

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 28, 2009

Passage: Jonah 4

Memory Passage: Jonah 4:11

**TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

### DAY 1 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 4:1-2.** What is it that made Jonah so angry? Why would he be angry with this? What five ways does Jonah describe God? What does this say about Jonah's understanding of who God is?
- (b) Have you ever felt like Jonah felt, namely that someone received mercy that you thought shouldn't have? Why did you feel that way? What kind of attitude should we have and why?
- (c) Read Romans 9:14-16. How does this passage apply to our passage today? How does God distribute mercy?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 4:1-2. What is making Jonah so upset? Why would he be this angry? What are the five ways Jonah describes God? Have you ever been in such a position? What does Romans 9:14-16 say? How does what Paul says apply to our passage today? Why should we be eager to see God acting so graciously? Why aren't we? Pray that you would have a heart like God's that is eager to see people repent and come to Him.

### DAY 2 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 4:3-4.** What kind of attitude does Jonah display in verse 3? How is this such a big switch from chapter 2?
- (b) Read 1Kings 19:1-4. Why had Elijah come to say the same thing Jonah said in verse 4? How is this different from what Jonah felt? Does God chastise Elijah like He does Jonah? What does this say about despair or depression?
- (c) Does God expect an answer in verse 4? What reason would Jonah give? How would God respond (Romans 9:21-24)?
- (d) *Think about it:* Why is Jonah incapable of showing mercy on the Ninevites? Do you ever think that you know better than God? Why? How do we get to that place where we think that?
- (e) *Family:* Read Jonah 4:3-4. What kind of attitude does Jonah exhibit in these verses? Is Jonah being a little dramatic? Does God think Jonah has a reason for being angry? Why or why not? What is wrong about falling into such despair? Who or what do we think is the most important when we act like that? Pray that God would be the center and foundation of your heart and emotions.

### DAY 3 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 4:5-6.** What does Jonah do next? What is the purpose behind which the Lord allows a plant to grow and shade Jonah? Is it because of his discomfort from the heat or from his discomfort of God's mercy? Why?
- (b) Is Jonah planning on watching the city for long? What makes you think that? What was Jonah's reaction to the plant? Who was he glad to?
- (c) *Think about it:* Where is Jonah's heart at the end of this section? Who/what is he delighting in (Is 44:9)? How does Jonah fail to see God at work? What should be our response when things go well for us or go well for others (Ps. 37:1-6)?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 4:5-6. What is Jonah's attitude in this situation? Why would he go outside the city? Is he prepared to be there a while? What does God do for Jonah? Does Jonah give thanks to God? What does this tell us about Jonah's attitude toward God? What is dangerous about delighting in something without giving thanks to God for it? Take some time and give thanks to God for anything that you might be taking for granted.

### DAY 4 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 4:7-9.** Who appointed the plant to grow and who appointed the worm to attack the plant? What does that tell us about what is going on? What is God up to?
- (b) Maybe you aren't as dramatic as Jonah is, but have you ever been in a place like Jonah? How does God respond this time to Jonah's reaction?
- (c) *Think about it:* The plant is something that Jonah finds comfort in apart from God. What happens when God removes those things that we find our comfort in apart from him? Do you respond like Jonah? How should we respond (Psalm 55:22; Phil. 4:6-7)?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 4:7-9. Why would God appoint a worm and wind and all of that? Who is in control of this situation? Why does Jonah complain so much? Does he go a little overboard? Why do you think he feels justified in his anger? Have

you ever been like Jonah? So mad over a little thing? What might God be doing in those times? Why is that always hard to see? Pray that you would have a heart that is tender to God's gentle rebukes and corrections.

**DAY 5 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE**

(a) **Jonah 4:10-11.** What is God's response to Jonah's indignation that God let the plant be destroyed? Why would Jonah pity a plant that he had not worked for or helped to grow?

(b) Why does God show pity upon Nineveh? Why doesn't Jonah? What is more important, the lives of people or a plant?

(c) Why do you think the story of Jonah ends here? Do you think Jonah finally sees his own arrogance?

(d) *Think about it:* What is more important, your neighbor's opinion of you or your neighbor? What is more important, your leisure time and retirement or serving the Lord? Jonah attempts to minister on his own terms to who he wants to. Do you do this as well?

(e) *Family:* Read Jonah 4:10-11. Talk about Jonah's heart toward the plant versus the city. How does God end up using the plant as an object lesson? Is there anything that you care more about than people? What is wrong with caring about something more than God? Pray that your heart would follow after God's heart of compassion.

**DAY 6 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE**

(e) *Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* What does this book teach us about God's heart for those who don't know Him? Is He eager to reign down judgment on them? What about you? Are you quick to judge like Jonah or eager to see others come to repentance? Why are you cynical or unwilling to care for others? What is something God taught you this week about His character?

**DATE:** June 28, 2009

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***A Lesson in Compassion***

*"And should I not pity Nineveh..."*