

JOURNEY TOWARD GOD - 4

Developing A Heart Like God's

"But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"
- Jonah 4:11

"The big question isn't 'Can a man live inside the belly of a whale?' Rather, 'Does the spirit of Jonah live inside us?'"

If God wanted only to save the city of Nineveh, the book would have ended at chapter 3. But there was still more work to do, for God wanted to save His servant from himself. Jonah was an angry man (vss 1, 2, 4, 9) who wanted to see Nineveh destroyed. Like the elder brother, he stayed outside and vented his bitterness (Luke 15:25-32). Jonah knew the heart of God theologically, but God's heart never possessed him.

Welcome

As a child, how did you respond when things didn't go your way? Do you still "pout?"

Worship

Praise God for His indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15), His grace that surpasses even our own self-righteousness! Possible songs: "Lamb of God" (176), "Give Thanks" (68), "His Grace Reaches Me" (113), "God Has Smiled On Me" (118).

Word

Read Jonah 4:1-11

1. What insight does this passage shed on the reason Jonah ran away from God's original call (Jonah 1:2)? When have you tried to limit God's mercy to others?
2. When was the last time you were furious about the way in which God dispensed His grace?
3. What is ironic about Jonah's prayer (vss 1-3) compared to his earlier prayer (chapter two)? Why does Jonah fail to notice the incongruity of his own prayers?
4. What does God attempt to use as a way of softening Jonah's heart? What has God used to drive home the importance of forgiveness to you?
5. What other passages come to mind which emphasize the basis for God's action in the world--His desire to give us what we need, not what we deserve?

Works

How has God used this study through the book of Jonah to prune your pride, or cultivate your heart? Share a specific way in which God's mercy will triumph over your own selfishness and self-pity.