

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 8/11/2019

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Jonah 1:1-16 (NIV)*

¹ The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”
³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.
⁴ Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.
But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”
⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”
⁹ He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”
¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)
¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”
¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”
¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- Recall a time when you did not want to do something God wanted you to do. Describe the reasons ... and the results. Did you learn anything from that experience?
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)

v.1-16

- O: **v.1-2**, What seems reasonable and surprising about God’s command?
- O: **v.3**, What seems reasonable and surprising about Jonah’s response?
- O: Look together at **Jonah 4:2** to find the reason Jonah gives for running away from God. How would you explain this reason in your own words (don’t spend too much time here, just look at it for context. We will discuss this further in ch.4 discussion)?
 - Follow-up:** In what ways can you relate to Jonah’s disobedience?
 - Follow-up:** What is it that usually keeps you from doing something that God wants you to do? (**DO**)
- I: **v.3**, Jonah found ready passage to Spain. How can we know when an opportunity open to us is from God or not (or as Keith talked about on Sunday, how the theology of “open doors” can be dangerous)?
 - Follow-up:** You can always find a boat sailing in the wrong direction. In your spiritual life, which direction are you running: towards God, away from God, with God, or behind God? (**KNOW**)
 - Follow-up:** What does our running from God reveal about our concept of God? (**KNOW**)
- O: Why did God pursue Jonah and by what means might God pursue us? What does this mean about God? (**KNOW**)
- I: **v.4**, What does this storm tell you about God? (**KNOW**).
 - How does God’s use the storm change the way you think about Him and His mercy toward others (**v.15-16**)?
 - Discuss the sailors’ response to the storm.
 - How did Jonah respond to the storm? What made the difference in Jonah’s reaction this time (**v.9-12**) compared to **v.3**?
- I: **v.9-12**, What does Jonah’s confession reveal about his heart?
 - Follow-up:** What does it take for you to acknowledge your disobedience? (**BE**)
- A: Do you see something of yourself in Jonah? What do you think God is saying about that? How should you respond?
- A: What has God asked you to do that you haven’t done? (Is there any area of disobedience in your life?) (**BE & DO**)
 - How **WILL** you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?

Recommended Follow-up:

- Pray:** Pray as a group for soft moldable hearts. Maybe break-up into genders and have a time of confession and prayer.
- Respond:** Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s companion devotional guide.
- Read:** Next week’s sermon (8/18/19) will focus on Jonah ch.2. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, as well as journey through this week’s companion devotional guide.

An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides*:

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on Colossians 1:9-10, see below)

Know – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

Be – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

Do – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)”* To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week**.

Colossians 1:9-10, NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...

* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon the following resources: Thomas, Mack. *The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: Old Testament*; Smelley, Hutson. *Chasing Jonah: A Mission 119 Guide to Jonah*; Baker Books. *A Walk Thru the Book of Jonah (Walk Thru the Bible Discussion Guides)*; Arthur, Kay. *Discovering the God of Second Chances (The New Inductive Study Series)*; Burkholder, Kyle. *Jonah: A 30-day Devotional on Running, Rescue, and the Incredible Depth of God’s Love*