

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- **Giving Away My Faith**

"I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes."

- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

As we continue in our study of the book of Jonah, we come to a kind of "pause" in the action of the book. Jonah is now in the belly of a fish for a couple of days. Such a dramatic and dark place gave him the opportunity to think—to say the least. But it's no accident that God forced Jonah to stop his running and to be still for a while. Now that God has his attention, notice what takes place in Jonah's heart. Perhaps in your own life, God is desiring you to stop—to be still for a while and be with Him. As you look at this passage this week, I'd invite you to hear God's call to you—whether you're in a big fish or not!

In Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word that will deepen your relationship with Him.

Read Jonah 2. This chapter records Jonah's prayer while he was inside the fish's belly. He reflects back on his experiences after being thrown into the ocean.

Take a few moments to imagine yourself in Jonah's place after being thrown overboard. What kind of physical and emotional realities would be threatening to overtake you?

If you have ever had a large wave sweep over you in the ocean, driving you off your feet, you may have had a small taste of Jonah's experience. What phrases or words does Jonah use to describe his experience after being thrown overboard?

Jonah's situation was desperate. His life was ebbing away. Think of a time when you felt desperate, when the "waves" of life threatened to drag you down and you felt your life "ebbing" away. How did this experience affect your emotions, relationship with others, and relationship with God?

Jonah could not escape his desperate circumstances on his own. You may feel that you are in the middle of a storm, you may have just come out of one, or your life may be relatively calm.

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to make you sensitive to His voice, willing to be obedient, and trusting when storms come your way.

Tuesday

Think of a time when you have felt desperate. Where did you go to find relief in this area of desperation?

Read Jonah 2.

Underline all of the phrases or words in chapter 2 that show Jonah's actions in response to his desperate need. To whom does Jonah look for help in his desperation? Why?

Reread these verses 2:2, 4, 6-9. What do these verses tell us about the changes in Jonah's heart?

Jonah had heard God's call to go to Nineveh and disobediently ran in the opposite direction. God brought a storm to sternly yet lovingly punish Jonah's disobedience, drawing him back into obedient relationship. Instead of digging his heels in further and becoming increasingly bitter towards God, Jonah's heart is softened and he seeks God. Jonah had a choice. We may think he called out to God because there weren't other options, but he had the choice to deny God's involvement and trust in himself. We also have choices, will you trust in God obediently submitting to Him, or rely on your self?

What areas of life has God given you specific instruction in which you are being disobedient? Ask God to give you a humble heart that would turn back to Him and follow obediently.

In what areas of life, have you obediently followed God?

Close your time in prayer thanking God for giving you the courage to follow Him. Ask for increased humility and sensitivity to God's call in your life.

Wednesday

Think of a time when you experienced consequences for disobedience to God or an authority figure in your life. How did you respond to these consequences? How did it affect your relationship with God or the authority figure?

Read Jonah 2.

Reread verse 3. To whom does Jonah attribute the waves and currents that threatened to drown Him?

Jonah believed that God was all powerful and could have stopped the waves at any moment.

What were God's purposes in bringing the storm into Jonah's life?

Think of a "storm" you have experienced in your own life, either as a result of your own disobedience or life circumstances. What do you sense were God's purposes in bringing this "storm" into your life?

God rescues Jonah from his foolish disobedience by first sending a storm that will bring Jonah near death and second giving him a way out from the watery grave by sending a fish to rescue Jonah.

Close your time in prayer. Thank God for the storms he brings and how he draws you back to Himself in these desperate times. Thank God for giving you a way out when you are "drowning" in desperation.

Thursday

Begin your time in prayer, asking God to speak to you through His Word today.

Read Jonah 1-2. Jonah's prayer inside the fish demonstrated a dramatically changed perspective from chapter 1.

Reread verses 8-9. To what worthless idols was Jonah clinging?

Spend a few moments thinking on your life. What "worthless idols" are keeping you from following God wholeheartedly?

Jonah had been clinging to the idol of his life. He did not want to follow God's call to the city of Nineveh, a place known for its violence. He did not want the people of Nineveh to turn to God and he certainly didn't want to risk his life for them. His insistence on clinging to his idol caused him to forfeit the grace of God he would have experienced in obedience.

How are your idols keeping you from the grace that is available to you in God?

Jonah experienced God's grace in a strange place—in the middle of a storm, sent by God, which threatened his life. God graciously rescued Jonah, in the midst of his disobedience, causing Jonah to give up his idol. What commitment does Jonah make to God in verse 9?

What idol are you ready to release in order to cling to God and His grace in your life?

Close your time by praying verse 9.

Friday

Begin your time in prayer. Thank God for His grace in your life and ask Him for the strength to obediently follow.

Read Jonah 1-2.

In the first two chapters of Jonah, there have already been seven miracles that have taken place. The book of Jonah is a great reminder of the power of God. Note the miracles below:

1. (1:4) -

2. (1:7) -

3. (1:15) -

4. (1:17) -

5. (1:17) -

6. (2:9) -

7. (2:10) -

Note what specific power is demonstrated by God in the miracle under each one.

Think on each of these miracles for a few moments. Allow yourself to be awed by the power of God.

Close your time in prayer. Thank God for His demonstrations of power. Ask Him to transform your heart, just as He did Jonah's, in whatever way He desires.