

**JONAH:**  
***"IS GOD TOO MERCIFUL?"***

**An interactive Bible study for  
individuals, families,  
and LIFE Groups**



Life Groups

**~May 20-26, 2007~**  
**"The Runaway Prophet"**  
Jonah 1

**This week** we begin a new, four-part study of the Old Testament book of Jonah entitled "Is God Too Merciful?" Each week this discussion guide will help you reflect upon the Sunday sermon and apply its content to your life. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at [www.upc-orlando.com](http://www.upc-orlando.com).

**LISTEN**

*Record your insights and observations from this week's sermon:*

## INTRODUCTION

The prophet Jonah was living in northern Israel when, around the year 760 B.C., he received a call from God to go to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, and preach a message of repentance and hope. It was a time of material prosperity and political stability for Israel under the long reign of Jeroboam II. But the nation of Israel was being lulled to sleep by greed, materialism, and spiritual pride. Other prophets like Amos, Hosea, and Elisha were calling the nation back to God. Jonah had to learn for himself that God's kindness should lead to repentance instead of complacency, to compassion for others instead of pride.

## SHARE

Tell about something (a task, a calling, a job opportunity, a challenge, etc.) that intimidated you so much you put it off or resisted it entirely. What eventually happened and what did you learn from the experience?

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## REFLECT

a) Review Jonah 1. When Jonah received God's call to go to Nineveh, what did he do and why did he do it? (vs. 3)

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b) Why would Nineveh be the last place on earth Jonah would want to visit with a message from God?

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c) God sent "a violent storm" upon the ocean to get Jonah's attention (vss. 4-6). What do you learn about human nature from the sailors' reaction to the storm?

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d) What is the sailors' worldview? That is, how do they interpret the calamitous event that is taking place around them? (vss. 6-11) How does their attitude compare or contrast with that of people today?

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e) At this early point in the story, what do you believe God is teaching Jonah?

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**APPLY**

a) Among other things, Jonah 1 is about accountability. What aspects of accountability do you see presented in this chapter?

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b) Related to accountability is the idea that our actions have consequences, not only to ourselves but to those around us. Reflect for a few moments on the people in your circles of influence. Upon whom might your sin pose the most serious consequences? What might those consequences be?

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c) Some years ago, Sheldon Vanauken wrote a book about his marriage called *A Severe Mercy*. How might that book title serve as an appropriate way to summarize Jonah 1?

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d) What “severe mercies” have you experienced in life? List several that come to mind. Pick out one or two and share them with another person or your small group.

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