



Jonah

Runaway Prophet



Study 2: The Regurgitated Prophet

Discussion Starter

Ask each person to share a brief answer to the question: "If you could live this last week again, what one thing would you want to do differently, and why?"

Worship God Together

Leaders note: It is possible that today's worship time will open up a hurt or need that you will need to spend time praying for together as a group. Don't be afraid to abandon the study and your agenda for the meeting if needs be.

Worship is not exclusively a happy thing, in fact we sell God short if we assume that we have to be feeling good to offer him the worship He deserves. However, worship in the difficult times will sometimes take quite a different form from the upbeat praise we often focus upon. The psalmists knew this, and the book of Psalms is sprinkled with 'laments', those psalms which are designed to enable us to express ourselves in worship to God at those times when we least feel like singing for joy.

Ask one person to read through Psalm 42 slowly, and then allow three or four minutes of silence.

In the quiet, encourage everyone to talk to God about their feelings towards anything they are struggling with at the moment – any frustrations, disappointments, hurts or fears. The simple act of acknowledging before God the way we are feeling and inviting him to meet with us in those feelings is an act of worship in itself.

Read the psalm a second time, and encourage everyone to join in the refrain in verses five and eleven. You may want to allow a few minutes for people to respond to God in silent or open prayer.

Focus on the Word

Read Jonah chapter 2 and discuss the following questions together:

- Reading through Jonah's psalm, make a list of all the actions that he attributes to himself, and all the actions that he attributes to God.
- Look at the kind of language Jonah uses, particularly the different phrases expressing depth or separation. What impression is given of his state of mind throughout these events?
- What does Jonah's prayer tell us about the point at which he changed his attitude towards God?
- Compare the point that the seamen had reached in their relationship with God at the end of chapter one with the point Jonah reaches by the end of this chapter. What similarities do you see? What common factors brought them to that point? Are there any lessons that we can learn from this?
- What would you say are the characteristics of true repentance?
- How seriously would you take Jonah's repentance? Has his heart really changed? How did God respond to his words? Does anything here surprise you?
- Both Jonah and the sailors appear to place a lot of significance on the idea of making vows to God, and then making good on them. Do you think that we treat promises that we make to

God with the same weight and seriousness? Ought we to? (If anyone suggests that this is a purely Old Testament concept, you might want to read Acts 18:18 or 21:22-24.)

Work it Through

In groups of two or three discuss:

- Have you had times when you have encountered God “in the depths”? If you feel able, share a little of the situation and how God entered into it.
- Are there situations in which you currently feel you need to encounter God? You need not share any more detail than you are comfortable with.
- Is there anything else that this study has brought up which you would like prayer for?

Pray for each other.