

“Jonah: Not Gonna Work”

Growth Group Guide

October 26, 2025

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

What has been your perception of the book of Jonah (i.e., fact or fiction)? What are you looking forward to as we study this book?

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Read the prayer below and praise God that our fleshly living is a failure, so He gives us His Spirit and transforms us through and through.

“I’m so grateful, Lord, that the Christian life is not a rigorous self-improvement course ... it is not a call to prove myself or improve myself by overcoming my own short comings and failures, in my own way, by my own resources. Thank You that, instead You are at work in me and in my situation to break old patterns of thought and action, ... and to make me a joy to You in new ways. I praise You that “Jesus Christ is able to untangle all the snarls in my soul ... to transform even my fixed habit patterns, no matter how deeply they are etched in my subconscious. (Corrie ten Boom). ... Thank You, too, for the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom ... to keep me filled with Himself and to flood my heart with Your love.” (Ruth Meyers, 31 Days of Praise, Day15, Kindle, John 15:5, Phil 2:13, Is 11:2, Rm 5:5.)

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. **Read 2 Kings 14:25.** What do you learn about Jonah from this verse?
2. **Read Matthew 12:39-41.** Jesus makes correlations between Himself and Jonah. What are they and how might they impact our view of the book of Jonah as we study it?
3. **Read Jonah 1:1-3.** V1 shows us that the two main characters in this account are God and Jonah. Jonah has a relationship with God, which means he’s a picture not of a non-Christian but a Christian (a child of God). How should this understanding frame our approach to this book?
4. **Read Jonah 4:1-2.** Why did Jonah runaway? What was he wanting from God and why?
5. Notice that some of the things he wanted could be defined as good. Pursuing good things independent of God can lead us away from the best thing, living dependent on God. **Read Jonah 1:4-10.** What three ways did God communicate that Jonah needed to give up on his independent living? Which one(s) were unusual? What can we learn?
6. Nothing seems to get through to Jonah, and he seems to be in a depressive funk. How might things have been different for Jonah, up to this point, if he had lived out what he knew was true about God? How could this apply to us if/when we feel in a similar state?
7. **Read Jonah 1:11-17 NIV.** God has placed Jonah in an impossible circumstance. Do you think God is being mean, why or why not? What is God wanting most for Jonah?

8. The Biblical term for living the way Jonah was, relying on himself instead of God, is called the flesh. Paul gives some characteristics of the flesh in **Galatians 5:19-21**. Read these verses in the Message translation. What fleshly characteristics did Jonah exhibit?
9. Discovering through the light of God’s word that we have lived independent of God (fleshly), isn’t for the purpose of condemnation, but for the purpose of trading our fleshly resources for spiritual living. **Read Romans 8:5-6.** What does spiritual living produce?
10. If we do feel condemnation as children of God when we discuss fleshly living, what could be our response? **Read Romans 8:1.**
11. If God has been highlighting something for you in this study, run to Him and hand it over. He will provide you what you need in exchange. Close in prayer. (Note: If you need prayer and are comfortable asking, have a friend or someone from the group pray with you today.)

WALK *(Living out God’s purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: God will not let the habits we have of living independent of Him be successful.** Our fleshly living can be tough to look at, but God has designed us for total freedom from all fleshly living. He has designed us to have lives saturated with life and peace, with Life by the Spirit (spiritual living). What an amazing trade! To further process this study with God, pray over these questions with Him: 1) What impossible situations have possibly been placed in your life to expose your fleshly resources? Use Galatians 5:19-21 as a guide as you talk with God. 2) Review the spiritual resources God has for you instead. See Our Union With Christ: A Comprehensive Overview handout. 3) What would it look like to stop running, hand your fleshly resources over to God, and go a different direction in your walk?
- ✓ **Please reach out to someone for prayer if you need it.** Don’t wait! You are too important and too loved to go another day in bondage to your flesh. God has so much more for you - abundant life and peace!

WORLD *(Embracing God’s heart for others)*

God was moving this summer at Everyone Village in BIG ways! New neighbors were welcomed into safe shelter, several residents graduated into permanent housing, several regained employment, and many began their recovery from addiction. The Village also celebrated the grand opening of their Community Health Clinic, watched 10 new medical recuperation cottages become a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable in Eugene, and they took major strides towards piloting Oregon’s 1st MicroVillage Housing. The Village has become more than a place to stay—it has become a place to heal, build friendships, regain dignity, and dream again. Join in praying for the replacement of state funding that is being cut back by 30%. This reduction puts a real pressure on the programs and supports that make the Village such a transformative place. They aren’t discouraged but pray for new long-term funding partners who share a passion for housing, healing, and community. (*September 2025 Newsletter.)

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