

## Fear of God

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO GO TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME FOR GOD?

### LEADER'S GUIDE

#### NOTE TO THE LEADER:

Do the front observation page for yourself.

Consult the leader's guide for added information on the passage.

Develop some specific questions about the passage that you found significant in the event group members do not offer many observations.

Plan the discussion on the second page using the leader's guide adding your own follow-up questions or personal examples.

### B A C K G R O U N D

**The Book of Jonah** demonstrates God's compassion on Gentiles in light of Israel's failure to be a light to the nations (Deuteronomy 28:1,9,10). Jonah is similar to the people of Israel who were called to disseminate the knowledge of God in the world. The original readers hated the people of Nineveh as much as Jonah did.

God places Jonah the prophet in a sticky situation. God commands him to go to the capital of Assyria-Nineveh, to confront its citizens of their sin before God, and give them an opportunity to experience reconciliation with God. Assyria was the bully of the Ancient Near East, committing heinous war crimes against people within that region. One of their previous kings once gloated about a vanquished foe, "A pyramid of heads I reared in front of his city. Their youths and their maidens I burnt up in flames" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 1494).

The events of this book occurred c.760 B.C. during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel. He ruled about half-way between King David and the Babylonian captivity of Israel. Jonah functioned as prophet for Israel after Elisha's ministry, overlapping the time of Amos, who served as a "lay" prophet in Judah.

**Group Member's Preparation** The best interaction over the passage will occur if your group members prepare the front observation page before they come to the group. If this does not work with your group, allow the group at least 15 minutes to study the passage before proceeding through the lesson.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### JONAH:

A historical figure mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. Tradition holds him as the author of this book or at least the source of information for it.

#### NINEVEH:

The capital of one of the cruelest and most idolatrous empires of all time—Assyria. It was located more than 500 miles east of Israel in present-day Iraq.

#### TARSHISH:

This city was most likely located on a mineral trade route on the Mediterranean Sea, possibly in Spain.

#### "SHIP THREATENED":

Personification of the ship which emphasizes Jonah's lack of sensitivity to the storm.

#### GET UP (VERSE 6):

The original Hebrew of this passage uses the same phrase in God's commission to go to Nineveh (v.2) and Jonah's running away (v.3).

#### LOTS:

Small stones or pieces of wood used for settling disputed questions or determining a course of action.

#### FEAR:

The same Hebrew word for fear is used for the sailors' response to the storm (v.5), Jonah's statement of worship (v.9), and their fear of God (v.16). This word has a range of meaning from a psychological reaction of fear to reverential awe.

### BIG IDEA

#### DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD REVEALS A DEFECTIVE FEAR OF GOD

Think of the one non-Christian or group of non-Christians you consider an enemy. Or consider the most intimidating non-Christian you know. Imagine God specifically commissioning you to share His message of love and forgiveness with them. How willing would you be to cooperate? This is Jonah's experience in Jonah 1. He disobeys. His problem, as well as ours, is a defective fear of God.

#### DESIRED LIFE CHANGE

The student will evaluate the connection between his/her fear of God, and his/her limits to obeying the Great Commission.

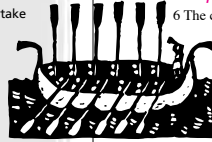
#### AUDIENCE

This lesson is designed for students who are walking with the Lord and are aware of the Christian's mandate to be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission.

# Jonah 1:11-16

- 1. ASK:** Would you be willing to go to anyone, anywhere, anytime for God? *Follow-up:* Why? Where would be the hardest place for you to go right now?
- 2. STATE:** Let's look at someone who was unwilling to go where God wanted him.
- 3. ASK:** Answers for the overview section.
- 4. ASK:** What stood out as significant to you as you observed the passage?
- 5. ASK:** What questions do you have about the passage?  
*respond to questions as a group*
- 6. ASK:** What titles do you have for each section?
- 7. ASK:** What would be a good title for this chapter?  
*God is feared though Jonah disobeys*
- 8. STATE:** Let's explore further the contrasting responses to God by Jonah and the sailors.
- 9. ASK:** Jonah answers. **KNOW** *omnipresent; creator; sovereign; faithful; gracious; holy; only true God* **FEEL** *dread; fear; hate toward Nineveh; caught; anger at God; guilt* **DO** *disobeyed; he did not truly fear God*

