



JONAH Table Talks

WEEK 1 OF 4 · Table Talk Takeaway

3 Things You Need to Know About the Book of Jonah

Jonah is a small but mighty book in the Old Testament that wrestles with some of our deepest feelings, fears, and questions about following God. Before diving into this powerful Bible book, here are three things to know.

1. The big fish isn't a main character.

If you've heard of Jonah, you've heard about the big fish. But why does a big fish swallow Jonah? Well, we'll get there in the next weeks. While the big fish looms large in the story, it's not one of the main characters. Instead, this book is all about Jonah working hard to resist God's calling and God's consistent care for the people He loves.

2. Jonah isn't a hero.

Apologies to people who grew up reading kids' books about Jonah running from God, getting swallowed by a fish, then becoming a great hero of the faith. Unfortunately, the story isn't that simple.

As we'll see, Jonah is not a great role model. We first meet him in the book of 2 Kings, where he's associated with an evil king of Israel. It's not a great introduction—and then it gets worse. The Book of Jonah starts with him running from God, and ends with him angry with God. Jonah is deeply flawed and self-destructive. But even though he's definitely not a person we should try to copy, his story has a lot to teach us about the cost of running from God.

3. Everyone gets a second chance.

This book is full of people getting second chances. Of course they're often more like third, fourth, forty-fourth, and a-hundred-and-fortieth chances, but for simplicity, we'll call it a "second chance" every time God provides an opportunity for someone to start fresh.

As you read Jonah, you'll see constant examples of God's love of second chances. In fact, just about everyone in this story gets a second chance. So if you've ever messed up, made a choice you regret, or wished you could have a do-over, this book is for you.

While on Earth, Jesus told a famous story called the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which is often compared to Jonah's story. Why? Because it's all about God giving people second chances. Please consider reading the story of the prodigal son. Notice how both brothers in the story receive a second chance from their father—who represents God. And as we explore the Book of Jonah, see if you notice similarities between the characters.

LET'S TALK

No one is perfect. That's why we all need God's limitless grace. As we start the story of Jonah:

1. Think back to the past week, month, and year. What are some ways that you've seen God give you second chances? It could be in a relationship, at work, breaking a bad habit, or a timely answer to prayer.
2. Read **Jonah 1:3**. Why do you think Jonah chose to run from God?
3. What are some reasons you might run from God?
4. Pastor Dawie said, "If you want to run from God, the devil will always offer you a ride." What do you think about that? Has there been a time in your life when this has been true?
5. Where in your life are you rationalizing sin and running from God? What is God calling you to do about it?
6. What are some ways to stop rationalizing sin and running from God?
7. As you close in prayer, thank God for how you've seen His grace in action in **YOUR** life.

Talk about when and where you'll meet next week for Table Talk 2.

NOTES & PRAYER REQUESTS
