

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 8/25/2019

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Jonah Ch.3 (NIV)*

¹Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

⁶When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

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

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What is the best “second chance” story you’ve ever heard, outside of the Bible?
- Another potential options: “Have you ever seen a hardhearted person suddenly soften and grieve over sin? What prompted the change, and what did it look like?”

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.1-10

O: What evidence do you see here that God is the “God of second chances.”?

Follow-up: Considering how uncomplicated the message was (v.4), why do you think God insisted on sending this particular prophet to preach it? What does this tell us about God's willingness to give us second chances in the aftermath of our rebellion?

Follow-up: What does this chapter reveal to us about God's character? (**KNOW**)

O: In response to God's word, what does Jonah do? The Ninevites? Their king?

I: How would you describe the word “repentance” to a non-Christian?

Follow-up: Why do you think the Ninevites were so quick to repent and believe God? (**BE**)

Follow-up: Is there anything that God has shown you that you need to do, but you have not yet done?

I: Describe the Ninevites repentance (inward and outward): Do you think repentance is always accompanied by outward evidence? Why or why not? (you could also discuss Jonah's repentance from ch.1 to ch.3)

A: Have you ever fasted and prayed for the salvation of another person or people group? Did you see any results?

A: The Ninevites as a people (community) repented. Think of the church in America today (both Riverside individually, as well as the “American Church” as a whole; what are the things we need to repent of? What would a change of heart and direction look like?

A: In light of today's passage, is there anything specific you think God might be saying to you/us?

Ex. Places to go minister, people to pray for, things to personally repent of, worship of God in deeper ways, etc.

-What is God saying? & How are you/we to respond? (**DO**)

-What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?

Final thought: What will you do to obey God's call this week to both repent as well as take His message of love and grace (and judgement) to the world? Who will you begin praying for? Ask God to reveal to you the message you are to share (be sure it includes His grace and mercy). Deal with any personal doubts or unbelief that would prevent you from doing your part or trusting God to do His part.

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** It might be good to break-up into gender groups and give space for personal repentance. Yes share prayer requests, but also consider having a time of confession and prayer. Remember, leaders set the tone, so leaders usually “go first.”
- **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 (9/1/19) will focus on Jonah ch.4. 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*