

# JONAH

AND THE GOD OF  
SECOND CHANCES

## Do-Over

Have you ever wished for an *extra life*? Maybe in a video game, you mess up and wish you could hit “restart.” (Thankfully you can!) Or maybe you’ve said something you wish you could take back, sent a text you regret, or completely bombed a test and thought, “*Can I get a do-over?*”

We all know that feeling. The good news? God is the ultimate giver of second chances, the One who lets us hit “restart” in real life. Jonah’s story shows us just how far God’s grace goes when we need another shot.

## Icebreaker

If you could hit the do-over button on one moment in life, big or small, what would it be and why?

## Daily Devotions

Day 1 : Read It

**Read 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?

## Day 2 — Today's Theme: In the Belly of Grace

### Read Jonah 2:10.

Have you ever been cave diving, or at least gone into a cave? They can be really cool, but they can also be absolutely terrifying. I always think, "What if I get stuck? What if this caves in?" Imagine being in a dark cave all alone, the path disappearing, and no one around to help. You can't see, you're scared, and every step feels risky, and the situation is so claustrophobic. It would be terrifying to be completely trapped and unsure if anyone is coming for you. I know it's a dramatic comparison, but Jonah probably felt that way... times a thousand... in the belly of the fish.

Jonah spent three long days inside the belly of a huge fish, thinking about the consequences of his choices. Jonah had completely failed. He messed up badly, and by all accounts, God could have just left him there. But that's not how God works.

God *heard* Jonah. God *saw* Jonah's heart. And God was *gracious* to him.

Jonah's story takes a dramatic, and slightly gross, turn here. After running from God, surviving a storm, and spending three days inside what had to be the world's smelliest Airbnb, Jonah finally turns his heart back to the Lord. Then comes one of the most unforgettable verses in the Bible: "*The Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land*" (Jonah 2:10).

The fish didn't just decide it was time to spit Jonah out—**the Lord commanded it**. God was in control the whole time. He saw Jonah in his distress, and He showed mercy when Jonah least deserved it.

5. **Have you ever felt stuck or scared like being alone in a dark cave, and how did knowing God is with you change the way you responded?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. **The story mentions Jonah inside the fish for three days. How do you think Jonah felt during that time, and what can you learn from being stuck in hard situations?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. **God commanded the fish to release Jonah. What does this tell us about God's control over our lives, even when things seem out of control?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. **Jonah failed badly, yet God gave him another chance. Why is it important to remember that God's grace often comes even when we mess up??**

## Day 3 — Today's Theme: Second Chance

### Read Jonah 3:1.

One of my favorite things in school was when a teacher let me retake a test. It didn't matter how unprepared I was, if I failed, no big deal. I could just try again until I got it right. That was great for school, but not so much for life. When we treat life like one big "retake," we start to grow careless. Our sins and bad choices have real consequences that ripple beyond us.

Jonah learned that the hard way. In his rebellion, he ran from God and put others in danger. But even in Jonah's failure, God stayed in control and showed grace.

Then we read one of the most hope-filled verses in the story: *"Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time"* (Jonah 3:1).

God didn't cancel Jonah or replace him. He gave him a divine "retake." The same God who disciplines us in the storm also delivers us to shore and says, "Let's try that again."

When Jonah disobeyed, God pursued him. When Jonah prayed, God listened. And when Jonah finally obeyed, God sent him out again. His story reminds us that God's grace runs deeper than our fear, failure, or foolishness.

We've all had moments when we've whispered, "Lord, can I get another shot?" Another conversation. Another opportunity. Another act of obedience. And God doesn't give up on us. He rescues, restores, and reassigns. His grace doesn't just get us out of the mess; it gets us back on mission.

The same God who pulled Jonah out of the deep is ready to pull you up, dust you off, and say, "Let's do this again...together."

Just like Jonah, without God's grace we are lost and without hope.

**9. When you mess up or fail, what do you usually do: try to fix it, hide it, or move on? How do you think God wants us to respond instead?**

**10. Jonah got a "divine retake." What's an occasion when you wish you could have had a "do-over" with God, a friend, or a situation?**

**11. Why do you think God keeps giving people second chances, even when we don't deserve them?**

**12. God didn't give up on Jonah; He sent him back on mission. What might it look like for God to "send you back" after you've failed or made a mistake?**

## Day 4 — Today's Theme: From Discipline to Devotion

### Read Jonah 3:2–3.

I've shared this before, but growing up I would get spanked when I disobeyed. If you had asked me as a child, "Does this help?" I would have said, "Absolutely not, it just hurts." But looking back, and I mean this sincerely, every punishment I received growing up was needed and necessary to get me to where I am now. They were lessons, reminders, and a correcting hand, pushing me to remember and make better choices. They taught me the importance of obedience, and I truly grew from the discipline.

In the same way, we see Jonah growing from his discipline in the whale. Jonah obeyed at last and went to Nineveh, the complete opposite of his first attempt to run. The journey was long, difficult, and required real commitment. His obedience wasn't just about avoiding consequences; it came from a genuine heart turned toward God.

God's discipline isn't about punishment, it's about restoration. Jonah had to hit rock bottom, before he truly listened. Most of us resist correction; we justify, push back, or run. Jonah did the same. Yet even in the belly of the fish, God's mercy found him.

Jonah's story shows that God's grace doesn't end when we fail. It's always there and we experience it anew when we turn back. God rescues, restores, and reassigns. He doesn't just erase mistakes through His blood, but He gives them purpose.

**13. When God corrects you or tells you to change, do you resist, run, or listen?**

**14. How could your current problems or struggles be a chance to come back closer to God?**

**15. What's the difference between just feeling sorry and truly changing your actions?**

**16. When God gives you a second chance, how can you make sure you actually follow through and not just feel thankful?**

**17. Is there a situation in your life where God might be giving you a chance to start over? What would the first step look like this week?**

This lesson was written by Ethan Wentzlaff, based on the adult lesson by the VBC pastoral team.