

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

JONAH - OBSTINATE OBEDIENCE

April 2017

LESSON 5 – JONAH'S MOTIVES – AND GOD'S

INTRODUCTION

How do you usually express anger?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Jonah 4

1. How many times did Jonah say, “I”, “me” or “my” in verses 2-3? How does Jonah express his “self justifying poison”? How had Jonah changed (or not) from his “fish” experience? Vs 2:9
2. The flip side of self-justification is condemnation of others. If Jonah is right, who does he accuse of being wrong? Vs 2
3. Why did he ask God to take his life? What’s wrong with that? Vv 3; 8; 9
4. Since Jonah’s mission appeared over, why didn’t God oblige him and take his life?
5. What other time has God shown mercy to a nation beyond Israel?
6. What three things does God provide Jonah?
Note: Jonah’s booth (v. 5), that is, shelter of leaves and branches, must have been inadequate. God provided additional shade for the prophet in a gourd (v. 6), thought to be a castor-oil plant which has large leaves.¹
7. What do the vine, worm and hot sun reveal about God? About Jonah?
8. How does God’s view of Nineveh give us hope today?
9. How does the way God thinks upset us, even when we know to what to expect?
 - a. **John 14:6** Do we really want Jesus to be the only way?
 - b. **Matt 10:34** Why didn’t Jesus bring peace?
 - c. **1 Pet 4:12, Rom 8:17** Must we really suffer?
10. When do our feelings dominate our thinking? What rights do we have to be angry with God?
11. How does God react to our anger? What do we need to fear when we return to God?

APPLICATION

- If the Lord asks us to own our moods and answer for them, what does that mean in practice?
- How do you answer God’s question in verse 11? Are “things” more important than souls? **Matt 6: 21;16:26**

God maintained a moral relationship with those who were not His own. The Ninevites were responsible for their actions, and God took the responsibility to judge them when they sinned. It is also clear from the response of the Ninevites that they were aware of what constituted wickedness. While God did not hold them responsible for Israel’s Law, they were being judged on the basis of the light they did possess (Rom. 2:12–16). (3) It is also clear that God gave the people of Nineveh sufficient information about Himself and His intentions for them to respond to Him. We must never think that even pagan peoples have no light.²

His mood was black and his complaint was out of order but at least Jonah pours out his burden before the Lord. It was certainly better than running away. It is very easy to avoid prayer with the excuse that we need to wait until we feel more in the mood for it. But sometimes it is the very mood itself that needs to be brought before the Lord. There are many instances in Scripture where people are rebuked for their approach to the Lord, but it is usually because of self-righteousness and hypocrisy. We may cringe at the intemperateness of Jonah’s outburst, but God himself seems perfectly at ease with it.³

¹ Paschall, F. H., & Hobbs, H. H. (1972). *The teacher’s Bible commentary: A concise, thorough interpretation of the entire Bible designed especially for Sunday School teachers* (557). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

² Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher’s commentary* (473–474). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

³ Mackrell, P. (2007). *Opening up Jonah* (87). Leominster: Day One Publications.