



Who doesn't love a good do-over? Whether it's yelling "Mulligan!" after a bad golf shot, re-recording that awkward voicemail you just left, or realizing you hit "Reply All" when you really, really shouldn't have — we've all needed a second chance. Thankfully, our God is the ultimate giver of divine do-overs.

Jonah's story takes a dramatic and slightly disgusting turn in this passage. After running from God, surviving a storm, and spending three long days inside what must've been the world's smelliest Airbnb, Jonah finally turns his heart back to the Lord. Then, in one of the most unforgettable moments in Scripture, "the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." (2:10) not exactly a graceful exit, but definitely a gracious one. And right after that comes one of the most hope-filled verses in the entire Bible:

"Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time." (3:1)

Those words drip with mercy. God didn't scold Jonah, cancel Jonah, or go find "Prophet 2.0." He gave Jonah a do-over. The mission hadn't changed, but Jonah had. The same God who disciplines us in the storm also delivers us to shore and then lovingly says, "Let's try that again."

When Jonah disobeyed, God pursued him. When Jonah prayed, God listened. And when Jonah finally obeyed, God recommissioned him. Jonah's story reminds us that God's grace runs deeper than our stubbornness, our fear, or our worst mistakes. He is the God of second chances and, for most of us, the God of third, fourth, and fifth chances too.

Every believer can relate to Jonah's need for a do-over. We've all had moments when we said, "Lord, can I get another shot at that?" Another conversation, another opportunity, another act of obedience. Yet God doesn't give up on His people. He rescues, restores, and reassigns. His grace doesn't just get us out of the mess, it gets us back on mission.

Before diving into study, take a moment to reflect on this: God's grace not only saves you from your past, it sends you into your purpose. The same God who pulled Jonah out of the deep is ready to pull you up, brush you off, and say, "Let's do this again but this time let's do it together."

## ICEBREAKER

**We've all needed a 'do-over' at some point in relationships, decisions, or even obedience to God. If you could hit the 'do-over' button on one moment in life, big or small, what would it be, and why?**

## READ IT

Jonah 2:10-3:3

## GET IT

1. According to Jonah 2:10, what did the Lord command the fish to do, and what was the result?
2. In Jonah 3:1, what happened to Jonah after he was released from the fish?
3. What specific instructions did God give Jonah in verse 2?
4. How did Jonah respond to God's command in verse 3, and where did he go?

## LIVE IT

### JONAH'S SECOND CHANCE

The opening line of chapter 3 is freighted with surprising grace. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. (Jonah 3:1) Pause for a moment and let the words sink in: the second time. What grace and forgiveness are bound up in those three wonderful words. We would not reenlist someone like Jonah. We would go back to the drawing board. We would begin reviewing resumes. We would start over — with someone else. Peter had his chance in the courtyard. John Mark had his shot on the mission field with Paul. Thomas missed his chance by skipping out on the upper room. But they all were given second chances!

James Montgomery Boice wrote in his commentary on Jonah: If we were to say, “Go home now, Jonah. I’m glad you repented of your disobedience, but you are no longer useful to me,” we would be just and reasonable in doing so. Does God stoop to use those who have rejected His calling, turned a deaf ear to His word, and pursued a course of determined disobedience? Yes, He is like that. Yes, He does use such messengers. If He did not, none of us could serve Him.

This is not defending disobedience. This is defending the grace of God—not just in Jonah’s life but in your life and mine as well. He is the God of second chances and beyond. Honest reflection compels the believer to speak of Him as the God of the 999th chance; how many times have we been forgiven and had yet another opportunity given to us to do something for Christ? Imagine the thrill of Jonah the prophet as he heard the word of the Lord coming to him again, the second time. George Morrison, the well-known Scottish pastor and writer from several generations ago, once wrote, “The victorious Christian life is really nothing more than a series of new beginnings.”<sup>1</sup>

5. **When you read the phrase “the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time,” what emotions or thoughts come to mind? Why do you think we often give up on people or even on ourselves after failure, while God chooses to give second chances?**

6. **If you were God, would you have given Jonah another chance? Why or why not?**

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<sup>1</sup> Jonah: Expository Commentary on the Old Testament (Wisdom Commentary Series) Stephen Davey

