

Small Group Discussion Questions - Winter Semester // Week Seven

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.

Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) When you were in school, what was your favourite subject? What did you like about this subject? Who was one of your favourite teachers?
- b) When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up? Were you someone who changed their mind about this often, or did you have a clear idea throughout your life?

Passage and Discussion

Read Jonah 3:1-10

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) In verse 7, the king issued a decree of mourning for Nineveh, in response to Jonah's message of repentance. This decree included fasting - have you ever engaged in the spiritual discipline of fasting before? Why do you think it is important for us to practice fasting in our own lives?
- c) The king's decree also included a command to cover themselves in sackcloth. What do you think is a modern equivalent for covering ourselves in sackcloth? What are a few examples of ways that we mourn with our community in our culture today?
- d) The people of Nineveh were also commanded to call out to God. To ask the question that Cam asked on Sunday: when was the last time that you "called out" to God? What are a few examples of people in Scripture that called out to God when they were in mourning?
- e) Finally, the king decreed that Nineveh would "give up their evil ways and their violence". In addition to outward expressions of mourning, they were commanded to repent. Why does repentance require us to change our behaviour? Why is it not enough to simply mourn it?
- f) What are a few ways that we can invite God to show us areas where we need to repent in our own lives? How do we remain open to His conviction about sin in our lives?
- g) If you feel comfortable, tell us about a time in your life when God called you to repent. How did you find the strength to change your behaviour, in response to His Word and Spirit? What would you tell someone who is struggling with repentance in their own life?

- h) On Sunday, Cam reminded us that the people of Nineveh are proof that anyone can repent of their sin; no one is too broken to be restored. Have you ever struggled with believing that you could not change or repent from your sin? How did you overcome this lie?
- i) How do you think our culture would understand the idea of repentance? How do you think that people in our world today would respond to the idea that we are sinful?
- j) In verse 9, we are reminded that we cannot control God; that He does not answer to us. Why is this important for us to remember? What are a few lies that we fall into when it comes to our attitude towards God?
- k) In verse 10, we are told that God responded to Nineveh's repentance with mercy. Does this seem unfair to you? How do we reconcile the mercy of God with the justice of God? How does Christ's death on the cross create a bridge between these two attributes of God?
- l) On Sunday, Cam reminded us of the "order of operations" when it comes to our faith. Grace is a gift from God: we cannot earn it. How should this truth change the way that we live our lives? How does His grace and mercy lead to our repentance?
- m) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging?

Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)

- a) This week, spend a few minutes in worship each day. Listen to a few of your favourite worship songs, and begin your day by praising God for His mercy and grace towards us.
- b) This week, consider how you can share God's message of mercy and grace to the people around you in your everyday life. Who is God calling you to share your hope with?

Optional Ideas for Prayer Time

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.
- b) As a group, spend a few minutes praying that each person in your group would have the strength to ask God where they need to repent in their lives; what He is calling them to change in their lives based on His Word.