

INTERVARSITY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Jonah 1:17-2:10 NIV, The Huge Fish (60 minutes)

WELCOME (7 minutes)

Icebreaker: If you are willing to share, what is the most desperate prayer you've ever prayed?

We are studying the Bible together because we want to grow in our love for Jesus through Scripture and because we want to grow in our witness to Jesus through Scripture.

Let's pray and ask God to help us as we study today's passage together...

GROUP NORMS (3 minutes)

Let's remember our group norms as we study together today:

1. Use "I" statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

INTRODUCE the Scripture Text (3 minutes)

In our last session, we saw Jonah hear God's call to go to Nineveh and then run away from God's presence. But God didn't give up on sending Jonah to Nineveh. God had already responded in force by not allowing Jonah to stay on a boat that was taking him in the wrong direction, but we finished on a cliffhanger because Jonah had been thrown overboard.

SEE the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Let's read the passage and talk about what we see.

- Who are the characters? How are they connected?
- What is happening? When? Where?
- Which words are being repeated?
- Is the author comparing or contrasting anything?
- Would you like to point out anything else you notice?

Jonah 1:17-2:10 NIV –

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He 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.
3 You hurled me into the depths,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;
all your waves and breakers
swept over me.
4 I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'
5 The engulfing waters threatened me,
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.
6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.
But you, Lord my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

7 "When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, Lord,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.

9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good.
I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

10 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)

Let's discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. Jonah's prayer references many verses from Psalms – 18:6, 120:1, 88:6, 42:7, 69:1, 77:11, 11:4, 50:14, 3:8, and more! Why do you think Jonah relies on his memory of these other written prayers as he prays from inside the fish?
2. What do we know about Jonah's relationship with God based on the words of his prayer? What emotions fueled his prayer?
3. Why did God decide to swallow Jonah in a fish and then vomit him out on dry land?
4. If we could communicate the core message of this text in just one sentence, what would it be? What do we sense God is communicating through this passage?

RESPOND to the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Jonah was in a very desperate situation, at risk of drowning, and God rescued him in quite an unexpected way. By catching Jonah inside a big fish, God gave him another chance to respond and obey. Jonah prayed fervently from this desperate place and God brought him out onto dry land and safety.

God's rescue doesn't always look like we imagine it should.

Let's discern together how we can respond to what God is saying. We will answer one option from below, whichever seems most relevant to our group's discussion of the text.

- A. Choose a line from Jonah's prayer that you relate to. How does this line connect with your life? Go around and pray these lines to God for yourselves.
- B. In what ways have you been crying out to God? How do you see God responding?
- C. What concerns in your life have you been holding back from God? Why?
- D. How have you recently seen your heart change as you've gone through trials?

CLOSE (2 minutes)

Let's pray and thank God for our time in Scripture together...

Tips for leading the group discussion (and more tips are available at howto.bible):

- *Participate but keep your comments short to make space for others.*
- *Silence is okay. Encourage further discussion by saying "What else?" instead of commenting on every response.*



this material and more can be found at tiny.cc/biblestudyguides

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