

Jonah 4

Community Group Discussion Questions

Opening Question: What was your least favorite subject in school?

Tell them: This week Pastor Andy finished up Jonah 4, and wow, what a finish! This chapter has to be the strangest chapter in the entire Bible. Such an odd finish to a book, but as we saw, there is a reason for it all. Jonah ultimately did what God told him to do externally, but internally he was just as rebellious as in the beginning. So here are the things we learnt about Jonah's rebellion:

1. **Jonah cared more about his comfort than people's lives.**

Tell them: Pastor Andy pointed out that Jonah was more consumed with temporary, trivial things than people.

Ask them: *What are some things we are can become consumed with besides the grace of God?*

2. **Jonah was a hypocrite.**

Ask them: Pastor Andy called Jonah a hypocrite. *Do you remember why?* (Note: Jonah was a hypocrite because he worshiped God for the grace He gave *him*, but he hated the idea of God giving grace to *others*. He wasn't excited about God's grace, but about his own salvation.)

Ask them: *Do you find that there are people whom you struggle with the idea of God giving them grace?* **Tell them:** Pastor Andy said Jonah was so filled with pride, that he thought he, as a Jew, should get grace, but not the pagan Ninevites. That's not believing in grace, that's racism.

Ask them: *Do you remember why he said that's a misconception of grace?*

Tell them: He told us since nobody deserves grace (see Eph. 2:8-9), you can't say you deserve it more than others do. It's not grace, if you think you deserve it.

Ask them: *How does this idea of undeserved grace make you feel?*

Ask them: *Do you ever create categories or degrees of sin in your mind? Do you ever find that these categories allow you to accept your sin while rejecting others'?*

Tell them: Andy called this an "us vs. them mentality."

Ask them: *Do you think that this might a problem in our current society?*

3. **Jonah wants to be God instead of following God.** He thinks he knows better than God. If we are honest with ourselves, we all have moments when we think we know better than God.

Ask them: *In what ways do you think we express the fact that we know better than God? (ex. angry over political situations, stress, worry or fear, conspiracy theories, etc.)*

Ask them: *In what ways might chasing conspiracy theories be evidence of our thinking we know better than God? (see Lamentations 3:37-39)*

4. **Jonah hates who God is.**

Tell them: Pastor Andy said that Jonah is angrier about who God is than who the Ninevites are. **Ask them:** *Why did he say that?* (note: Jonah quotes Ex. 34:5-7 at the beginning of chapter 4.) **Tell them:** Jonah looks at God, knowing His compassion, and he doesn't like it. Jonah thinks he's better than the non-Jews are, and he hates that God loves them.

Ask them: *Do you ever struggle with loving the pagan as much as God does?*

5. **Jonah's heart never changes.**

Tell them: Pastor Andy pointed out that Jonah prays the right things, does the right things, knows the right answers, memorizes scripture, but none of that guarantees that his heart is right.

Ask them: *So how do we know if our hearts are right?*

When we think we don't need mercy or grace.

When we are more proud than humble.

When we cannot love our enemies.

When we think we are better than others.

When we say, "I'm not *that* bad."

When our hearts never change.

When we care about temporary things more than people.

When we want to be God and control the world.

Tell them: Jonah is a book about God, not about Jonah. If it were about Jonah, God would have told us what happened to Jonah. But it's a book about God; who He is, what He does with His people, His nature, His character, how He works and how He asks. And God asks: *When you see who I am, what does it reveal about your heart in relation to me?*

External religion will not produce forgiveness, mercy or compassion your heart. God is not calling you to something you can do on your own. It is super-natural, spiritual. Only He can do it in your heart by His spirit, if not, it will not happen.

Jonah's religion was just not enough: doing, saying the right things. He gets the right results, but that's not enough. None of that changed his heart.

Ask them: *What do you think about this idea?*

Tell them: At the end, Pastor Andy gave us a list of questions to ask ourselves. Let's look at a few of them: (Pick however many you have time for.)

1. **One was, "What are your plants?"** By that he meant what are the temporary trivial, insignificant things you are passionate about? That you care about more than you care about people? What are the things you love more than Jesus?
Ask them: *Would anyone like to share their reaction to this?*
2. **How real is your religious appearance?**
Ask them: *What do you think he meant by that?*
3. **Do you have an "us vs. them mentality?"** **Ask them:** *What are some examples of "them?" (ex. Other races, religions, political parties, gender types, pro-choicers, etc.)* **Ask them:** *How could we love them the way God loves us when we didn't think the same things He did?*
4. **Do you rejoice more when sinners repent and receive grace or get what they deserve?**
5. **Do you pursue people in their sin?** Or do you watch to see their destruction?
6. **Do you give people second chances?** Do you write people off?
7. **Are you willing to give grace to your worst enemy?** Let's take a look at Matt. 5:43-47. **Ask them:** *What do we learn about God's grace in this passage? What do we learn about the grace we are to give?*
8. **Do you know that you deserve to drown at the bottom of the ocean?** If you were the only person in the world, Jesus would have had to go to the cross for you. You are not any better than the rest of the world He died for. **Ask them:** *How does that make you feel? (Humility is the response to God's grace that signifies a change of heart.)*
9. **Pastor Andy said:** Pride is never a response to God's grace to you.
Ask them: *What do you think about that statement?*
10. **Will you live by the spirit of Jonah or the Spirit of Jesus?** *Will you give second chances, love your enemies, pray for those who hate you?*

Tweets Quotes and Words to Remember

1. Nobody deserves grace; therefore, you cannot say you deserve grace more than others. It's not grace, if you think you deserve it.
2. If you were the only person in the world, Jesus would still have had to die for you.
3. Pride is never a response to God's grace to you.