

Sermon-Based Small Group Preparation

For the week of February 5, 2012

“Living Beyond Resentment”

Sermon Series: *Flow* (week 4 of 7)

Colossians 3:8–10

» Please look over these questions *before* your Small Group meeting «

Getting Started

- 1) Have you ever experienced “Cognitive Incapacitation”? What are some scenarios in which you might find yourself in this “fight or flight” state?

Into the Bible

Read *Jonah 4*

¹ But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³ Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴ But the LORD replied, “Have you any right to be angry?”

⁵ Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. ⁷ But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered.

⁸ When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”

⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?”

“I do,” he said. “I am angry enough to die.”

¹⁰ But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹ 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?” (NIV1984)

- 2) Would you say that in this chapter Jonah is experiencing a moment of “Cognitive Incapacitation” and that his rational thought process is out of control?
- 3) Why do you think Jonah is so resentful about God’s change of heart toward the people of Nineveh and his decision to forego their destruction?
- 4) How does God respond to Jonah’s anger (vv. 4, 6–9)?

Refer to the following scriptures about anger and resentment for Questions 5–7:

Ecclesiastes 7:9: “Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools” (NIV1984).

James 1:19-20: “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (NIV).

Ephesians 4:31: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice” (NIV).

Psalms 37:8: “Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil” (NIV).

1 Timothy 2:8: “Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing” (NIV).

Romans 12:19: “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (NIV).

- 5) What unhealthy ways of managing anger do these verses imply?

- 6) If the fruit of the Spirit is the sign of God's indwelling presence, what changes would you realize in your patterns of resentment and anger if the Holy Spirit were allowed to flow more freely through you? (See *Galatians 5:22-23*.)

- 7) How does God feel about us allowing our anger to lead us towards revenge?

Digging Deeper

We have all experienced anger and resentment at one time or another. You've probably experienced both "quick heat" anger that flashes and dies and "slow burn" anger that never seems to completely die, but flares up over and over again. Or, perhaps you struggle with resentment that gnaws away at your contentment and joy.

- 8) What steps can we take to stay in the flow of the spirit and manage both types of anger or patterns of resentment?

- 9) What does this story about Jonah's anger and God's response teach us about our role in managing anger and resentment? What does it teach us about God's role in helping us deal with these emotions?

- 10) If we seek to dwell in the flow of the spirit, how might we better fulfill our role?

Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer

Sermon Notes

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- 1) Invite the Holy Spirit to manage your anger.

- 2) Invite the Holy Spirit to manage your non-anger.