

Bible Study: When Life and Ministry is Hard

Do you ever feel like God is asking too much of you? Or like you're the one who has to do all the work and everyone else gets off easy? When life and ministry are hard, often our first impulse is to run. Escape into recreation, social media, television, food, or a good book. Anything to make us forget our trials.

We're not the only ones who want to escape when life is hard. In today's Bible study, we'll look at a man who was the master at escape: Jonah. In the first chapter alone, he has three trials. Let's take a look at those trials.

1. Read the following passages and describe Jonah's trials and how he handled each one:

Jonah 1:1-3

Jonah 1:4-5

Jonah 1:6-16

2. If you were to describe Jonah's typical response to trials in one word, what word would you use?
3. Why do you think Jonah responded that way?
4. How do you think God was hoping He'd respond?
5. Did Jonah's response to his trials hurt himself, others, or both? Explain.

Personal Reflection

1. The truth is, Jonah's not the only one with trials. We also have them. What's the biggest trial you're going through right now?

2. How are you responding to your trial?
3. Are you hurting yourself or anyone else by your response? Explain.
4. God wanted Jonah to go to the Ninevites because God loved the Ninevites and He wanted to give them an opportunity to repent. How do you think God wants you to respond to your trial?
5. Why do you think God wants you to respond that way?
6. What will you gain if you respond the way God wants you to respond?

Homework

Read the following Bible verses. What would God say to Jonah through these verses?
Review your answers to the Personal Reflection Questions. What would God say to you?

1. Psalm 37:23-24
2. Isaiah 43:1-3a
3. Isaiah 62:5-8
4. Luke 9:23

5. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

6. Philippians 2:3-8

7. Philippians 4:1

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the following statements are true from a biblical standpoint? Why or why not? Give examples from Scripture if possible:
 - a. If God really wants you to do something, He'll give you the desire.

 - b. If things aren't going smoothly, that's probably a sign you shouldn't be doing it.

2. Does God always ask us to serve in the area of our passions, or does He sometimes ask us to serve in the area of our non-passions and even our active dislikes? Explain.

3. Do you think the current push to serve in the area of our passions is good for the church or bad for it? Explain.

4. Why do you suppose God sometimes asks us to do things we don't want to do and don't even feel like we *can* do?