

# JONAH

AND THE GOD OF  
SECOND CHANCES

## Relentless God, Repentant Hearts

### Icebreaker

If you had to speak up against something happening in your school or community right now, what would it be, and why?

### Daily Devotions

Day 1 : Read It

**Read Jonah 3:4–10.**

Get It

1. What message did Jonah proclaim to the people of Nineveh?
2. How did the people respond to Jonah's message?
3. What outward sign of repentance did the Ninevites display?
4. What inward signs of repentance did the Ninevites experience?
5. How did God respond when He saw their repentance?

## Day 2 — Today's Theme: Standing Up for Truth

### Read Jonah 3:4.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a social activist and Baptist minister who played a key role in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. King sought equality and human rights for African Americans, the economically disadvantaged, and all victims of injustice through peaceful protest. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and is remembered each year on Martin Luther King, Jr Day, a U.S. federal holiday since 1986.<sup>1</sup> King was a voice of truth speaking out against the wickedness of his day until a single bullet silenced his voice.

Unlike Martin Luther King, Jr, Jonah didn't lose his life. But like King, he spoke out against the wickedness of Nineveh, faithfully proclaiming the message of God's truth: "40 more days and Nineveh will be overturned." We have a world around us that is also sinful and wicked and lives as if everything is just fine. Just like Jonah, we need to point out to the culture around us that they are sinners, and a day of judgement is coming where they will have to pay the consequences for their sin unless they repent and believe in Jesus.

**6. Nineveh was a wicked city. In what ways is the culture around you participating in wickedness?**

**7. What message of truth are we to proclaim to those around us?**

**8. When you see injustice or sin in the world around you, are you more likely to speak out (like MLK, Jr. or Jonah) or remain silent? What holds you back? What can help motivate you to speak out against sin and wickedness?**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.history.com/articles/martin-luther-king-jr>

## Day 3 — Today's Theme: Belief

### Read Jonah 3:5.

A couple of weeks ago, I gave one of my neighbors a booklet titled “Jesus Changes Everything.” I told him that because I care about him, I want him to know for sure that he will be in heaven with Jesus when he leaves this earth. I saw him a couple of days ago, and he said that he finally had time to read it, and he said that he understands it. I emphasized the importance of placing his faith in Jesus is what saves him. At this point, I am not sure if he just intellectually understands the gospel message that Jesus died on the cross for his sins and rose from the dead or if he fully put his full trust in Jesus to save him. They say that 18 inches separates your brain from your heart. That means intellectually someone can understand the gospel, but their understanding doesn't travel to their heart where they put their full trust in Jesus to save them.

Jonah proclaimed that God said that He was going to overthrow Nineveh in 40 days because of its wickedness. The Ninevites believed God! This belief made it from their brain to their hearts; it brought about a change in their wicked actions. This is an important question that you need to ask yourself. Do you truly believe with all of your heart that Jesus died for YOU? Has your understanding made it from your head to your heart? James 2:19 (NIV) says, “*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*” This means that the demons have an intellectual belief in God, but that's all they have. (On a side note, Jesus didn't die to pay the price for fallen angels [demons]; He only died for humans.) You need to ask yourself this most important question: Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for YOUR SINS and rose from the dead—not just with your head, but also with all of your heart?

**9. What is the difference between believing with your head and believing in your heart?**

**10. Do you KNOW FOR SURE that you are going to heaven when you die? If yes, how do you know? If no, how can someone KNOW FOR SURE?**

## Day 4 — Today's Theme: Are You Caught or Convicted?

### Read Jonah 3: 5–8.

When I was in my early 20s, I lived with my parents. We had some elderly neighbors across the street who we always tried to keep an eye on to make sure that they were doing OK. I arrived home late one evening and I noticed a car pulled into their driveway, turned off the lights, and just sat there without anyone getting out of the car. As I looked closer, I could see that two people were sitting in the dark in the car. After waiting and watching the car for five minutes, my suspicion alarms went off that this was not right, so I called the police. They arrived with lights flashing. They pulled up behind the dark car and shined bright lights on the two people in the car and over a loudspeaker told them to get out of the car. I saw the two people hurriedly scramble out of the car. It was then that I realized who the two people were. It was a grandson making out with his girlfriend in his grandparents' driveway. They were busted! I don't know what happened after that, whether the police called their parents or if they woke up the grandparents. But I'm sure their grandson will think twice before choosing his grandparents' driveway to "hang out" in with his girlfriend.

**Sometimes when we sin, we are caught in the act.** Your parents, teacher or another authority figure, or even a friend can catch you and confront you. You can respond in a few different ways. You can not care, ignore what they say, and go on with your life. You can feel bad, but only because you were caught and had to face the embarrassment and shame of being caught. If you weren't caught, you would have no problem continuing in your sin. Or you can be convicted genuinely have a broken heart over your sin. You know it is wrong, not just because it hurts you and those around you, but most importantly because you sin against God who loves you. You realize it's your sin that put Jesus on the cross. Second Corinthians 7:10 (NIV) says, *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."*

The Ninevites were "caught" by Jonah in their sin, and we see that they were truly broken over their sin and showed godly sorrow.

**11. What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?**

**12. How can you tell that the Ninevites demonstrated godly sorrow instead of worldly sorrow?**

**13. Have you ever been caught in the act of doing something wrong? What were you doing? How did you feel and respond?**

## Day 5 — Today's Theme: The Character of God

### Read Jonah 3:6–10.

When we think about God, sometimes we focus on one characteristic of God. We talk only about God's love or God's Almighty Power. We have to look at and appreciate the whole character of God, not just our favorite attribute of God.

In Jonah 3 we see that God is holy and hates sin. He is a just God who has taken notice of the wicked sin of the Ninevites and is threatening to destroy all of Nineveh because of their sin. The king somehow knows that God is a loving and compassionate God and hopes that God will not bring upon the Ninevites the destruction that He has threatened. He appeals to the love and compassion of God, and he decrees that all the people and animals put on sackcloth as an outward sign of their inward repentant heart change over their sin. *“When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.”*

**14. What is your favorite character trait of God? Why is that your favorite?**

**15. Why is it important to understand all the characteristics of God?**

**16. Jonah 3:10 says that God relented. Numbers 23:19 (NLT) says “*God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?*” Did God change His mind? Is this a contradiction in Scripture?**

This lesson was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng, based on the adult lesson by the VBC pastoral team.