“God is the God of the second chance and the hundredth, and the thousandth. He always stands ready to forgive us and welcome us home when we truly repent. We don’t just need one second chance; we need repeated ones, the daily beauty of confession and forgiveness that keeps drawing us back to His grace.”<sup>2</sup>

- 7. How does knowing that God still uses imperfect, disobedient people like Jonah, Peter, and John Mark encourage you in your own faith and service?**

When God brings discipline or distress into our lives, it’s not to pay us back but to bring us back. Still, if we’re honest, most of us don’t handle that very well. We push back, justify our choices, or run the other direction instead of leaning in to what God might be teaching us. Jonah did the same thing, and it took the belly of a fish for him to finally stop running and start listening. But even there, God’s mercy met him. His correction isn’t meant to crush us, it’s meant to change us. It softens our hearts, shapes our will, and pulls us back in step with His purposes. The question isn’t whether God will discipline us, but whether we’ll let His discipline deepen our devotion.

- 8. When God’s discipline surfaces in your life, do you tend to resist it, run from it, or receive it and what does that reveal about your trust in His goodness?**

- 9. How might your current struggles look different if you viewed them not as punishment, but as God’s invitation to return, realign, and grow closer to Him—like Jonah did in the belly of the fish?**

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<sup>2</sup><https://billygraham.org/answers/does-god-give-us-second-chances>

10. What steps can you take to acknowledge your mistakes, seek God's mercy, and move forward in obedience. What might it look like this week to stop running, start listening, and take the next step God is calling you to?

### **HE AROSE AND WENT TO ~~TARSHISH~~ NINEVAH!!**

In response to God's commission, Jonah arose. He had done this before (cf. Jonah 1:3), though only to flee in defiant disobedience. This time, however, the prophet moved in the right direction he went to Nineveh. Previously, the prophet boarded a westbound ship for Tarshish in his effort to run from God's will. This time, he went where the Lord commanded him to go, traveling east toward Nineveh. The difficult journey of nearly five hundred miles, assuming the fish ejected Jonah somewhere in Israel, would have taken at least a month to complete.

The fact that Jonah went to Nineveh demonstrated the sincerity of his repentance and the reality of God's grace at work in his life. Repentance restores usefulness, as God forgives and enables His servants. That Jonah obeyed God fully is indicated in the phrase according to the word of Yahweh, which describes full conformity to what God demands (cf. 1 Kgs 17:5, 16; 2 Kgs 10:17). In other words, Jonah journeyed to Nineveh not primarily because he was afraid of the consequences of disobedience but out of genuine and heartfelt submission to the Lord. In acting according to the word of Yahweh, the prophet moved beyond honoring God's command to honoring Yahweh Himself. True obedience not only does what God commands, but, more than that, it seeks to glorify the One who issues such commands (cf. Deut 6:4–6; Isa 58:1–19; Zech 7:5; 1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17; Heb 13:15). While Jonah defied the presence of God at the outset (cf. Jonah 1:3), in response to the second commission, he honored the Lord from the heart, as demonstrated by his actions.<sup>3</sup>

11. What's the difference between being remorseful over sin and being repentant? Why do you think we often settle for feeling sorry instead of truly changing direction?

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<sup>3</sup> Jonah & Nahum: Grace in the Midst of Judgment: (A Verse-by-Verse Expository, Evangelical, Exegetical Bible Commentary on the Old Testament Minor Prophets ... Exegetical Bible Commentary on the OT) John F. MacArthur

- 12. Jonah's obedience "according to the word of the Lord" showed that his repentance was more than words it was action. What are some ways real repentance shows up in our choices and behavior?**

Genuine repentance is not a convenient escape hatch after a weekend or a life of folly. It means admitting specific wrong, recognizing your offensiveness to God, changing course, turning to Christ, and wishing with all your heart you had never made the mistake you now despise.<sup>4</sup>

- 13. Jonah's story shows that God's grace doesn't end when we fail, it begins again when we turn back. Where in your life might God be inviting you to begin again, and what would it look like to take that first obedient step?**

- 14. After receiving mercy, Jonah obeyed immediately. How can you make sure God's second chances in your life don't end with gratitude alone, but lead to real action and renewed obedience this week?**

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<sup>4</sup> The Hole in Our Holiness by Kevin DeYoung