

A Step in the Right Direction



01. READ

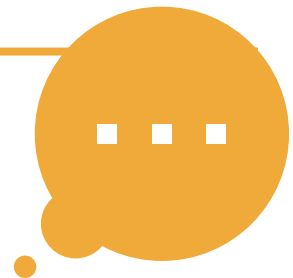


³ When you threw me into the depths, into the heart of the seas, the current overcame me. All your breakers and your billows swept over me. ⁴ And I said, "I have been banished from your sight, yet I will look once more toward your holy temple." ⁵ The water engulfed me up to the neck; the watery depths overcame me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶ I sank to the foundations of the mountains, the earth's gates shut behind me forever!

Then you raised my life from the Pit, Lord my God! ⁷ As my life was fading away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, to your holy temple. ⁸ Those who cherish worthless idols abandon their faithful love, ⁹ but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation belongs to the Lord. ¹⁰ Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

02. REFLECT

I think it's safe to say that the events of Jonah's life recorded in Scripture are the perfect setup for a Netflix show. Think about it—a rebellious character, a near death experience on the sea, and all of a sudden a huge fish swallows the main character. See what I mean? All the makings of a hit thriller! But you know what else this series of events caused? A rollercoaster of emotions.



In a matter of seven verses, Jonah was replaying so many experiences, thoughts and feelings in his mind. Why? Because he had just been through a traumatic event and his life was flashing before his eyes. The next time you're thrown overboard and swallowed by a fish, let me know if you remember which way is up. But, if there's anything you've learned about Jonah, it's that he knew God was his only source of hope and help.

You can see that Jonah went from despair, to hope, and finally to a resolved mindset. According to dictionary.com, resolve means "to come to a definite or earnest decision about; to determine." Notice what Jonah says in verse 9, "I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation belongs to the Lord." Jonah resolved in his mind to do what the Lord had asked him at the very beginning—go to Ninevah. And, it's not a coincidence that the fish hurled Jonah onto dry land as soon as he came to that conclusion. You better believe that Jonah was hightailing it to Ninevah as soon as his feet hit the sand. He probably didn't even slow down long enough to clean the fish guts off of his shoes. Jonah was on a mission—God's mission—and nothing was going to stand in his way.

Isn't it amazing how things can change when we make up our minds to follow God and obey what He has been telling us for days, weeks, or even months? The Lord is faithful even in our disobedience, but we see and understand his faithfulness so much more when we

finally decide to turn from our sin and run to Him. Hindsight is 20/20 and ironically, this year is 2020. What is God asking you to turn from? What is causing you frustration, disappointment and pain that you need to give up? Or, what step of faith is God asking you to take? How is He inviting you to join His mission? The only way to find out is to take that leap of faith and pursue Him with all that you are.

And when you look back, you'll see with complete clarity, that it was the best decision you've ever made.

**And when you look back,
you'll see with complete clarity,
that it was the best decision
you've ever made.**

Determine today to follow God wherever He leads. Put your entire trust in Him and stand firm in that decision. And when you do, no matter the circumstances, your anthem will be Psalm 23:6: "Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live"

03. RESPOND

- ▶ *Have your emotions ever gotten the best of you? How were you able to gain composure and refocus?*
- ▶ *Why is it important to have a resolved (firm / earnest) mindset as a Christian? What happens to your trust and belief in God if you don't have a strong foundation?*
- ▶ *How have you seen God work in your life when you made a decision to trust Him and do what He was asking? What step is He asking you to take right now?*

04. REMEMBER

***The Lord is faithful even
in our disobedience,
but we understand his
faithfulness so much
more after a step of
obedience.***

