



# #SHARK SERIES

## PART 4: FISH TALES

Some people have called the book of Jonah, “One big fish tale,” because some people can’t get past Jonah and the whale. And that is unfortunate. Because it’s not a book about a whale. Jonah is a book about God and His love for everyone. It’s not a book about fish, or a book about Jonah; it’s a book about God’s gracious, lavish invitation for everyone—even people we don’t like—to enter into a relationship with God.

The story of Jonah—found in the book of Jonah in the Bible—is actually prophetic. It explains how God is more concerned about His mission than our comfort. God’s focus is on those far from God, even to the expense of our comfort. That fact doesn’t sit well with Jonah. And it doesn’t sit well with religious insiders, either.

### BIG IDEA: **God’s mission is about reaching people, not keeping people comfortable.**

1. Chris said, “God is more concerned about His mission than our comfort.” How does that statement make you feel? Can you think of any time in the Bible where God called people to be more comfortable?
2. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Jonah 1:1-3.*

*The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.” But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.*  
*Jonah 1:1-3 (NLT)*

3. Think about your life. When have you run from God in disobedience? What are some things that God asks you to do that make you uncomfortable?
4. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Jonah 1:4; 17.*

*But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.*  
*Jonah 1:4; 17 (NLT)*

5. Think about the extents God went to because of His commitment to His mission. Ponder this quote from Stu’s message: “God is more concerned with His mission than your comfort.” Talk to God today about your thoughts regarding this quote.
6. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Jonah 4:6-8.*

*And the Lord God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah’s head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant. But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away. And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. “Death is certainly better than living like this!” he exclaimed.*  
*Jonah 4:6-8 (NLT)*

7. Ask God to show you what is in your life that you place too much value on like the plant in the story of Jonah. How do your priorities differ from God’s priority for people?
8. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Jonah 4:11.*

*But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn’t I feel sorry for such a great city?”*  
*Jonah 4:11 (NLT)*

9. Think about how this verse relates to the hundreds of thousands of people who live near or around you and your city. Pray today about your heart as it connects to God’s mission. What needs to change in your life to cause your heart to line up with God’s heart?



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10. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Luke 19:10. Memorize Luke 19:10 today. What was Jesus' mission?*

*"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*

*Luke 19:10 (NLT)*

11. Should our focus be any different from Jesus' while He was on the earth? Should our church's focus be any different from Jesus' while He was on the earth? Why?
12. Who do you know that is disconnected from God? How will you engage them this year for the purpose of introducing them to their Heavenly Father?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What is something of value that you lost? What were the emotions you felt when you realized you had lost it? How long did you look for it?
2. *Read Luke 15:1-2.* Jesus spent most of His time in the company of sinners and tax collectors—those who were relationally lost from their Heavenly Father. How often do you spend time with those who are disconnected from God? How could you spend more time around those who are lost?
3. *Read Luke 15:3-7.* In this parable the shepherd focused on what was lost and not on what was secure. How can you keep your focus on those who are disconnected from God instead of being satisfied with the company of Christians?
4. *Read Luke 15:8-10.* In this parable the woman searched until she found what had been lost. How big a priority is it for you to connect people with God? What lengths are you willing to go to in order to help someone find a relationship with God?
5. *Read Luke 15:11-32.* In this parable the father held nothing back in the celebration of the return of his lost son. Why was the older brother angry with his father? How did the older brother reflect the heart of the Pharisees (v. 2)?
6. *Read Luke 19:10.* Should our focus be any different from Jesus' while He was on the earth? Should our church's focus be any different from Jesus' while He was on the earth? Why?

## MOVING FORWARD

The value of the thing determines the time we give to searching for it, the energy we give to searching for it, and the price we are willing to pay to retrieve it. How much does God value those who are disconnected from Him? How much do you value those who are disconnected from Him? How much time are you willing to spend? How much energy are you willing to invest? What is the price you will pay?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Who do you know that is disconnected from God? How will you engage them this year for the purpose of introducing them to their Heavenly Father?

Commit to pray for one disconnected person every day this year. Pray that God would open up opportunities for you to be a part of their life and for the opportunity to talk with them about your faith.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10*