

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 8/18/2019

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Jonah 1:17 & Ch.2 (NIV)*

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Ch.2:1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

3 You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

4 I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

5 The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit.

7 "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.

9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

10 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

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

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- Describe a time when you had a near death experience and the thoughts that went through your mind.

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?)

1:17 – Ch.2

O: From what you see in Jonah's prayer in this chapter, what are the most important things he understands about God's personality and character? (**KNOW**)

I: Some commentators believe Jonah's prayer was one of true repentance, others do not. What do you think & why? (**BE**)

Note: Another way to ask this question: In view of Jonah's conduct in chapter 1, what should be included in his prayer in chapter 2 that seems to be missing? (*hint: confession and repentance...*)

I: What do you think is the true cause for the change that has come upon Jonah since the events of chapter 1?

I: Jonah says he will sacrifice to God a song of thanksgiving (v.9). What all does Jonah have to be thankful for?

A: Where have you felt like Jonah – far from God, enmeshed in a situation beyond your control? How then was your life brought "up from the pit?" (v.6)"

A: It seems like Jonah only prays as a last resort (considering the events of ch.1). Why is prayer often our last resort?

Follow-up: On a scale of 1-10, rate your prayer life. What would make your prayer life more meaningful?

Follow-up: What will you do this week to intentionally connect more with God? (**DO**)

*** Seriously, with this week's passage from Jonah ch.2 capturing Jonah's prayer, make prayer a priority this week.

-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 really PRAY. Consider using this chapter as a guide, read a verse, acknowledge it's God's word speaking, and then respond by praying.
- **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 (8/24/19) will focus on Jonah ch.3. 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: *“⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ 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*