

Home Group Leader's Notes on Jonah 1  
Leaders Notes March 24, 2019

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** Our focus in this study is on Jonah's response to God's compassion call to be bring God's message of warning to an enemy of the Hebrew people.

SHARE

What are your early memories of the story of Jonah?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** I did not grow up in a bible teaching family or in church. Therefore, I had no impressions until later when I saw a picture of a fish swallowing a man. That's all. As we see below, that is a flannel-graph episode but not the main story.

LEARN

To whom was Jonah called to preach and why? (2) (Note: To learn more about Nineveh, go to <https://www.bible-history.com/biblestudy/nineveh.html>.)

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** Jonah was called to preach to the people in Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. The Assyrians have the reputation of being the cruelest conquerors of all time. They not only conquered Northern Israel, they also and tortured and murdered thousands of Hebrews. Jonah had reason to hate them. (Go to the website above.)

What was Jonah's response? (3) Why? (See 4:1-2 and 2 Kings 18:9-11)

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** As Todd Arnett explained in the Sunday message, Jonah went in the opposite direction of Nineveh. He knew that God was compassionate and forgiving and wanted none of that for the Assyrians.

List the ways that God actively pursued Jonah. (4-15)

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** Throughout this little book, God, with patience and compassion, is being the opposite of Jonah. He is in pursuit of him to give him second chances. In chapter one:

- He sends a storm to stop him from going in the opposite directions
- He speaks to the sailors through the storm.
- The captain goes below (prompted by God?) to awaken Jonah. He's not a sailor; why wake him?
- God made sure that the "lot fell on Jonah."
- God calmed the sea to reveal again that He is the one who made the sea.

In what ways were the captain and sailors compassionate toward Jonah? How were they affected when learning of "the LORD?"

**NOTES TO LEADERS:**

- He speaks to the sailors through the storm.
- Instead of just killing him, the sailors quiz him with five questions
- When Jonah reveals his beliefs and that he was running, they ask him a tough question: "What have you done?"
- Instead of throwing him in, they wait in compassion (see v.13)
- They pray with humility to Yahweh (14)
- This resulted in the sailors "fearing" Yahweh and offering a sacrifice AND VOWS to Him.

What do we learn about the character of God in Exodus 34:5-7? How was Jonah acting the opposite?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** Exodus 34 is God describing God; He is revealing who He is to Moses. Notice how emphatically God expresses His love for humankind: *“the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”*

Jonah hated the Assyrians and was ignoring the compassion that God had shown him. Jonah was hoping for the Assyrians to go to hell.

What is our spiritual status when God reaches out to us? (Romans 5:8-10; Ephesians 2:1-6)

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** Romans 5:6-10 makes it clear that our status was:

- Powerless
- Ungodly
- Unrighteous
- Sinners
- Under God’s wrath
- Enemies of God
- Unreconciled
- Unsaved

Ephesians 2:1-6 add that our status was:

- Dead in transgressions and sins
- Following the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Satan, the devil)
- Disobedient
- Gratifying the craving of our sinful nature
- Objects of wrath
- Not suitable nor on track for heaven

## DISCUSS

If you are a follower of Jesus, what efforts did God do to reach you? How is He still compassionate?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** For each of us, we can look back and see how God was reaching out to us. Today, he is still showing us compassion through His Holy Spirit, through God’s people (sometimes), through His provision, etc.

What fuels your desire to be a part of God’s rescue of the world?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** The top five things that fuel my desire: The grace that God has shown me, the desire to glorify (make known, honor, magnify) Jesus, my desire to love Jesus by fulfilling the call that Jesus has given me/us as His followers, compassion for people who are so lost without Jesus, and the joy of seeing people come to Jesus (seeing God working).

The sailor’s question is challenging, “What have you done?” (10) Jonah was indifferent and uncompassionate. Are we sometimes like this? What does it look like to keep quiet about the Good News?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** This is a heavy question. Can I ask you, Shepherds, an honest question? Is this too heavy? It is not meant to produce guilt. I don’t even know if we can be honest and transparent about this question.

Using the sailor’s question was meant to challenge us. If God is asking us to “go” and we do not, wouldn’t this question then be asked of us? (I.e. “What have you done?”)

I know that I can be very indifferent and uncompassionate. At times, I am so concerned with my agenda and schedule that I can totally ignore the people on my block. It is difficult for me to sacrifice comfort, fun, money, etc. so that people in our world can know Him.

If I go back to the question above (“What fuels your desire”), what is missing that my desire doesn’t become my way of life?

You are an expression of God’s love to His family. I feel so privileged to team up with you.  
Steve