

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- What can you do to hear God better this week?
- Scripture says that God's mercies are new every morning, which means you can have a fresh start today. What do you want to do differently tomorrow to live better?
- Are there any areas of your life where you know your desires are different from God's? What steps can you take this week to align your desires with his?
- Who can you share God's heart of mercy and love with this week?

PRAYER

- Ask God to help you to hear His voice better this week.
- Pray that God would change your desires to be more aligned with His.
- Ask God to show you who around you needs to hear His message of mercy and love and ask God for an opportunity to share with them.

NOTES



WEEK 4: JONAH

CONNECT

- If you could go on a cruise anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why?
- What was the worst storm you have ever been caught in?
- Have you ever sought to avoid a person or situation you knew you shouldn't avoid? What happened?
- Why do you think people through the ages and across cultures have been able to relate to the story of Jonah and the whale?

WHAT

Jonah is quite unique in the scriptures. He was the only prophet sent to deliver a message of repentance and mercy to a wicked, gentile (non-Jewish) nation, a nation the Jews hated and feared for good reason. They were exceptionally wicked and would later conquer and enslave the Jews. This amazing story reveals God's love for all people, His mission to use His people to communicate His messages of love and repentance to others, and His miraculous intervention into Jonah's life which foreshadowed Jesus' work of salvation on the Cross.

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WORD

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” ³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.”

Jonah 1:1–3 (NIV)

1. Jonah’s Reluctance.

³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.”

Jonah 1:3 (NIV)

Nineveh was 500 miles east of Joppa, the port that Jonah sailed from. Tarshish was 2000 miles to the west, revealing how much Jonah wanted to avoid the thing God had asked him to do. Jonah obviously heard God, but just didn’t want to listen. Have you ever sensed God speaking to you but you didn’t want to listen? How did God communicate to you?

2. Jonah’s Repentance.

²He said: “In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.”

Jonah 2:2 (NIV)

After nearly being thrown overboard in the midst of a storm and being swallowed by a whale or a large fish, Jonah cried out to God who had the fish vomit him up on a beach – Jonah 3:1-3 tells us that God then gave Jonah a second chance to deliver His message of mercy to Nineveh. This time Jonah obeyed. Have you ever been given a ‘second chance’ in life? If you could live your life over up to this point, what would you do differently?

3. Jonah’s heart.

²He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.”

Jonah 4:2

As a prophet, Jonah obviously knew God's voice, yet his desires and values were quite different from God's. God loves all people, even the most wicked. His desire is to show mercy to all and to save us from their self-destructive and self-defeating ways. Jonah resented that God would save the Assyrians in Nineveh, obviously wishing God would’ve destroyed them. Why do you think Jonah’s desires were so different from God’s? Has there ever been a time in your life when your desires were different than God’s desires? How did you respond to this conflict of desires?
