



**DISCUSSION STARTER:** How would you describe the year 2009 if you could use only one word?

**DISCUSSION FOCUS:** More often than we care to admit, we're exactly like the prophet Jonah. We're more concerned with our own comfort than we are with the fact that the lost around us stand on the brink of God's eternal judgment if they do not repent and embrace Jesus Christ. If we're to embrace God's desire to rescue them, **we** need to recognize our own desperate need for Jesus Christ. Only as we seek daily to live in light of the compassion we have been shown through Jesus Christ and repent of our idolatrous comfort quests, choosing instead the lasting comfort found in him, will we have the sustained desire and power to tell the lost around us of Jesus Christ, who died for sinners.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Even if your Community Group isn't meeting this week, make a conscious effort to gather with 1-2 friends to read and discuss the book of Jonah. *Begin by reading the entire book aloud.* It's only four chapters, so it won't take you long. As you read, ask the Lord to give you renewed ears to hear his Word afresh. Ask him to help you step into Jonah's story and recognize rightly that Jonah's story is your story. Once you finish reading, reflect on the following questions together:

- What stands out to you from your reading of the book of Jonah?
  - Focus on how God clearly cares for the lost, those who do not know him, and for an entire pagan city. Do you think that God has changed his care for the lost?
- In what ways do you identify with Jonah?
  - Share a story when God was calling you to minister to a neighbor, co-worker, friend or family member, but you refused. What happened?
- Consider this statement: *If you choose comfort over mission, God can easily remove your comfort in order to call you into mission.* How did Jonah experience this? When you consider this statement in relation to your own life, what thoughts and feelings immediately come to mind?
  - Is your group choosing comfort over mission? Ask your group, "Looking back at our time together during 2009, in what ways have we succeeded in mission? Who have we invited into our group's structure that may not even be a part of Sojourn yet?" Once you have discussed this, ask your group, "How can we be more outward-focused in 2010? What are some practical ways that we can get out of comfort and get on mission?"
- Jonah lacked compassion, and he loved comfort. These two things kept Jonah from participating in God's mission to the Ninevites. What is it that keeps you from telling your family, your friends, your neighbors, and your co-workers about Jesus Christ?
  - Do you lack compassion for the lost?
    - Share an experience when you were blessed by serving the lost, poor or marginalized. Discuss how God used that experience to soften your heart to compassion. Remind your group that compassion often is given by God as we serve and give, not before.
  - Do you *really* believe that eternal judgment awaits the lost if they don't repent and believe the gospel?
    - To answer this question, share what your life would look like if you truly believed this. What would be different. What lengths would you go to in order to share God's good news and demonstrate his love in deed?
  - Why do you run from honest gospel conversations about sin, judgment, death, and faith in Christ? Is it because you love comfort more than you love a particular co-worker who may label you a Jesus freak or a religious fanatic?

- **Be honest here.** Share your convictions and your heart. Once your group shares their hesitations, fears and failures – transition the conversation to repentance. Ask what repentance (turning from these sins and turning to God) look like fore each person. Get practical.
      - Is it something else?
  - How might a fresh reminder of God’s compassion toward you and the lasting comfort that is yours in Jesus Christ renew in you a desire to share the gospel?
    - **Share a time when God made clear to you his compassion toward you. Be specific. How did this clarity affect the way you approached others with the gospel? Did you have a renewed zeal for God’s word to be made known? Was your compassion for others increased? If not, why not? Ask those in your group if they have had a similar experience and what their reaction was.**
  - Think for a moment about some specific individuals you will interact with this week. What would it look like for you to forsake comfort, embrace the promises of the gospel for you, and share the good news of Jesus with at least one of them?

**PRAYING THE MISSION FORWARD AS A FAMILY:** Pray simply that God would remind you of the compassion you have been shown in Jesus Christ. Ask him to remind you that Jesus didn’t cling to the heavenly comforts he enjoyed. Instead, he embraced death on a cross for you so that you could enjoy eternal comfort through him. Pray then that the Father would grant you a heart of compassion for specific people around you who do not know Christ. *Jonah was sent to the city of Nineveh to preach a specific message to a specific people. To whom is God sending **you** with his gospel message?*