

# JONAH

## PART 3: RELUCTANT OBEDIENCE

### WIN

To recognize that God cares not only about our obedience, but also about the condition of our hearts.

### CONNECT

Take a few minutes to discuss this question in your group:

What's something you've received a second chance at that you're grateful for?

### LEARN

Before watching the video together and discussing the questions provided, we suggest taking a few moments to pray. Here's a simple prayer you can use:

*Heavenly Father, help us not only obey you outwardly, but also allow you to shape our hearts inwardly. Teach us to care about the things you care about and to reflect your mercy and compassion toward others. Amen.*

After praying, watch the video for Part 3.

### APPLY

After the video, discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Think of a time when you did what was expected of you, but your heart wasn't in it. What made it difficult to engage wholeheartedly?
2. Read **Jonah 3:1–4**.

*Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown."*

What stands out to you about Jonah's response to God's second call?

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3. Read **Jonah 3:10; 4:1–2**.

*When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.*

*But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing 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 was grateful for God’s mercy toward him, but angry when God showed mercy to Nineveh. Why is it often easier to receive God’s mercy for ourselves than to want it for certain people?

4. Who is hardest for you to feel compassion toward?

- Difficult coworkers
- People with political differences
- People who’ve hurt you
- Arrogant people
- Irresponsible people

What makes compassion difficult for you?

5. Read **Jonah 4:10–11**.

*But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”*

God used the plant to reveal what mattered most to Jonah. What are some things we can become so focused on that we lose sight of people God cares about?

6. As you reflect on the entire book of Jonah, where do you most relate to Jonah’s story right now and why?

- Resisting God
- Running from God
- Feeling overwhelmed by circumstances
- Needing a second chance
- Obeying reluctantly
- Struggling to show mercy

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7. What's one next step God may be inviting you to take after engaging with the story of Jonah?

## PRAY

Share prayer requests as a group. Then, close your time in prayer. Here's a simple prayer you can use:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your patience and mercy toward us, even when we resist you or go our own way. Help us surrender the areas of our lives we keep holding onto, and demonstrate your compassion toward the people around us. Amen.*

## BEFORE NEXT TIME

If you haven't already, read the entire book of Jonah in one sitting.

As you read, ask yourself:

*Where might I be resisting God, and what would trusting him actually look like?*