

BEFORE THE SESSION:

- Look over the suggested questions to the right. Ask God to guide you to the ones that will work best for your group.
- Be prepared to get the discussion going in your group if they're not feeling it today.
- Don't feel like you have to know all there is to know about scripture. Use this week's study notes to prepare yourself. But, if something arises that you can't answer, tell your group, "That's a great question. I'll research that and get back with you." Then, email eddie.mosley@lifepointchurch.org for help.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA

God is more concerned about His purpose than with our comfort.

TO PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK:

Read about the prophets Isaiah and Amos as they warn Israel and Judah about God's judgment.

AS YOU READ...

...Think about who in your life needs to hear about the things you're reading.

CONNECT**(10 min.)**

Choose one or both of the following questions to begin your time together as a group.

1. **As a kid, how did you tend to react when you didn't get your way? How about today?**
2. **Who do you see as the people God is calling you to reach? family, neighbors, coworkers or others?**

EXPLORE**(40 min.)**

Say something like, "Today we will discuss Jonah's lack of compassion for the people of Ninevah." Then guide your group through these questions.

3. **If you were in worship this week, what statement or experience stood out to you? What stood out during last week's reading?**

(Leader: Take some time to discuss any questions that may have arisen as your members read through this week's assigned reading.)

4. **Read Jonah 3:10-4:10. Retell this story in your own words. In what ways do you see yourself in Jonah?**
5. **Why do you think Jonah refused to go to Ninevah (v. 1-2)? Why do you think Jonah asked the Lord to take his life in verse 3? Is there a particular kind of person that you have trouble loving? Why?**
6. **Look at verses 6-8. What three things does God provide Jonah? What do these three things reveal about God? What do you think Jonah's reaction to these things reveal about him?**
7. **What blessings from God have we turned into idols to such a degree that if they were taken from us we would be "angry enough to die"?**
8. **What do you think is keeping you from being obedient to God's command to all believers to make disciples of all nations?**

TRANSFORM**(10 min.)**

Wrap up your time by recalling a few things from your meeting that stood out to you. Then, ask the following question and pray together.

9. **What did you learn about God's heart from our discussion? About your heart? About people? What will you do with what you learned?**

This Week's Study Notes:

Jonah

Jonah was a prophet who lived in Israel during the reign of Jereboam II. The primary purpose of the book that bears his name is to engage readers in theological reflection on the compassionate character of God, and in self-reflection on the degree to which their own character reflects this compassion, to the end that they become vehicles of this compassion in the world that God has made and so deeply cares about.

Scripture Notes

Jonah 4:1

God's compassion on Nineveh angered Jonah. God should punish this evil city, Jonah surmised. He preached reluctantly, hoping that the obstinate Ninevites would get the punishment they deserved ... with no mercy.

Jonah 4:3

Jonah was so disappointed in God's mercy to the Ninevites that he wanted to die. Perhaps he thought that Israel had lost its favored standing with God, since Nineveh was such an enemy to Israel. Or he may have been embarrassed that his threats were not carried out.

Jonah 4:10-11

God uses the vine to show Jonah how misplaced his affections were. Jonah did not truly care for the plant; only for the physical comfort it gave him. A gardener who cared for a plant would have reason to regret its loss. Likewise God, whose love extends to all people, had even more reason to show compassion on Nineveh. Jonah had to acknowledge God's missionary heart: repentance and salvation are for all people.

Leader Tips

AS YOU READ THIS WEEK...

- Think about and pray for each member of your small group.
- Think through the following questions:
 1. Whom does God bring to mind as I read these verses? Why?
 2. What needs to change in my own life as a result of what I'm reading?
 3. Whom do I need to tell about these verses?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY WE RECOMMEND...

- Bible Commentary: Bible.org
- Bible Commentary: DesiringGod.org
- Pronouncing Biblical Words: Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm

* Scripture Notes adapted from and used by permission of Serendipity House Publishing, 1 LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee

