



## Group Guide

# Persistence in Prayer

*January 26, 2025*

**Main Passage: Jonah 3:1-10**

## Theological Theme

Despite our brokenness, God desires to use us in His plan to reach the world with the gospel.

## Introduction

- ❓ What is the longest you have persisted in prayer about something?
- ❓ Why is it easier to give up praying about specific things over time?

## 1. God's Call to Jonah (Jonah 3:1-2)

Despite Jonah's initial resistance (Jonah 1-2), the Lord gave Jonah another opportunity to listen and obey His instruction. Today's passage occurs after Jonah ran the opposite direction from God's original call for him to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. In his rebellion from the Lord, Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and spent three days inside its belly. Jonah cried out to God and repented of his sin. Once safely back on dry ground, Jonah heard from the Lord again.

- ❓ Are there places you might feel reluctant to go or people you might feel reluctant to share God's grace with because you know God forgives and restores those who repent? If this is our posture, how have we misunderstood our own need for the gospel?
- ❓ Why do you think God often give us the next step but not the next ten steps? How is this connected to our need for persistence in prayer?
- ❓ Application: How have prayer taught you to depend on God daily?

## 2. Jonah's Message to Nineveh (Jonah 3:3-4)

Sometimes lessons must be learned the hard way and that is what happened with Jonah. When he resisted obedience to God by running from Nineveh the first time, he learned that life outside of God's will is not the place to be. So, the second time he heard from the Lord, he responded immediately, "according to the Lord's command" (v. 3).

- ① How do Jonah's actions show that He learned from his previous disobedience to God and the consequences that followed? When have you had to learn a lesson from God the hard way?
- ① How would the overwhelming nature of the city and the task to be completed require Jonah to continue to depend on God? How do overwhelming tasks or circumstances lead you to persist in reliant prayer?
- ① Application: Who do you have a hard time believing could ever become a Christian? How can you persist in prayer for that person or group of people?

### 3. Nineveh's Response (Jonah 3:5-10)

Jonah's task was not a futile one; it was fruitful. The people believed God and responded in repentance. Jonah's words landed on people who were ready to receive them even though it may not have seemed that way. God had been working to prepare the hearts of the Ninevites so that they would receive His message and be changed.

- ① When have you seen God work in a person's life in an unexpected way? When we fail to act because we don't believe a person can change, how is this a failure of faith in God?
- ① How has your life changed as you've experienced conviction of sin and responded in repentance?
- ① Application: Where might you need to call out to God in repentance now?

### Conclusion

- ① Who have you resisted sharing Jesus with because you assume they won't receive the message? How is God challenging you in this today?
- ① How can we encourage one another toward obedience to God even when it doesn't make sense to us or goes against our personal preferences?
- ① Who might you tell about the love of God through the story of Jonah?