

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 7, 2009

Passage: Jonah 1

Memory Passage: Romans 3:20

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 1:1-3.** Who is Jonah (2Kings 14:23-28)? What period did he live during? When was this? Does the text say anything about the author of this passage or when it was actually written?
- (b) What was it that Jonah was sent to do? Where is Nineveh in relation to Tarshish? Why would God send Jonah to Nineveh just to declare judgment? Why would Jonah not go to Nineveh?
- (c) How are Jonah's movements described? What is significant about the fact that Nineveh's evil "came up"? Where does this place God and Jonah?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 1:1-3. Who is Jonah (2Kings 14:23-28)? What is Jonah's mission from God? What is interesting about the way the words "up" and "down" are used in this passage? Is Jonah actually getting away from God by going down? How are we sometimes like Jonah? Can you think of a time when you went "down" when God called you to rise "up"? Pray for the heart and desire to follow after the Lord no matter the cost.

DAY 2 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 1:4-6.** How are the forces of nature depicted in this passage? Who is in control of the storm? What are some other passages that talk about God's control over the earth (Psalm 65; Job 38; Nahum 1)? How is God's power described in other passages?
- (b) Who were the sailors calling out to? How concerned were they? What does this say about their trust in their gods? How does Isaiah talk about idols in Isaiah 44:9-20?
- (c) Where was Jonah? What was he doing? How could he be asleep? What did he know about the storm? Does the captain have any security that the storm will subside?
- (d) *Think about it:* What does the world's idols have to offer? What are they like compared with the Lord? How does Jonah's sleeping signify what he knows about the Lord? Despair and hopelessness often come when we have placed something as an idol before God. Are there any idols in your life that, when troubles come, you turn to besides God and they offer little hope?
- (e) *Family:* Read Jonah 1:4-6. How are God's actions described in this passage? What does this say about His power? How about the sailor's belief in gods? Are they able to stop the storm? How does Isaiah 44:9-20 describe idols? Idols don't have to be statues, they can be ideas, desires or beliefs. What idols does our country hold? What are idols that sometimes you might hold? Pray that the Lord would help you to destroy the idols that are in your life.

DAY 3 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 1:7-10.** What does it mean to cast lots? Why would you do it? How is it used in these other passages (Num. 26:55; Josh 18:10; Proverbs 16:33, 18:18; 1Sam 10:20-21; Matt 27:35; Acts 1:23-26)? Is the use of casting lots good or bad? What are ways in which we "cast lots" today?
- (b) When the lot falls to Jonah, how does he answer? What is interesting about Jonah's self-identification? How do the men respond to the reputation of the Lord?
- (c) *Think about it:* Do you think that you can outrun God? Do you think you can hide from God? What does this passage communicate about that? What about God is being conveyed to the sailors who are hearing what Jonah says? What does our obedience and disobedience to God communicate to others?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 1:7-10. What does it mean to cast lots? Is casting lots good or bad? What might make it a bad thing (Proverbs 16:33)? How did Jonah talk about himself? Why is the fear of the Lord important? What does it say about what you believe? Pray that you would fear God rightly.

DAY 4 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 1:11-13.** What is the response of the sailors? Why does Jonah think such drastic measures must be taken to calm the seas?
- (b) Why don't they follow Jonah's orders? What are they trying to do? Can we ever right a wrong against God (Romans 3:19-20)?

(c) *Think about it:* When we are dealing with our own sin, drastic measures are often necessary to get rid of it. Jonah knows that they can have no part of the sin and go unpunished. How does what Jonah asks them to do give us a model for ridding sin in our own lives?

(d) *Family:* Read Jonah 1:11-13. What does Jonah know about the wages of sin (Romans 6:23)? What do the sailors think they can do? How does what Paul says in Romans 3:19-20 contradict this? What is necessary for reconciliation to God (Romans 5:6-9)? Do you realize your own need for the blood of Christ? Thank God for sending Jesus to take away your sins and bring you into new relationship with God.

DAY 5 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Jonah 1:14-17.** How have the attitudes of the sailors changed from when we found them at the beginning? Who are they crying out to now? Would they have recognized the Lord as the bringer of the storm without Jonah telling them?

(b) Why did they finally throw Jonah overboard? What did they do after they threw him overboard? What does this show about what had happened to their beliefs in other gods?

(c) *Think about it:* How did the sailors show that they truly did fear the Lord? When did they offer sacrifices? Out of bad circumstances God brought about salvation for all. Does it always seem like God is in control during rough times? How does this passage encourage you?

(d) *Family:* Read Jonah 1:14-17. How do the men respond when they realize they are going to have to throw Jonah overboard? Does God grant them mercy? How do they respond to God's mercy? How does Romans 12:1-3 talk about the way we are to present ourselves to God now that we have found mercy? Pray that the Lord would continue to show you mercy everyday.

DAY 6 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

(e) *Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* Read Jonah 1. How far down is Jonah at the end of the chapter? Where is God still? What have you learned about God's grace during the midst of discipline? What have you learned about his mercy and forgiveness?

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The Unwilling Messenger

"But Jonah had gone down..."