

JONAH

Early Childhood

PARENT BIBLE STUDY

Read: Jonah 1

We are all like Jonah. His story serves as a mirror for our own stories, and his defiance points to our own disobedience. We get stuck in our own way, running towards comfort and our own satisfaction instead of leaning into what God is asking us to do.

God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, but instead of obeying, he ran in the opposite direction. Jonah found a boat going to a city as far away as possible from Nineveh. Defiance ruled Jonah's heart; and he fled God's command out of fear, selfishness, and pride.

In the familiarity of this story, let's not miss what Jonah did. He deliberately disobeyed the one, true God of the universe even though it was his very job to proclaim God's truth to wayward people. Jonah forgot that he himself was a wayward person. He wasn't above disobedience. Turns out, Jonah's heart was just as corrupt as the city of Nineveh. He needed God to show him mercy just as much as Nineveh needed that message of God's mercy from Jonah. If we read this story in judgment of Jonah's defiance, we miss the point.

But Jonah's story shows us something else, too: the closeness of God's presence. It is both a terrifying and an incredible gift that the presence of God is inescapable. Jonah's story shows us that we cannot run away from God. He is everywhere and he pursues us, even in our disobedience.

This truth is all over the Bible and is at the core of the Gospel. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God's love for us doesn't wait for our obedience. It collides with our disobedience. Jonah was sinning – actively running away from God, and even though he didn't want God, God never left him alone.

Have you ever felt God's nudge to do or say something, but you chose to ignore it?

Read Romans 5:8 again. What does it mean to you in the context of your disobedience? Does it affirm God's love for you?