



## Small Group Guide | Session 3

### Alpha Prayer Points

**Praise God!** We prayed for 15-20 people to serve with Alpha, and He brought 24! Pray that God would shine His light and love through them..

**Pray** for God to be working in the hearts of those who are a part of this Alpha whether they are non-Christians or Christians who are searching. Even more people came this past week, as we prayed for God to continue to draw more people and for them to respond.

**Pray** for spiritual protection for those who are participating in and serving with Alpha. People do experience spiritual opposition during the course, as Ephesians 6:12 informs us our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Pray for God to cover and protect them by His might and strength.

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### HOW DID IT GO?

- How did you encounter God this week? When did you struggle to do what you knew God wanted you to do? In what ways did you stubbornly resist Him? Discuss ways that you acted like Jonah—along with some of the consequences.
- It was ironic that pagan sailors were more willing to call on their gods than Jonah was to call on his. When has the behavior of non-Christians convicted you?
- Jonah lived in a multicultural society like we do. What steps have you taken to understand some of the vibrant varieties of culture in Houston?

Read aloud the passages for this week: **Jonah 1:7-10.**

## **HEAD | Observe the text and the author's main points.**

1. "Who are you?" After the pagan sailors are led by God to realize that the tempest is the result of Jonah's sin, they ask about his identity. To know which god has been angered, what do they ask Jonah in verse 8?
2. "I am a Hebrew." Jonah identifies himself first ethnically in verse 9. What does this indicate about what he values in his identity? How does this impact his relationship with the pagan sailors? With God?
3. "What have you done?!" The pagan men were seized by fear when they learned about Jonah's God in verse 10. What does the pagan crew's response show about how they perceive Jonah and his God?

## **HEART | Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.**

1. How would you answer the questions the sailors ask Jonah in verse 8? What things are foundational to your identity? Your mission? Are these God-centered or centered around other gods? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment about this.
2. How does your identity get in the way of being honest about your brokenness? Discuss times when you have admitted your brokenness to others. What was the impact?

## **HANDS | Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.**

### **Reaching Upwards | Growing in Your Relationship with God**

- God wants a relationship based on His love for us. This week, ask God to show you when you are putting your trust in something other than Him and His grace. Be open to hear what He says, and to respond with repentance.
- In spite of the storm, Jonah remained stubbornly opposed to the call God gave him. Ask the Lord to reveal where you are stubbornly resisting Him so you can surrender that to Him.

### **Reaching Outward | Investing in Your Neighbors**

- Jonah's sin affected his relationship with God and his relationship with those around him who were the sailors and other passengers on the boat. When has sin impacted your relationship with God and your relationship with others?
- As followers of Jesus, we are called to clearly communicate our own sin and reliance upon our Savior. We ought to be the most open, honest, and authentic people, especially in revealing our brokenness, because of the good news of God's grace in Jesus. Ask the Lord which of your relationships are lacking these attributes, and ask Him to transform them. Besides praying, what actions will you take this week to move toward wholeness in some of these relationships? Share with the group what this transformation will look like.
- What storms in your life today are opportunities for reliance on the grace of God and witness to others?

## Reaching Beyond

- Jonah treated the sailors as “others,” meaning not of his tribe and less than human. In Christ, God reconciled us with Himself and with others (Ephesians 2:14). Ask God to show you who you are treating as “other” and to give you opportunities to respond differently to them.