

“Transforming Fear” - Week 2

New Thru 30 Finish Up

If you didn't have the opportunity to mention it last week, talk to your group and see if they would like to continue a specific Bible reading plan together. There will be several available on Sunday mornings for the next few weeks, and even more available online at www.youversion.com. Reading together as a group is not only great for accountability, but also for camaraderie.

Study/Discussion

Last week we began a new series on the book of Jonah. We talked about Jonah's reluctance to accept the call God had placed on his life, and his attempt to run from this reality. This week's study/discussion time will focus on what happens next in the story of Jonah.

- ▶ What parts of this week's message impacted you the most?

Start out by reading **Jonah 1:4-16**

- ▶ One of the main points from this week's message was that **“When we try to run from God, it often affects others around us.”** Have you ever seen this happen in your life? Maybe you were the person who was affected?
- ▶ It seems very common for all of us to only think about how our actions affect ourselves. What do you think it is about our culture that encourages that so much?

- ▶ In these first 10 verses there is a play on words happening that is only visible in the original Hebrew. The word *yarad* is used to describe Jonah's passive actions in several different verses:

- 1:3 – Jonah “went down to Joppa” (*yarad*)
- 1:5 – Jonah “had gone below deck” (*yarad*)
- 1:5 – Jonah “falls into a deep sleep” (*yaradam*)

In verse 6, the captain uses a very similar word *radam* when he wakes Jonah and urges him to action. This is a play on words that sound the same, but imply two completely different actions. It seems evident that there is something that we should notice about the change in Jonah's actions here in verse 6. What change do you see taking place? Why is it significant?

- ▶ In verses 6-16 we see a transformation in the nature and function of the sailor's fear. In this week's message it was outlined in this way.
 - **Fear of the unknown (Vs. 5)** - They were afraid of the storm, but were not sure of the cause or source.
 - **Fear of the known (Vs. 9-10)** - They feared the God who controlled the powers that were working against them in the storm.
 - **Fear of a God who saves (Vs. 16)** – They became God-fearing men who offered Him reverence and worship through sacrifices and vows.

- ▶ Knowing that their quick conversion is somewhat uncommon, how do you think their fear was transformed so quickly? What seems to be the source or reason behind it?
- ▶ What stage of the process do you think most non-believers are in? Fear of the unknown, or fear of the known?

Closing

- ▶ Ultimately, Jonah makes a transition during this great storm. Though he is rather unwilling, he does speak of God's great power and fame to the sailors. He was not in pursuit of what God had originally called him to ("Go to Nineveh..."), but once his pride finally gave way to God's direction, God was able to do a great work in the lives of the mariners. Even though he was out of position, he was not out of power! Do you ever feel "out of position" to fulfill God's calling in your life? What can you do to capitalize on God's power, even in such a position?

Accountability

Take your time to carefully approach the topic of accountability. Show the group how serious you are by continuing to share your struggles, and they will be more willing to join you.

- ▶ What struggles are the most prevalent in your life right now?
- ▶ How can your Life Group encourage you in your efforts to overcome these struggles?

Prayer

End your time together with a short time of prayer and support.