

## Day 1

September 21



### Pray | *To repent of anger and extend God's mercy to others*

ANGER CAN GIVE US TUNNEL VISION. Fixating on the sins of others can make us forget our own sinfulness and need for mercy.

In the last chapter of Jonah, we find God's prophet Jonah sitting on a hill, staring at the city of Nineveh. After blatantly disobeying and running from God, Jonah personally experienced God's mercy in the storm and in the fish. God gave him a second chance and Jonah preached a message of repentance to the sinful people of Nineveh. Through Jonah, God did a miracle! The most unlikely people listened, repented, and followed God.

Nineveh's repentance should have caused Jonah to celebrate, but instead, he was angry. Fixated on Nineveh's sin, Jonah forgot his own sinfulness and need for God's mercy. As a result, God's mercy to Nineveh offended Jonah. His consuming anger and bitterness gave him tunnel vision; he used all his time focused on Nineveh's failure and destruction.



Read | *Jonah 4:4-11, Romans 5:8*

### Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Consider a time when you felt anger toward a person or group, or toward God. What was the effect on your attitude and relationship with God and others? Ask God to reveal where still you harbor bitterness.

Romans says that God's love was demonstrated in Christ's death. God does not have angry tunnel vision; he offers mercy to all who call on Jesus. How does God's love and mercy to you change your view of those who have wronged you? Confess where you need God's help to love and extend mercy to others.

God used questions to hold up a mirror to Jonah's anger. When has God used scripture, a friend, sermon, or other means to warn you about your anger? Ask God to help you turn to him in your anger, and to fix your eyes on Jesus when you are tempted to choose bitterness.



### Pray | *Pray for the World*

Pray for our Ministry Partners in Haiti: That effective partnerships would increase in number and opportunity for ministry, training and economic development to the Haitian people. Please pray for success in developing businesses that will provide jobs in farming and small business, etc. Please also pray for the workers in the Medical/Dental clinic, that the Gospel will be communicated as patients are treated.

*Day 2*  
September 22



Pray | *To be on guard against entitlement*

ENTITLEMENT DOES NOT REFLECT GOD'S HEART.

Entitlement describes the belief that one deserves privileges or special treatment that others do not. Today, a sense or feeling of entitlement is common. While entitlement is often scorned, it is also expected. Despite its prevalence in our culture, entitlement is a dangerous way to live and is a result of pride. Entitlement drives us to compare ourselves to others and decide that we are better or more deserving to receive good things. As we look at what others have or achieve, our hearts cry, "No Fair!", like an angry toddler. We miss opportunities to celebrate the success of others and to applaud people and their hard work. Jonah, sitting and staring at Nineveh while stewing in anger and waiting for their destruction, looks rather entitled.



Read | *Jonah 4:4-11, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9*



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

To what have you felt entitled? What was the effect on your attitude and your relationship with God and with people? Ask God to reveal and protect your heart from entitlement today.

Have you, like Jonah, resented God's grace toward someone else while feeling entitled to the grace God gave you? Romans says that ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Ephesians says that we are saved by grace, not works, so no one can boast. Ask God to help you remember his grace to you as you consider his grace to others.

Have you received God's grace and gift of salvation through faith in Jesus? You are loved by God. He sent his Son to die and save YOU. There is nothing you can do to earn this gift. It's free! To learn more, talk to a Five Oaks staff member or consider joining a small group:  
<https://www.fiveoaks.church/small-groups>

## Day 3

September 23



Pray | *To experience and reflect God's compassion*

GOD THINKS YOU ARE WORTH SAVING.

Over time, computers and smart phones slow down. Their batteries hold a charge for less time, and they become bogged down from all the connections made and files saved and deleted. Calls are dropped, downloads stall out, and connection to the internet becomes unstable. Sometimes, a tech-savvy person can clean them up and make them run better. But sometimes, the time and money required leads to the decision that they just are not worth saving.

Similarly, people and cultures can become bogged down with sin and its effects. The connection to God and God's Word becomes limited or lost. However, unlike phones and laptops, God values people and no person is too costly to save. His compassion for people is unmatched and we are called to reflect his compassion to the world.



Read | *Jonah 4:4-11, Mark 6:34, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

When Jonah did not understand why his response to God's mercy toward Nineveh was a problem, God graciously gave him an illustration using the plant. Then, God challenged Jonah's anger. Jonah felt compassion for a plant, but not for people in Nineveh. Ask God to give you his heart for people, even those you struggle with.

Jesus is God in human form and reveals God's character. In Mark, and throughout the Gospels, Jesus showed compassion by teaching, healing and meeting spiritual needs of broken people. To whom is God calling you to show compassion? As a person or group comes to mind, ask God to show you specific ways to reflect God's compassion for people.

2 Corinthians says we are equipped to comfort others as we have been comforted by God. What comfort have you received from God that you have been able to share with others?

*Day 4*  
September 24



Pray | *For God to equip you to engage with and love your neighbor*

WE ARE CALLED TO BE IN THE WORLD, NOT OF THE WORLD.

What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world? Well, it means we are not called to live in a bubble, only interacting with those who are like-minded. Instead, we are called to live, scattered throughout our community, and to engage with the people we encounter. This means intentionally crossing cultural boundaries to befriend family, neighbors, coworkers, and community members who begin as strangers. Furthermore, we are called to do this while following and reflecting Jesus. To do so, we must resist the temptation to blend in by accepting cultural norms that do not align with the character of Jesus. It will not always be easy. But believers are both filled with and equipped by the Holy Spirit to love people in the world, without being of the world.



Read | *Matthew 5:43-44, Luke 10:27-37, Romans 12:2*



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

The world tempts us to call those who oppose us, or even who are simply different from us, enemies. However, in Matthew 5, Jesus says to love our neighbors, and instead of hating our enemy, to pray for them. Even those who persecute us. Whom do you have trouble calling neighbor instead of enemy? Ask God to soften your heart and to help you begin to pray for your neighbor.

How does the description of loving your neighbor in Luke 10 challenge or encourage you? How has someone unexpected shown you love and compassion? Ask God with whom he may be calling you to begin to get to know and share the love of Jesus.

In what ways are you tempted by the patterns of the world? What daily practices do you have in place to renew your mind as described in Romans? Consider how the practices of prayer, reading the Bible and worship can be added to your daily routines to help you stay focused on God as you engage with the world.

## Day 5

September 25



Pray | *To respond to God and His call wholeheartedly*

### HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

A good story is hard to beat. Whether the story is told in a book, a movie, or in conversation, a good story makes us want to stick with it until we hear what happens in the end.

The story of Jonah is filled with great plot lines. A prophet running from God, the God who rules the sea and sea creatures, a city of people whose sin has offended God and his people, and the surprise of an entire city turning to God! These are the makings of a great story. However, the ending leaves us hanging. God asks Jonah a question and we turn to see the answer, but there is none. Why would God leave us hanging? Instead of getting caught up in the ending, we need to be asking a more important question: “What is my response to this?”



Read | *Jonah 4:4-11*



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Given what we already know about Jonah, how do you think he responded to God’s question? How does the idea that Jonah stayed stuck in his anger and bitterness challenge you to live differently?

The Bible is applicable and relevant today, in our circumstances. As you consider lost people and cultures today, how do you respond? Ask God to open your eyes to see people as he does – as people who are lost and deeply loved by God.

Who comes to mind when you think about lost people and cultures in your sphere of influence? Pray and ask God to show you one step you can take to share God’s love with someone specific this week.

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