

**Not Just FOR Us – Part 1**  
Community Group Discussion Guide  
May 2, 2021

God's love and grace is for everyone. Jonah pitched a fit about going to Ninevah because he couldn't stand the people. Jonah kept going to the bottom instead of the top. The grace that God shows Johan isn't just for him but for all the people who were following God. Like Jonah, we all have our ups and downs. All along, God is trying to tell us to "get up."

This series will take us on a journey into the world of the prophet Jonah. Most of us haven't given the story of Jonah and the great fish a second thought. After all, what can we possibly learn from the story about a man getting swallowed by a fish? Throughout this series we will see a full picture develop of God's love, compassion, and realize that no one is beyond redemption. That the gospel is for all who repent and believe. We will learn from this reluctant prophet Jonah and be determined to obey God doing whatever he asks and going wherever he leads.

Jonah learns some extremely valuable lessons about his leadership, his faith, and about God's activity in the world around him.

\*Discuss a time in your life when someone asked you to do something, and you absolutely did not want to have anything to do with it? (For example, being offered a new position at work, take on a different position of leadership, have a conversation with a stranger or someone you don't care for, etc)

God was asking Jonah to do something he didn't want to do. This created great conflict for him. He wasn't so interested in being a vessel of God's message to Nineva, he just wanted to live his life his way.

**Read together Johan 1:1-17**

**Scripture Support:**

The purpose of the book of Jonah is to show the extent of God's grace and that the message of salvation is for all people.

No one deserved God's favor less than the people of Ninevah and Johan knew it. He also knew that God would forgive them and bless them if they would turn from their sin and worship God. Jonah greatly disliked the Assyrians. Hate is a very strong word, but probably safe to say he hated them. He wanted vengeance for them, not mercy. So, when God chose Johan to be the one to go to Ninevah he initially ran the other way. In the end, God confronted Johan about his self-centered values and lack of compassion.

**v. 1-2;** give us a perspective as to why Jonah didn't want to interact with the people of Ninevah. Ninevah was guilty of plotting evil against God, exploiting the helpless, war crimes, idolatry,

prostitution, and witchcraft. God chose the prophet Jonah to go there. Why? To warn the people of Ninevah of God's judgement and to declare that they could receive mercy and forgiveness if they would repent/turn from their sin. Keep in mind, this was a 500mile trip northeast of Israel. **v. 3;** Jonah runs away from God. Jonah knew that God has a specific job for him, but he didn't want to do it so he attempted to go as far away in the opposite direction of Ninevah.

Sometimes when God give us direction we run in the opposite direction in fear or stubbornness, claiming that God is asking too much of us.

\*Share an example of a time in your life when you sensed that God was asking you to do something and you ran away, or tried to ignore him? How did that work out for you? Explain.

**v. 4-5;** Jonah's disobedience to God endangered the lives of others, specifically the crew members of the ship. Jonah's actions apparently didn't bother his conscience because he slept right through a storm. However, the absence of guilt isn't always a barometer of whether we are doing what is right. We can deny reality, we cannot measure disobedience by our feelings. Instead, we must compare what we do with God's standards for living.

Jonah was facing a big problem... to obey or disobey.

He knew that Ninevah was facing big problems. (see the list in verse 2/wickedness)

Paul introduced us to a new word: **GADOL**.

**GADOL** means **great!**

v. 2 Great City; gadol

v. 4 Great Wind, storm; gadol

v. 5 Great Fear; gadol

Later in the story we will learn about a gadol fish; a great (big) fish.

Let's face it, we all have problem. Some of our problems are.... GADOL (great, big). We all have different habits, hurts, or hang-ups.

\*So, what would you say is the "gadol" (greatest) problem you are facing today? Explain.

\*Have you noticed the GADOL issues in our community?

\*Have you noticed the GADOL issues in our state, nation, world?

\*Do you know the people in your neighborhood, at work, that you pass in the car that have GADOL needs?

**The reality of Jonah is to go to the GADOL city, to get involved in the GADOL problems because God wants Jonah to be a part of the GADOL transformation.**

The call of God is to go UP to GET UP, not to run away or go down. The more Jonah goes down and tries to move away from God, the more the chaos goes up.

Our calling is to be salt and light, love and life. Distributors of peace and grace. We have been chosen, called to GET UP and go; be FOR our community our WORLD.

Jonah was called to get UP and be FOR Nineveh. We must come to the point of being FOR others. To do that we must remember that we serve a GADOL God.

Let's stop going DOWN, instead, with humility, GET UP!

\*How do you see God working this out in your life, your group members lives, the church, & community?

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