting, sackcloth, and turning from violence. How does this description challenge the modern understanding of repentance, which is often limited to merely feeling bad or saying "I'm sorry"?

Question 5: Discuss the principle "When man repents, God relents" (v. 10). Does God change His character, or does our change in position allow us to experience His mercy differently? How does this deepen your confidence in God's grace?

Question 6: The lesson mentions that "your scars become your sermon" and that Jonah was likely physically changed (bleached skin) by his time in the fish. How can your own past failures or "scars" from God's discipline become a testimony to help reach others around you?

Question 7: Jesus calls Himself "something greater than Jonah" (Matthew 12:41). While Jonah preached judgment, Jesus offers eternal redemption. How can you model the "Greater Jonah" this week by running *toward* the difficult people in your life with grace, rather than running away like the first Jonah?

Question 8: Is there an area of "unfinished obedience" where God is calling you a "second time"? What specific step do you need to take this week to "Arise and go" into that mission?

NEXT STEPS

Take time this week to reflect on where God might be speaking to you "the second time." Is there an area of disobedience or a mission you have abandoned? Ask God for the grace to "Arise and go". Also, examine your own life for genuine repentance, not just words, but a visible change in direction. Finally, pray for those in your "Nineveh" (workplace, neighborhood), trusting that no one is too far gone for God to reach.