

Study Series: Running from Mercy

Author: Anthony J. Carter

 Lesson Title: “Redemption” (pp. 63-76)

Session 5

January 1, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: God pursues us in order to redeem us.

Focus on this goal: To help adults rejoice over God’s pursuit of their redemption

Key Bible Passage: Jonah 3:1-10

Before the Session

1. Consider your favorite cartoon that consistently portrays one character chasing another character. [Think Coyote and Roadrunner, Tom and Jerry, Sylvester and Tweety, Grizzy and the Lemmings, etc.] Prepare to describe it or share a clip with the class. (Step 1)

2. Hang a large piece of paper, divided in half with a vertical line, with the words Pursue and Redeem written at the top of the two sides. (Steps 2-7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**Say:** *Some of the best cartoons from the past were simple: one person—or animal—always chasing another.* **Share** a description or quick clip of your own favorite, and **engage** a few learners in describing other shows or books that they remember or enjoy about being chased.

**Ask:** *Have you ever felt like something is pursuing you, whether it’s bad luck or a life plan you’re trying to avoid?* **Explain** that today’s passage from Jonah might change our outlook on how it feels to be pursued.

Step 2. Pursued

Direct attention to the large piece of paper labeled with the words “Pursue” and “Redeem.” Ask: How would you define each of these words in a non-biblical setting? Explain that, through the rest of the lesson, you’ll be adding to our understanding of each of these words.

Use Day One content (pp. 63-64, especially the third paragraph) to begin a working definition of pursue. Write your group’s definition under the word.

Under the word “Redeem,” write freedom and use the Day One content (pp. 63-63) to walk learners through biblical examples of redemption.

Step 3. Redemption Is a Second Chance, Part 1

**Invite** a volunteer to read Jonah 3:1-10. **Reread** the first verse. Use Day Two content to stress the amazing grace of God in our second chances.

**Help** learners see that second chances are not guaranteed by **pointing out** the biblical examples in the second paragraph (p. 65).

**Read** John 3:17, **stressing** the fact that our redemption is an outpouring of God’s grace. **Invite** a volunteer to read Romans 5:20. As a group **consider** how our redemption and second chances reveal the glorious grace of God.

**Add** *not guaranteed* and *undeserved* to the column under “Redeem” on your large piece of paper. **Continue to add** to it at the end of each step.

Step 4. Redemption Is a Second Chance, Part 2

**Invite** a volunteer to read Jonah 1:2. Then **invite** another volunteer to read Jonah 3:2.

Playing dumb, **ask:** *After Jonah’s rebellion and confession and redemption, how was God’s plan changed?* **Invite** one more volunteer to read Malachi 3:6. **Say:** *Many people think God’s Word should be interpreted differently for the times in which we live; nothing could be further from the truth. God’s Word is the same for all time.*

**Read** the Day Three paragraph (p. 68) beginning “Today the Word of God . . . ,” **driving home** the fact that God’s Word doesn’t change; we do.

Step 5. Redemption Changes Heads, Hearts, and Hands

**Say:** Let’s turn our attention for a few minutes to the Ninevites; God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach against their evil ways. According to Jonah 3:1-10, how did they take Jonah’s message?

**Use** Day Four content (pp. 69-70) to **point out** the three ways in which the Ninevites repented: head (they believed), heart (they sought Him through fasting), and hands (they all dressed in sackcloth). **Help** learners see that we, too, must repent in all three ways.

**Consider** one sin many people struggle with (selfishness, pride, lying, anger, or so forth). As a group, **discuss** what it would look life in real life to repent of that act in one’s head, one’s heart, and one’s hands.

**Challenge** learners to **consider** a mentor or accountability relationship to check their thoughts, emotions, and actions as they walk in faith.

Step 6. Redemption Is God Relenting

**Read** the Day Five Note (p. 71): “When men and women repent, God relents.” **Read** Jonah 3:4, **looking back** at 3:2 to **remind** learners that Jonah’s message had come from God.

**Ask:** *How did the repentance of the people of Nineveh—both outward and inward—change their situation and standing with God?* **Help** learners see that God’s judgment was certainly on the wickedness of the citizens of Nineveh, but He ordained Jonah to carry a message that would cause repentance.

**Ask rhetorically:** *To whom has God sent you to deliver His message of hope and salvation through Jesus?*

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 73). Say: The people of Nineveh repented and obeyed, hoping that God would relent. But we have a different promise: God hears our prayers of repentance and He loves to offer mercy.

Close with prayer, inviting volunteers to voice prayers to God, thanking Him for His mercy as He has pursued and redeemed them.

