

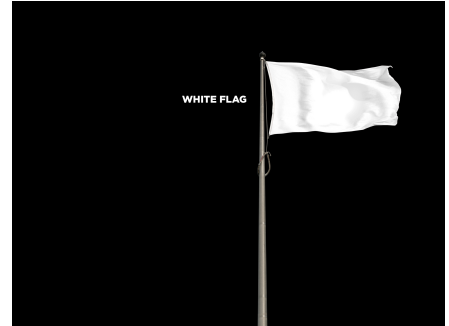
onechurch

bigIdea

You know God wants you to do one thing—make a particular decision—move in a certain direction. But you resist and do the opposite—you run the other way. Jonah resisted and found himself in the belly of a fish. Where has your resistance taken you?

BIG IDEA: You can run from God, but you can't outrun God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- As a teen, when you were told to do something you didn't want to do, were you more likely to:
 - obey out of fear of the consequences
 - ignore the command
 - make excuses for why you didn't obey
 - run and hide until the coast was clear
 - say "okay" but conveniently forget
 - outwardly comply but inwardly rebel or
 - willingly obey because you respected their authority and trusted their judgment?
- Read Jonah 1:1-2:1.* Jonah seemed to be the last person in the boat to recognize the chaos going on around him. How often is it that those who are running are the last to connect their choices to the chaos in their lives?
- The Word of the Lord has to change me before it can change others.** Jonah had to experience judgment and repentance firsthand before he could deliver his message to Nineveh. He had to experience the grace and compassion of God before it told it to others. Has there been a time in your life when the very thing God called you to tell others changed your life first?
- God may send a storm to grab your attention.** How did God use the storm to grab the attention of the sailors? What affect did God's stilling the storm have on the sailors? How did God use the storm to turn Jonah back to him? How did God use Jonah's disobedience to save the sailors? What hope does this give you concerning your past disobediences?
- What kind of storms has God used in the past (or present) to get your attention? What did your storm reveal to you? How long did it take for you to have a change of heart? How did God use the storm to change the way you think about Him and His mercy toward others?
- Your disobedience will cost others.** Share some examples of how the consequences of our disobedience can affect others. Think about a time when you disobeyed God. Who was affected by your disobedience? **What has God asked you to do that you haven't done? (Is there any area of disobedience in your life?)** How is your disobedience harming others? Are you presently suffering because of someone else's disobedience to God? How do you need to pray for this person?
- What was God's purpose in sending the storm and the great fish? In the past, how has God used your worst circumstances to turn your life around? What nightmare are you currently going through and how could this be exactly what you need (from God's perspective)?
- Why is it foolish to attempt to run from the direction God is leading you?
- Why is it that many people view difficulties in their lives as a way of God paying them back? How might those hardships be a way of God not *paying* them back . . . but *bringing* them back?
- Read Jonah 1:14-16.* What is surprising about how the sailors responded to Jonah's confession? Why did Jonah tell the sailors to throw him into the sea? What does Jonah's confession reveal about his heart? What does it take for you to acknowledge your disobedience? What was missing in Jonah's confession?



FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Even when you don't understand it, or when you flat out don't want to, why does it make sense to follow God's direction?
2. What is God asking you to do that you don't want to do? In what way are you running from God? What do you need to surrender and what attitudes do you need to change in order to be obedient to God? What steps will you take this week to be obedient? Share this with your Community Group or someone who will pray for you and hold you accountable.
3. Who or what is currently your Nineveh? With whom in your life have you refused to share God's message of mercy and grace? Are you withholding God's message because of fear, bitterness, judgment, or something else? Confess your disobedience to God and receive His grace to obey. Forgive your enemies and pray for them. Ask God to give you another opportunity to share His message of love and grace.
4. What is your first step in following where God is leading you?

MOVING FORWARD

Here's the bottom line: you can run from God, but you can't outrun God. God demonstrates the kind of love that the Bible describes as *steadfast*. It's a love that waits for you however long it takes. It's the kind of love that cares enough to discipline you—not to pay you back, but to bring you back. So let that sink in for a little bit. Because next time, we'll consider actually doing something about it.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. Proverbs 3:11-12

