

## Five-Day Devotional · “Running the Wrong Way”

*A companion to Jonah 1:1–16. Five short readings, one per weekday. Keep your Bible nearby.*

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### Day 1 — The Call We’d Rather Not Hear

*Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah... “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it.”*

— **Jonah 1:1–2 (ESV)**

Nineveh was the capital of cruelty and Israel’s most violent enemy. God’s call to Jonah wasn’t “be nice to your neighbor”; it was “go to the people who want you dead and offer them My word.” Before we shake our heads at Jonah, we should ask honestly: is there a call of God in my life I’ve been treating as optional because of who it involves or what it costs? God’s commands are not suggestions to be weighed against our comfort. They are the voice of the King.

***Pray:** Lord, give me ears that don’t flinch at hard obedience. Show me where I’ve treated Your clear call as a suggestion. Amen.*

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### Day 2 — Which Way Is Down?

*But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa... and went down into it.*

— **Jonah 1:3 (ESV)**

Watch the word “down.” Down to Joppa, down into the ship, soon down into the sea, down to the roots of the mountains. Sin is always a descent it never lifts us higher, no matter how it advertises itself. Jonah is using the very energy of obedience (“arose”) to run the opposite way. Where are you spending real effort, even good effort, traveling away from God rather than toward Him?

***Pray:** Father, I confess the ways I’ve been going down while telling myself I’m fine. Turn me around before I sink further. Amen.*

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### Day 3 — The Sleeper and the Storm

*But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea... But Jonah had gone down... and was fast asleep.*

— **Jonah 1:4–5 (ESV)**

There is a sleep that is not rest but rather the numbness of a hardened conscience. While pagan sailors pray for their lives, the prophet snores below deck. The most dangerous place

isn't raging against God or weeping over sin; it's being asleep to it. And notice God's mercy: He sends a storm. Not to destroy Jonah, but to wake him. What if the storm you're weathering is not punishment, but a severe mercy refusing to let you drift quietly away?

***Pray:** Lord, wake me where I've grown numb. Help me to see Your storms as the mercy of a Father who loves me too much to let me sleep. Amen.*

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#### **Day 4 — Right Words, Running Heart**

*"I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."*

— **Jonah 1:9 (ESV)**

On paper, it's a perfect confession. Every word is true. And Jonah says it while sailing the opposite direction from God's command. To "fear the LORD" in Scripture is not merely to recite right doctrine but it is to revere and obey Him. It is possible to have flawless theology and a fugitive heart. The most dangerous distance is not Joppa to Tarshish; it's the eighteen inches between the head and the heart. Ask the Lord to close that gap in you today.

***Pray:** Father, keep me from a faith that is only information. Move what I know about You from my head into my hands and feet. Amen.*

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#### **Day 5 — The Greater Jonah**

*"Something greater than Jonah is here."*

— **Matthew 12:41 (ESV)**

The chapter ends with pagans worshiping the God their prophet fled. Mercy spilled over the side of the boat to the very people Jonah avoided. And that is only a hint of what was coming. There is another boat, another storm, another sleeper but Jesus did not run. He went down into the deep willingly, into death itself, to calm the storm our sin had stirred up and He rose on the third day. Whatever you've been rowing to save yourself, lay down the oars. Salvation belongs to the LORD.

***Pray:** Jesus, You are the greater Jonah who went down so I could be brought up. I stop rowing and rest in You. Make me eager to carry Your mercy to my own "Nineveh." Amen.*