

# JONAH

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You Can't  
Outrun Grace

Street Level Christianity SERIES



# PAUL TRIPP

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# STUDY TIPS

## BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER...READ THIS!

Thank you for being willing to facilitate this study on Jonah. I believe that these 48 Old Testament verses summarize a biblical worldview, and God has chosen for you to help your brothers and sisters develop more accurate vision. How exciting!

*As the facilitator, your role is both similar and different to those participating. You should pay close attention to the material and listen with a humble heart, because God wants to teach you things. At the same time, it's your role to lead others and be available to give counsel, advice and wisdom.*

Here are some recommendations for you to keep in mind as you lead:

- **Watch all eight video lessons** and follow along with the Discussion Guide in advance of your first group gathering; having a full understanding of Jonah before this study begins will allow you to facilitate more effectively.
- **Agree on a start and end time** and honor it; eight, 60 to 75-minute gatherings should provide ample time to finish this study.
- **Facilitate each gathering**, asking questions and encouraging participation. Solicit answers from multiple participants; don't let the same person answer every question. For some questions, it might be appropriate to ask everyone, but don't force anyone to answer.
- **Allow time** for participants to answer, rephrasing the question when necessary. Avoid answering questions yourself; contribute, but don't dominate.
- **Affirm everyone's participation** and allow "questionable" responses to remain uncorrected. Rejecting answers, or allowing others to reject answers, can result in an environment of timidity and reduce honesty among participants. Often, a "questionable" or "faulty" answer will be corrected over the course of time.
- **Lead with transparency** and vulnerability, and others will follow. Remember, there's nothing that could ever be exposed about us that Jesus hasn't already covered. We have confidence to admit moral failure and cry out for help.
- **Adjust as necessary.** If you believe that skipping certain questions or spending an entire lesson on one question in particular will benefit your gathering, do so. There are multiple discussion questions for each lesson, and my assumption is that you won't be able to ask all of them in each lesson without rushing. This guide is merely a template, so select questions you believe are most relevant.

# ABOUT THE **AUTHOR**

**Dr. Paul David Tripp** is a pastor, author and conference speaker. He is the president of Paul Tripp Ministries and works to connect the transforming power of Jesus Christ to everyday life.

This vision has led Paul to write many books on Christian living and travel around the world speaking at events. Paul's driving passion is to help people understand how the gospel of Jesus Christ speaks with practical hope into all the things people experience in this broken world.



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# ONE

## What controls your heart?

Before we get into the book of Jonah, you need to understand what this story is about. In only forty-eight verses we will see four major themes:

- 1) At the center of the universe is a God of awesome, stunning, incalculable glory.
- 2) We live in an incredibly sinful, broken world.
- 3) We were designed to live for something greater than ourselves.
- 4) There is a beautiful reality of powerful transforming grace at work in the world.

Our diseased hearts tell us a different story. Sin tells us we are the center of the universe, that we don't need Jesus, and that our personal kingdoms are greater than God's eternal kingdom. Far too often we live as God-amnesiacs: we know the facts about God but live as if He doesn't exist. We live as if the most holy things in our lives are our wants, our feelings, and our needs. We are all controlled by something. **The question is: what controls you?**

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“We can be God-amnesiacs in our marriages, in our parenting, at our work, in our finances... we can forget that we don't live in the center of the world, God does.”

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1) If God is not dominating the center of your life, you will put yourself in His place. How have you lived as a God-amnesiac this week? Be specific.

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2) Read **2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV)**:

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

How does the Word of God confront your God-amnesia? How could you have acted differently this past week?

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“It’s impossible for you to minimize sin without devaluing God’s grace, because the only people who get excited about God’s grace are people who get up every morning and name themselves as sinners.”

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**3)** It is tempting to minimize our sin rather than admitting how incredibly broken we are. How are you “a very skilled self-swindler” when it comes to your sin? Be specific.

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**4)** The theology of the sinfulness of man is the one thing none of us believe. We prove this when we minimize our sins and become defensive when others point out our sins. Do you live in a way that shows you believe you are sinful? How, specifically?

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**5)** When was the last time you got angry? Was it about God’s kingdom or your own little kingdom? What really controls your emotions?

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“I have one hope in life and death: it’s the grace of God. It’s forgiving, rescuing, transforming and ultimately delivering grace. Jonah preaches that grace from beginning to end.”

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## **STREET LEVEL TRUTH ::**

There is a God who controls the universe, and you was meant to live for him and not for yourself. This world is broken by sin, and grace is your only hope. You need a Savior. Jonah’s life is a huge neon sign pointing us to Jesus.

## **PRAYER ::**

God, I confess I live for my own little kingdom far too often. I confess I live like your grace and commands are insignificant. I know I am called to live for something bigger than myself every day. Give me the strength and grace to live for your holy kingdom. I know my heart is diseased and my only hope is Jesus who has taken my sin and shame to the cross. Lord, I pray that truth alone will control my heart. Amen.

## **MEMORY VERSE ::**

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV)

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

# TWO

## Do you have God's heart?

In the last session, we saw how we are willing to minimize our sin and overlook our shortcomings. In the same way, we minimize our faith by rejecting the difficult call of God in favor of comfort. We evaluate our Christian lives by our church attendance and emotional worship but don't walk across the street to tell our neighbor about Jesus. How do you respond when God chooses an experience for you that you would never plan for yourself? Could it be that somewhere, somehow, in some way, you are running from God?

*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. **Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV)***

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"Let's not be too hard on Jonah. Jonah is in the Bible because he's like us."

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1) We often ask God to show us his plan for our life, but then choose to reject that plan when it is difficult. How have you run from God's difficult plan this past week?

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