



## **The Race You Cannot Win** **Jonah 1:5-17**

*These questions are provided to lead the group in **applying** the teaching from Sunday. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in being a doer of God's Word. Challenge each other and be vulnerable as God works IN and THROUGH you together.*

1. Who has God placed on your heart to invite to The Table (1-Year Rally)? Have you had any table meetings yet (Church? Community? Cultures?)? If so, how's it going?
2. What groups or kinds of people do some Americans have a hard time showing kindness to and loving? Why do you think this is? How have you also seen this in the church?
3. Read Jonah 1:5. What happened to the sailors? How can our disobedience sometimes have a negative impact on others around us? When have you seen this in your life?
4. Read Jonah 1:6. Jonah had grown so calloused that he was at peace in a storm. How does continual disobedience make us insensitive to God? How is "peace" overrated? When is a time you have put your subjective feelings over God's objective word?
5. Read Jonah 1:7-11. The sailors thought that it was strange that Jonah worshipped such a powerful God, but he did not follow and obey him. Has an unbeliever ever looked at your life and questioned your faith? What did God teach you in this experience?
6. Read Jonah 1:12. At this point, Jonah stopped running. If you have ever run from God, describe the circumstances when you stopped running.
7. Read Jonah 1:13-14. Compare and contrast Jonah's attitude toward the pagan sailors and their attitude toward him. Why do you think that people outside the church sometimes demonstrate more mercy and goodness than people inside the church?
8. In what ways does the distinction between Special Grace and Common Grace help us see people outside the faith differently and remind us that all people are created in God's image and have the capacity for wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, and beauty? How does this affect the way you see "those other" people?
9. Read Jonah 1:15-16. What happened to the sailors? How can our obedience have a positive impact on others around us? When have you seen this in your life?
10. Read Jonah 1:17. What happens to Jonah? Do you believe this? See the next page and discuss the "Did a Great Fish Really Swallow Jonah?"
11. Read Hebrews 12:4-11. How does this passage support this point: "God does not send me through storms and suffering to pay me back, but to bring me back"?
12. Read Psalm 139:7. Can we outrun God? Explain? How does this encourage you today?
13. How can this group pray for you and our church this week? Pray for people to invite to your Church Table, Community Table, and Cultural Table.

## Did a Great Fish Really Swallow Jonah?

❑ There are some alleged historical accounts of great fish swallowing people who survived, but these stories have never been substantiated.

❑ Jonah was not necessarily in the fish for 72 hours.

In Jewish thought, a portion of a 24-hour period is considered to be a complete 24-hour period.

❑ It is possible that Jonah did not live in the fish but died, and he was resurrected when the fish disgorged him.

Jonah 2:2 "...From deep in the realm of the dead (*Sheol*) I called for help, and you listened to my cry." (NIV)

The Old Testament teaches that *Sheol* was the underworld, the realm of the dead.

❑ Jesus believed that Jonah's experience in the fish was a historical reality. (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:4; Lk. 11:29-32)

Jesus said: Matthew 12:39 "...the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish (*ketos* – "huge fish, sea monster, whale"), so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (NIV)

❑ If we believe in the miraculous intervention of God in this world, then accepting the story of Jonah as a straightforward historical account is not difficult.

Matthew 19:26 ...Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (NAS)