

DEALING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

Jonah Chapter 4

We all have times of doubt and discouragement. Jonah was used greatly by God, but now found himself alone and discouraged.

Jonah's (bad) example, and God's corrective words can teach us the proper way to deal with discouragement.

I. LIFT UP A PRAYER – TAKE YOUR PROBLEMS TO THE LORD (JONAH 4:1-3)

1. He will help. Prayer is powerful.

- i. “What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer. O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer.”
- ii. *Philippians 4:6–7 (NLT)⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*
- iii. *Psalms 55:22 (NKJV)²² Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.*

iv. 1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)⁷ *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

2. Be honest with God: Complaining, Anger, Depression, real talk.

- i. (ELIJAH) 1 Kings 19:4 (ESV)⁴ *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."*
- ii. Psalm 142:1–2 (NKJV)¹ *I cry out to the Lord with my voice; With my voice to the Lord I make my supplication. ² I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.*
- iii. Matthew 23:27–28 (NKJV)²⁷ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

II. LOOK AT YOUR PROBLEMS – IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU TO BE ANGRY? (JONAH 4:4-9)

1. **Examine your heart. Sometimes fear, anger, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, prejudice, etc. can motivate our discouragement. (Verse 2)**

i. **Luke 15:21-32 The Prodigal son and his brother.**

ii. “Jonah was concerned about his reputation, not only before the Ninevites, but also before the Jews back home. His Jewish friends would want to see all of the Assyrians destroyed, not just the people of Nineveh. When Jonah’s friends found out that he had been the means of saving Nineveh from God’s wrath, they could have considered him a traitor to official Jewish foreign policy. Jonah was a narrow-minded patriot who saw Assyria only as a dangerous enemy to destroy, not as a company of repentant sinners to be brought to the Lord.” Warren Wiersbe

2. Don’t let discouragement turn to doubt. God is in control and God has a plan. (See vs. 6,7,8 & 1:17)

i. *Romans 8:28 (NKJV)*²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

ii. *Hebrews 3:12 (NKJV)*¹² *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

3. Control your emotions and weather the storm. Too many “fair weather” Christians (Verses 6-8)

i. *James 1:19–20 (NKJV)*¹⁹ *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to*

speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- ii. *Job 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” ¹⁰ But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

III. LOVE PEOPLE – REMEMBER WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN LIFE (JONAH 4:10-11)

1. **People are more important than plants. We are worried about our own comfort and have no concern for the wellbeing and salvation of others.**
 - i. *“Lost! Lost! Lost! Better a whole world on fire than a soul lost! Better every star quenched and the skies a wreck than a single soul to be lost!” – Charles Spurgeon*
2. **Practical: Stop focusing on your own discouragement and start helping other’s with theirs.**
 - i. *Philippians 2:3–4 (NKJV) ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

- ii. 1 Corinthians 10:24 (ESV)²⁴ *Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.*
 - iii. Romans 12:15 (NKJV)¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*
3. **The whole message of Jonah is that God wants us to go into the world and lead others (even the people we don't like) to the love and grace of God.**
- i. **"You have one business on earth – to save souls."
— John Wesley**



Discussion Questions

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1. We all get discouraged. Do you think it's easier or harder to pray during discouragement and why?

2. It's important for us to be honest in prayer to God. But do you think there are things we shouldn't say to Him? What is the line between being honest and being disrespectful?

3. Look at your problems and the things that discourage you. Do you think it is helpful to consider the problems that other people have, and compare yours with theirs? Why or why not? (For example, if you lost your job would it be helpful to consider people in India or Africa who live in extreme poverty without food?)

4. How would you define a "fair weather Christian" and how is that different from being discouraged during a trial?

5. Jonah's real problem is that he didn't have God's heart for the lost. How can we make evangelism and missions a bigger priority for us as Christians?
