

Submission to God

WHY DO
BAD THINGS
HAPPEN TO
BELIEVERS?

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

In Chapter 2 we find Jonah in a tragedy of his own making. Jonah's disobedience in Chapter 1 resulted in God hurling tragedy at him (1:4; 2:13). God designed the circumstance to bring Jonah to the point of willingness to obey His original commission. Likewise, God will intervene in our lives, sometimes with negative circumstances, to cause us to submit to His direction. It's when God leaves us alone that we have something to worry about.

The focus of this study is the difficulties we experience resulting from our disobedience as opposed to suffering for righteousness or being victimized by others. This study does not intend to minimize the pain that people feel; however, tragedy such as Jonah experienced may be an indicator that God is trying to get our attention.

If so, our loving Father may at times be pointing to sin in our lives which requires repentance. He desires our submission to His sovereign purposes so that we can join with Jonah in saying, "Salvation comes from the Lord."

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

INSIDE THE FISH:

It's likely that Jonah was not fully conscious when he was swallowed by the fish. The author does not elaborate on the fish's nature or activity. All the author desires the reader to know is that the fish is subject to God (Cf. Matthew 17:24-27).

VERSE 2:

This is Hebrew poetry. A summary statement begins this thanksgiving psalm which was composed after Jonah's deliverance (Cf. Psalm 18:6, 30:4). Although English poetry has rhymes, Hebrew uses similar statements to communicate one idea.

GRAVE, PIT:

Figurative for life-threatening danger.

WORTHLESS IDOLS:

Literally, false vanities, empty nothings. A derogatory allusion to the gods of the sailors in 1:6.

GRACE:

Literally, covenant faithfulness to the only true God. This refers to the covenant that God established with Israel and founded on His loyal love.

VOWED:

Indicates Jonah's complete obedience.

SALVATION:

Jonah's acknowledgment of God's absolute sovereignty in granting deliverance.

BIG IDEA

OUR REPENTANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR RELIEF

Most people ask "Why?" in the middle of difficult experiences. Haven't you? Sometimes our difficult circumstances result from our disobedience. Consequently, God may discipline us to bring us to the point of submission to His purposes. He may hurt us to help us yield to His control. Yet His intentions are loving regardless of the pain we may feel.

DESIRED LIFE CHANGE

The student will choose to submit to God in an area of disobedience.

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 1:17 - 2:10

- 1. ASK:** Why do bad things happen to believers? *some are a result of things we have done wrong; some are a result of things we have done right; some are a result of nothing we have done*
- 2. STATE:** “Last time we learned from the life of Jonah that limited obedience reveals a defective fear of God. This week we pick up his story again and find him thrown into the sea.”
- 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 brings Jonah to repentance
- 8. STATE:** Let’s examine further what God does and how Jonah responds.
- 9. ASK:** What does God do in Jonah 1;17? *provides a fish to swallow Jonah* Follow-up: What would you have felt if you were Jonah? *terror* What does this tell you about God? *He wasn’t out to destroy Jonah; He can provide unlikely means of deliverance*

OVERVIEW		JONAH 1:17-2:10: <i>God brings Jonah to repentance</i>		
3 WHO are the characters? <i>God Jonah the Fish</i>	4 WHEN do the events happen? <i>after Jonah fled from the Lord and God caused the storm</i>	1:17 But the Lord . . . <i>What the Lord does: provides a fish to swallow Jonah</i>	6	
		2:1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He said: <i>What: Jonah calls; God answers</i>		6
		3 You . . . <i>List the progression of events: Jonah is hurled into the sea the waves swept over Jonah Jonah feels banished but hopes the engulfing water surrounds Jonah Jonah sinks to the bottom of the sea</i>		
4 WHERE do the events take place? <i>in the sea, in the belly of the fish</i>	5 But . . . <i>What God does: brings Jonah’s life up from the pit</i>	7 When my life was ebbing away . . . <i>What Jonah does: remembered God prays to God</i>	6	
WHY do these events occur? <i>to demonstrate God’s sovereign deliverance and to bring Jonah to repentance</i>	8 List Jonah’s conclusions: <i>those who cling to idols miss out on grace; He will sacrifice and vow to God; salvation comes from the Lord</i>	9		
WHY is the point of this story? <i>God delivers Jonah in response to his repentance</i>	10 And the Lord . . . <i>What the Lord does: commands the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land</i>		6	

OUR REPENTANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR RELIEF.

- 10. ASK:** What does God do in Jonah 2:3? *hurls Jonah into the sea* Follow-up: How did God hurl him into the sea? *by causing the storm; by the sailors hands* What does this tell you about God? *He deals with sin; He actively disciplines; He doesn’t just look the other way when we sin*
- 11. ASK:** What does God do in Jonah 2:10? *saves Jonah by commanding the fish to vomit him onto dry land* What does this tell you about God? *He is merciful, able and willing to save; He offers second chances for obedience*
- 12. ASK:** What characterizes Jonah in Chapter 1? *fleeing from God*
- 13. ASK:** What characterizes Jonah in Chapter 2? *submission to God*
- 14. ASK:** What did it take to get him there? *discipline, catastrophe* Follow-up: So, what was God doing by allowing Jonah to thrown onboard? *bring him to submission*
- 15. DISCUSS:** (Give group members a few minutes to answer these then discuss.) Is there any hardship you are experiencing that may be a result of God trying to get your attention? What area of your life is not submitted to His lordship? What do you need to do to demonstrate submission to God?

Submission to God JONAH 1:17-2:10

1. What does God do in Jonah 1:17?
2. What does God do in Jonah 2:3?
3. What does God do in Jonah 2:10?

What does this tell you about God?

PATTI'S PORTRAIT

A young woman tells her story of being unmarried, alone, and pregnant.

I considered myself a Christian at the time...but being pregnant ripped through the hypocrisy of my double life. I had been meaning to 'get right with God,' but I kept slipping back.

I was looking out my bedroom window one night when I thought clearly for the first time in weeks. I realized I either believed this Christianity or I didn't believe it. And if I believed in Christ, then I couldn't do this (have an abortion). God is real, I thought, even if I've never lived like He is.

That decision was a point of no return. I put my faith in the God of the Bible, not the God I made up in my head. I was still everything I never wanted to be - pregnant, alone, deserted by family, and rejected by the one I had loved. Yet for the first time in my life I was really peaceful, because I knew for the first time I was being obedient.

I thought in the depths of my despair that my life was ruined, but I knew I had to at least be obedient in taking responsibility for my sin. What matters more than anything is that I have what I was searching for so desperately before - peace with God.

from Loving God by Charles Colson, pp. 138,139.

12 BEFORE

14 AFTER

What characterized Jonah in Chapter 1?

What characterized Jonah in Chapter 2?

What did it take to get Jonah where God wanted him to be?

15 SELF PORTRAIT

Is there any hardship you are experiencing that may be a result of God trying to get your attention?

What area of your life is not submitted to His lordship?

What do you need to do to demonstrate submission to God?

QUOTE: THE ANSWER TO YOUR "WHY" IS A "WHO."