OVERVIEW		7 JONAH 1:1-16: God is feared though Jonah disobeys	
3 <b>WHO</b> are the characters? <i>God Jonah The Sailors The Captain</i>	4 <b>4</b> 1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: <i>What the Lord says:</i> 2 <b>Go to Nineveh; preach against its wickedness</b>	6 <b>6</b> <i>God says "Go," Jonah says "No"</i>	6 The captain ... <i>What he says:</i> 6 <b>get up and call on your god</b>
WHEN do the events happen? <i>After the Lord commissions Jonah to preach to Nineveh</i>	4 Then the Lord ... <i>What the Lord does:</i> <b>sends a storm</b>	5 All the sailors ... <i>How they responded:</i> <b>afraid; cry out to own gods; throw out cargo</b>	8 <b>8</b> <b>determined Jonah's guilt through lots; ask Jonah who he is</b>
WHERE do the events take place? <i>Jonah boards a ship in Joppa; the storm hits on the sea between Joppa and Tarshish</i>	6 The captain ... <i>What he says:</i> <b>get up and call on your god</b>	7 Then the sailors ... <i>How they respond:</i> <b>determined Jonah's guilt through lots; ask Jonah who he is</b>	10 This terrified them and they asked. "What have you done?" <i>Why they were terrified:</i> <b>they knew he was running from God; the sea was getting rougher</b>
WHY do these events occur? <i>To show it is unwise to disobey God's commission; to show it is impossible to hide from God</i>	9 He answered ... <i>How Jonah answers:</i> <b>I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord</b>	10 This terrified them and they asked. "What have you done?" <i>Why they were terrified:</i> <b>they knew he was running from God; the sea was getting rougher</b>	12 <b>12</b>
WHAT is the point of this story? <i>Jonah disobeys because he does not fear God even as much as the sailors do.</i>	10 This terrified them and they asked. "What have you done?" <i>Why they were terrified:</i> <b>they knew he was running from God; the sea was getting rougher</b>	11 <b>11</b>	14 <b>14</b>
DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD REVEALS A DEFECTIVE FEAR OF GOD.	12 <b>12</b>	13 Instead, the men ... <i>List the responses of the sailors:</i> <b>tried to row back to land; cried out to the Lord; threw Jonah overboard</b>	16 At this ... <i>What the result is:</i> <b>the sailors feared God; they offered sacrifices and vows to God</b>



**9 POINT OF VIEW**  
**Jonah**

1. **KNOW:** If you were Jonah, the prophet, what might you have known about God?

2. **FEEL:** What might you have felt in response to God's commission? During the storm?

3. **DO:** How did Jonah respond to God? Why?

**10 POINT OF VIEW**  
**The Sailors**

1. **KNOW:** If you were one of the sailors, what would you know about God?

2. **FEEL:** What would you be feeling during the storm? After the storm?

3. **DO:** How did the sailors respond to God? Why?

**11** **WHAT DOES THIS REVEAL ABOUT GENUINE FEAR OF THE LORD?**

**12** **REFLECT: WHEN WHAT I WANT CONFLICTS WITH WHAT GOD WANTS, WHO WINS?**

**13 JONAH'S COMMISSION WAS CLEAR:**  
*Go to Nineveh and preach.*  
JONAH 1:2

**14 OUR COMMISSION IS CLEAR:**  
*Go make disciples of all nations.*  
MATTHEW 28:18-20

**S E L F P O R T R A I T**

How am I currently saying "yes" to God's commission for me?

Where have I drawn the line, saying "no" to God's commission for me?

What does this reveal about my "fear of the Lord"?

- 10. ASK:** Sailors answers. **KNOW** *little; believed in many deities* **FEEL** *fear for my life; relief; awe of God* **DO** *feared for my life; offered Him sacrifices and made vows; convinced that God was worthy to be feared*
- LEADER'S NOTE:** Make the connection between obedience and fear of the Lord.
- 11. ASK:** What does this reveal about genuine fear of the Lord? *It is demonstrated by obedience to the Lord.*
  - 12. REFLECT:** When what I want conflicts with what God wants, who wins?
  - 13. STATE:** Jonah's commission. *Go to Nineveh and preach.*
  - 14. STATE:** Our commission. *Go make disciples of all peoples.*
  - 15. DISCUSS:** (Give group members a few minutes to answer these then discuss.) How am I saying "yes" to God's commission for me? Where have I drawn the line, saying "no" to God's commission for me? What does this reveal about my "fear of the Lord"?