

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK 1: 10.08.2017

“RUN”

[set up]

Take a quick poll of your group: Who heard the story of Jonah when they were a child, whether from a church or from pop culture? Answer the following questions and then briefly share them with your LifeGroup.

What encourages you most in the story of Jonah?

What is hardest for you to believe?

Who is the main character in Jonah?

What is the moral of this story?

Why do you think God gave us this account?

Jonah is a unique book of the Bible. It is considered part of the “Minor Prophets” of the Old Testament, it is (presumably) told by Jonah himself, includes one of the most remarkable miracles in the Old Testament, and prophesies about Jesus being in a tomb for three days. As we study the book of Jonah, we find out that this book is not really about Jonah and everything that happened to Jonah. Rather, the book is about the LORD and his compassion for even the worst of sinners. God’s character and His relentless love for the lost is on display in the midst of Jonah’s rebellion.

[digging deeper]

Read Jonah 1:1-3. The Word of the Lord came to Jonah and told him to “arise” and go to Nineveh. Jonah “rose” but did the opposite of God’s command by going the complete opposite direction to Tarshish. Why did Jonah disobey God?

Verse 1 says that Jonah ran from God, he tried to flee from “the presence of the LORD.” The great irony is that one can never flee from the presence of the Lord. Think of your life. Has there been a time where you tried to run from the presence of God. Did you succeed? (briefly share in your LG)

Read Psalm 139:1-12. How do we flee from God’s presence? What patterns, practices, or mindsets do we use to flee from the Lord?

How do we run from God or His God's plan for our lives?

On a large Post-it note, write this question: "How do we (as individuals and as a church community) run from God's mission to reach the lost?" Now brainstorm all that comes to your mind. Walk through each of those response and offer a counter-tactic to those ways we run.

In the eyes of the Israelite, the Ninevites were "those" bad, wicked and horrible people. This fueled Jonah's resistance to God's plan for Nineveh. For you, who are "those" people? What people do you see as bad, wicked or hard to love? How does God challenge us to change the way we view other people in Colossians 1:21-22?

Verse 1 says "the word of the LORD" came to Jonah. Read Genesis 1:1-5 and John 1:1-5. What about "the word of the LORD" was concealed in the Old Testament is now revealed in the New Testament? (Hint - Who is the Word of the Lord?)

What was the mission of "The Word?" in His own words seen in Luke 19:10?

If you are a follower of Jesus, then the Word of God has come to you and It is now your mission to live out God's mission. Congratulations, you are a Jonah! The question is whether you will run to or away from your mission. Welcome also to "Unleash", CVC's initiative to more greatly share the news of New Life in Christ by increasing our reach to our neighbors, the nations, and the next generation.

As we "unleash" our resources for greater impact in Northeast Ohio and beyond, It will require us to step up and take risks at greater levels. Riskier prayers. Riskier conversations. Riskier relationships. Riskier giving. Of those areas, sometimes the area people are most touchy about is giving. How is being a generous investor in God's Work part of obeying God's call to reach the lost? What are common barriers that keep Christians from being more generous investors in God's work? How can we (A) individually, (B) as a LifeGroup and, (C) as a church community increase our obedience and participation in this area (share a few ideas for each of those three categories)?

[living it out]

As you reflect on this study time, is there something in your life that God is confronting? Is there an area you are running from Him? Where is God wanting you to make a "course correction", especially in the area of praying, sharing the Gospel, building relationships with "other" not like you and giving?

Write your answer here: _____

How can this Group help you in your course correction?

We at CVC have a great desire to see the Nations reached with the Gospel. Indonesia is a nation with THE largest Muslim population in the world. In Indonesia, "Pearl Island" alone has 3 million people, most of them have even heard of Jesus. Spend some time in prayer over our "Nations" target of Pearl Island. Pray for our missionaries T&K, for the few believers on the island to grow into a church planting movement on the island, for the Bible we want to see translated in their own language, and for your own hearts to grow in compassion for the lost of Pearl Island.

