

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

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word and a willingness to be obedient to His promptings.

Read Jonah 3-4. Reread 4:1-3.

What has greatly displeased Jonah?

How does Jonah describe God in these verses?

How had God demonstrated these characteristics of grace and compassion previously towards Jonah?

What does Jonah's response demonstrate about his understanding of God's character and the mission to which God had called him?

Jonah has missed out on the joy of being involved in God's work in Nineveh because of his own self-centered interests. Spend a few moments reflecting on your own life. Are there ways that you are missing out on God's work through you because of self-centeredness?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to soften your heart for His plans and purposes in your life.

Tuesday

Begin your time in prayer asking God to make you open and willing to God's ways of using you, not just your own plans.

Read Jonah 4. Reread verses 1-5.

How does God respond to Jonah?

How does Jonah respond to God's question?

Jonah has gone outside the city and built a shelter to wait and watch for what will happen next to Nineveh. Instead of the rejoicing that we might expect over thousands of people turning from evil, he is stubbornly pouting because God has not worked in the ways he had hoped.

Spend a few moments in silence asking God to search your own heart. Are there ways in which you have seen God move in and through your life with which you are not comfortable? How have you responded?

Are there areas of your life that you are angry or stubborn towards God's plan? Spend a few moments telling God about this and ask Him to help you move from stubbornness and anger to humble obedience.

Are there areas in which you have not been comfortable with God's plans, but have followed in obedience and trusted Him? Close your time, by thanking God for leading you and shaping you through these experiences.

Wednesday

Read Jonah 4:1-11. What miracles does God use to teach Jonah a lesson?

Praise God for His sovereignty over all creation.

Reread Jonah 4:1-8.

Verse 6 records the one moment when Jonah was happy over His circumstances. What has caused his happiness?

(The literal translation for this phrase is *Jonah rejoiced over the vine with a great rejoicing.*)

Who caused the vine to grow, the worm to eat the vine, and the scorching east wind?

It is important to note that the passage distinctly says that the Lord God provided the vine, worm, and scorching wind. The author of Jonah wanted to make it very clear that these were not happenstance, but God ordained events to teach Jonah.

*"Losing shade in this arid environment was one matter, experiencing the scorching wind was another. Many identify the wind as the "sirocco." When this wind is experienced in the Near East, temperatures rise dramatically and humidity drops quickly. It is a constant and extremely hot wind containing fine particles of dust. It contains hot air so full of positive ions that it affects the levels of serotonin and other brain neurotransmitters, causing exhaustion, depression, feelings of unreality, and occasionally bizarre behavior." *Taken from: The New American Commentary, Smith B.K. & Page, F.S.*

What is Jonah's response to God's lesson through the vine, worm, and wind?

Ask God to help you examine your own life. Are there lessons that God has been teaching you which you have misunderstood?

Spend your remaining time in silence. Begin by asking God to help you reframe your view of your circumstances to see how He is leading and teaching you.

Thursday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you deepened insight into his plans to use you in reaching those who don't yet know Him.

Read Jonah 4:1-11. Reread verses 9-11.

What is Jonah's emotional state in these verses? Why?

Jonah's focus is on his anger and resentment over God not providing an outcome in Nineveh in the way he had expected and now on his loss of comfort. He has lost focus of the grace which God has abundantly poured out on His life.

What does God's description about Nineveh demonstrate about God's heart for the Ninevites?

God is not concerned with the political ramifications of saving Nineveh or the ethnicity of the people. He loves and has mercy on all people.

Spend a few moments in prayer, asking God to move you from preoccupation to compassion for others. Who are the people in your life who don't yet know Christ?

Spend the remainder of your time praying for them.

Pray for: increased compassion towards them, opportunities to serve, a hunger for spiritual things.

Friday

Read Jonah chapters 1-4.

This book surprisingly does not provide us with a resolution to Jonah's spiritual journey. We don't know if he saw his shortcomings and surrendered to God's plan or if he stubbornly refused to listen to God.

"The book ends with a question from God that captures the intention of the book – the issue of grace and mercy. Just as Jonah's provision was the shade of the vine he did not deserve, the Ninevite's provision was a deliverance they did not deserve. God's wish for His creation is salvation, not destruction. He will work to see that salvation is accomplished if there is willingness on the creation's part. Can a person ever rightly resent the grace of God shown to another?"

*God will act in justice against sin, but His great love for every person in the world causes Him to wait patiently, to give graciously, to forgive mercifully, and to accept compassionately even the most unworthy people in the world. To experience the grace of God and not be willing to tell others of His compassion is a tragedy. Messengers of God can neither limit the grace of God nor control its distribution, but they can prevent God's grace from having an effect on their own lives." *Taken from: The New American Commentary, Smith B.K. & Page, F.S.*

Just as we have been extended grace and mercy, we must extend that message of grace and mercy to those in our lives who do not yet know Christ. Think through the following questions:

- How did God patiently wait for you to turn to Him? How are you waiting patiently on others who have not yet turned to Him?
- What has God graciously given you? What do you need to graciously give to others?
- From what has God mercifully forgiven you? From what do you need to mercifully forgive someone else?
- How has God compassionately accepted you? Whom do you need to extend compassionate acceptance to?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to deepen your compassion for those around you who do not yet know Him.