

Study Series: Running from Mercy

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 Lesson Title: “Grace for the Rebellious” (pp. 7-20)

Session 1

December 4, 2022

The main point of this lesson is: Each person is rebellious toward God, but He extends grace to them anyway.

Focus on this goal: To help adults acknowledge their own rebellious tendencies toward God

Key Bible Passage: Jonah 1:1-6

Before the Session

On a board or large piece of paper, draw a long horizontal line, labeling the far left with the number 1, the far right with the number 10, and the center with the number 5. Write Rebellious at the top. (Step 1)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Briefly **share** a humorously rebellious time in your history. (For example, if you hated brushing your teeth and went to great lengths to avoid it.)

**Draw** learners’ **attention** to the board. **Say:** I’m not going to ask you to tell the situation, but consider the most rebellious season of your life. On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate your rebellion compared to others your age? As learners volunteer a number, **write** their names on the chart at the corresponding spot.

**Write**, Jonah at the number 10. **Say:** For the next several weeks, we’re going to look at a man whom many might consider to be the most rebellious God follower in the Old Testament: Jonah.

Step 2. A Rebellious Beginning, Part 1

**Ask:** *If you had to summarize the story line of the Bible in one sentence, what would it be?* (**Request** that any learners who remember the author’s summary not volunteer his answer.) **Read** the Day One Note (p. 8). **Engage** learners in discussing if they agree or disagree with the quote.

**Read** Romans 5:12 from your Bible; **draw** parallels between that verse and Jonah’s theme.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Jonah 1:1-2. **Help** learners understand that God’s command was clear and direct.

**Read** the last paragraph of Day One (p. 9), **pointing out** the irony of a rebellious prophet, but reminding learners we are all inherently rebellious.

Step 3. A Rebellious Beginning, Part 2

**Enlist** a volunteer to read Jonah 1:1-3. (Yes, that’s repeating the first two verses. We’ll do that a few times.) **Say:** We’d like to think that if we clearly heard a word from God, we’d immediately follow. But what do you think pointed Jonah away from Nineveh?

**Help** learners consider Jonah’s opinion of Ninevites and his own selfish feelings toward certain groups of people today. **Use** Day Two content (pp. 9-10) to **point out** that it’s not ignorance that’s the source of rebellion; it’s willful disobedience.

**Read** the paragraph (p. 11) that begins, “I’m sure there were people . . .” and **challenge** learners to consider how they may hide their own rebellion from themselves and others.

Step 4. A Resourceful God, Part 1

**Read** from your Bible the first three words of Jonah 1:4 (“But the Lord”). Then **read** the Day Three Note (p. 11).

**Explain** that Jonah’s story helps us understand more clearly some of God’s most mysterious characteristics: first, He’s omnipresent.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Psalm 139:7-12. **Share** a time in your own life that you tried to “hide” from God.

**Help** learners see that God’s seeking us out in our rebellion is an expression of His mercy, not His judgment. **Read** the last Day Three paragraph (p. 13), and **engage** learners in what it means to hide in God rather than hiding from Him.

Step 5. A Resourceful God, Part 2

**Enlist** a volunteer to read Jonah 1:1-5. **Say:** In addition to being omnipresent, we see in these verses that God is also omniscient and omnipotent.

**Use** Day Four content (pp. 13-15) to be sure learners are familiar with these theological terms. **Read** the second Day Four paragraph (pp. 13-14) as a brief overview of Scripture concerning God’s omniscience. **Point out** that His all-knowing understanding is terrifying for those rebelling, but comforting for those in His will.

**Ask:** How do we see God’s omnipotence in the first few verses of Jonah?

**Read** the Day Four Note (p. 15). **Lead** learners in a discussion of that quote, **asking** if they agree or disagree and why. **Invite** a few volunteers to share their own testimonies of God’s using His power to save them in some manner.

Step 6. A Rebellious Sleep

**Enlist** a volunteer to read Jonah 1:1-6. **Say:** And while the storm was roiling and the men on the boat were panicking, Jonah was sleeping. How does that reflect his spiritual condition?

**Use** Day Five content (pp. 16-17) to **guide** learners to consider their own spiritual slumber when we should be observing and participating in God’s work around us.

**Read** the Day Five Note (p. 16). **Engage** learners in discussing the significance of that truth.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Say:** We can’t read the first six verses of Jonah without encountering the knowledge, power, and presence of God. At the same time, we can’t help but see His mercy.

**Use** Day Five content (pp. 16-17) to **encourage** learners to dwell on God’s mercy in Jonah’s story as well as their own.

**Read** Luke 18:9-14. **Close in prayer,** asking that God would help us clearly see our own rebellious condition and cry out for God’s mercy.

