



STUDENT

MINISTRY

SCOTT LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH

LIFEGROUP DEVOTIONAL

March 12-16, 2018

Your end goal isn't to trust in Jesus, it's to learn how to follow Him daily. Satan has set up the system of this world to lead you towards sin and busyness. Like a toddler in a tantrum, the activities of daily life will demand your time. You will have to continually tell yourself—I AM A FOLLOWER OF JESUS FIRST. Before you are a student, or athlete, or employee, or musician, or in a relationship, or whatever, YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS FIRST. Many of our daily demands are good, but they can never take priority over what is best—your relationship with God.

Mark out a time, place, and set a daily reminder to help you develop the habit of personally studying the Bible every day.

MONDAY

READ JONAH 1:1-2

Background: Jonah was a prophet to Israel during a time of prosperity and moral corruption for God's people. Under King Jeroboam II, Israel had regained its territory lost to enemies' invasions. However, while experiencing victory on the battlefield that nation was far from God and worshipping idols. At the same time Jonah is alive, the prophets Amos and Hosea are warning Israel to turn from their ways or God would punish them by allowing the Assyrian Empire to conquer them. For more than 100 years the Assyrians had oppressed Israel and made them pay tribute or be attacked. The Assyrian Empire was one of the cruelest nations in the world. Jonah as a proud Israelite would have hated the Assyrians for their treatment of his people.

1. Jonah is a prophet of God. What is a prophet?

2. What did God command Jonah to do?

3. How did God describe the people of Nineveh?

4. Today we know first hand of the Assyrian's love for violence in their own bragging accounts of their victories. They were known to cut off the heads of enemy's soldiers and pile them in a pyramid at the city gates. They burned their captives alive. Enemy leaders were strapped with a collar and chain like a dog and forced to live in human kennels. They even skinned their enemies and displayed the skins on their city wall as trophies. Why would God send Jonah to preach to these people?

5. Jonah could see all the evil of the Assyrian, but he couldn't see the evil in his own people. Why is it easy to see the sins of others, but overlook or minimize our own sin?

TUESDAY

READ JONAH 1:3 and 4:2

1. Instead of obeying God, what did Jonah do?

2. The trip from Israel to Assyria was about 500 miles. The trip that Jonah started to Tarshish was 2,500 miles away at the edge of the known world in Spain. Think through Jonah's actions. What expense, troubles, and loss was he willing to go through so that he wouldn't have to obey God?

3. According to Jonah 4:2, what was Jonah's reason for not wanting to go to Nineveh?

4. Jonah absolutely hated the Assyrians. They had attacked and oppressed his people. Now God was sending him to preach to them. Is there any person or group that you would have a hard time loving enough to reach out and tell them about Christ?

5. We all know unloveable people or have groups that we dislike. We would honestly rather stay away or see God punish them rather than see them receive God's mercy. What does that say about our heart?

6. In all areas of faith it's easy to let emotions and personal beliefs override our theology. What are some areas of life where this tends to happen?

WEDNESDAY

READ JONAH 1:4-6

1. What does God send?

2. The storm is so violent it threatens to break up the ship. What 2 things do the sailors do to try to save the ship?

3. God will sometimes put us in a crisis to wake us up spiritually. Have you ever had a moment when God used something to wake you up or get your attention spiritually?

4. What is Jonah doing during the storm?

5. Why do you think he was able to be so calm?

6. Sometimes God takes the things we have confidence in as a place of refuge, and breaks them up. What are some things others than God that believers really trust in?

7. In desperation, the ship's captain wakes Jonah and asks him to do what?

8. The captain said, "perhaps your god will be concerned about us". It's easy to miss God's concern for us in the middle of a storm. What storms are you facing?

THURSDAY

READ JONAH 1:7-16

1. The men on the ship cast lots. Lots were kind of like dice. They believed the dice would reveal answers to questions depending on how they landed. What do they reveal?

2. How does the scene with the sailor's casting lots teach us about God's sovereignty?

3. What does Jonah's story teach us about the ways in which our disobedience affects others?

4. The lot fell on Jonah and revealed he was the reason for the storm. They began to question Jonah. What does Jonah say?

5. Jonah identifies himself as a follower of God and as one who fears, or worships God. What about his actions didn't match his words?

6. It's easy to say we are followers of God. It's a lot harder to match our life with our words. What areas of your life are the hardest for you to live out what you say you believe?

7. Jonah knew the only solution was for him to be thrown overboard. Instead what do the men do? How does this contrast with Jonah's heart for people?

FRIDAY

READ JONAH 1:17 and MATTHEW 12:39-40

1. Now we come to the part of the story that everyone remembers. Jonah is thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish (probably a whale). Now that you are a little older, what do you think about this part of the story?

2. Jonah told the sailors that his God was the ruler of the seas and dry land. How did God prove this in Jonah 1:17? What word in this verse shows God sovereign power over all things?

3. How does Jonah's time in the belly of the fish reveal God's patience and compassion?

4. What is the connection between Jonah's 3 days in the great fish and Jesus' resurrection?

 - Jesus was challenged by the religious leaders to give a sign showing He was from God. Jesus had already perform hundreds of miracles proving Himself, but they still wanted more. Jesus said in Matthew 12:39-40 that the only sign they would get would be the sign on Jonah—3 days and 3 nights in the earth.
 - Ancient Jews count time different than we do. 3 days wasn't a literal 72 hours. They counted 3 days as one 24-hour day and part of the day before and after. This is how Jesus is counted as 3 days in the tomb but was only in it from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning.

SATURDAY

READ JONAH 2:1-10

1. Jonah chapter 2 is Jonah's prayer from the stomach of the fish. Surprisingly, it's not a prayer asking for help. Look at Jonah 2:9. What is the main subject of his prayer?

2. What are some of the details revealed in these verses about Jonah's experience of nearly drowning and being swallowed?

3. What is repentance?

4. Do you think Jonah was truly repentant of his disobedience to God or was it counterfeit?

5. God puts us in a place to turn to Him, but He doesn't force true repentance. We do that of our own free will. Look back at Jonah chapter 2. How many times does Jonah use the words me, I, or my? _____
6. Jonah recognizes his near death experience, but does he admit his sin? _____
7. The story of Jonah reveals the beauty of the Gospel. Even in our sin, God seeks us out. God goes to extraordinary measures to bring us to a point where we turn to Him. In what ways is God seeking after you? How have you seen God working to bring you to Himself?



WEEKLY PRAYER CALENDAR	OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS:	ANSWERED PRAYERS:
MONDAY - My family		
TUESDAY - My friends		
WEDNESDAY - My school, teachers, and administration		
THURSDAY - Our nation and leaders		
FRIDAY - My goals and my future		
SATURDAY - Unsaved people and the spread of the Gospel		
SUNDAY - My church, youth group, pastors, and missionaries around the world		