

Ronnie Martin

Jonah & Nahum

Mercy Runs Deep



✓ 6-Session Bible Study

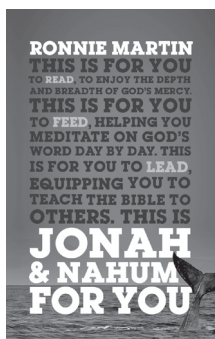
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Jonah & Nahum For You

These studies are adapted from *Jonah & Nahum For You*. If you are reading *Jonah & Nahum For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Jonah & Nahum For You*:

Study 1 > Ch 1

Study 2 > Ch 2

Study 3 > Ch 3

Study 4 > Ch 4

Study 5 > Ch 5

Study 6 > Ch 6-8

Find out more about *Jonah & Nahum For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

Jonah and Nahum: Mercy Runs Deep

A Good Book Guide

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Contents

Introduction	4
Why Study Jonah and Nahum?	5
1. Running from God <i>Jonah 1:1-6</i>	7
2. The Price of Peace <i>Jonah 1:5-16</i>	13
3. In the Depths <i>Jonah 1:17 – 2:10</i>	19
4. The Saving of a City <i>Jonah 3:1-10</i>	25
5. An Angry Prophet <i>Jonah 4:1-11</i>	31
6. Discipline and Deliverance <i>Nahum 1 – 3</i>	37
Leader's Guide	43



Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God's word as "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we've discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They're perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let's take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you're invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you've seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven't got time to do the whole thing in one go.

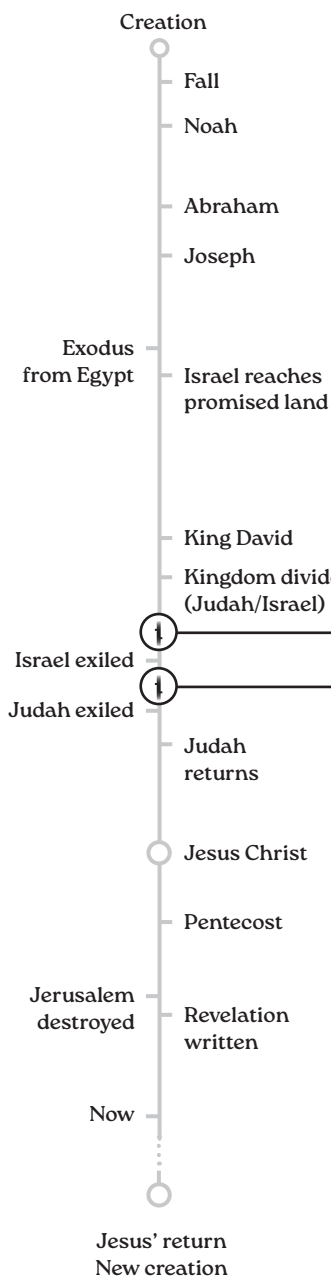
In the back of the book, you'll find a **Leader's Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God's light-giving word.

Why Study Jonah & Nahum?

The book of Jonah contains one of the most colorful stories in all of Scripture. Although in modern times it has gained a reputation for being a light, fun, and adventurous tale most appropriate for children in Sunday school, the words contained in this brief book offer serious theological and practical implications for the entire church and for every Christian today.

Though short, these four chapters cover some of Scripture's darkest themes, such as rebellion, racism, wrath, and unrepentance. Not surprisingly, we also see God's sovereignty, mercy, grace, patience, and forgiveness illuminated with a light and intensity that is all the greater because of the darkness. If that wasn't enough, Jonah also delivers elements of humorous irony and exaggeration that provide an enjoyable, energetic, and story-driven flow.

The first five studies in this Good Book Guide take you through this famous, but still surprising, story, showing you how it points us to the Lord Jesus and what it says to us as God's people today about our own hearts, our own repentance, and our own witness. Then, in the final study, you'll move forward a century to the time of the prophet Nahum, who has his own challenging message to give to the Ninevites to whom Jonah had (eventually) preached, along with a message of great comfort to deliver to God's people—then, and now.



Jonah c. 800–750 BC

Nahum c. 650–620 BC



1

Running from God

Jonah 1:1-6

Talkabout

1. What household chore or workplace task do you least like doing?

- Do you tend to find ways to avoid doing it? When you do tackle it, what has motivated you to get on and get it done?

Investigate

 Read Jonah 1:1-3

DICTIONARY

Come up before me (v 2): become something that God is no longer prepared to overlook.

2. What do we learn about Jonah in verse 1?

3. What task is Jonah given in verse 2?

4. What impression do you get of Nineveh from verse 2?

- Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Read Nahum 1:11; Isaiah 23:13 and 2 Kings 15:29: these descriptions of Assyria come from after Jonah's time but what do they tell us about what Assyria was like?

Famously, Jonah runs away from the task that has been given to him.

 **Read Jonah 4:2**

5. What does this suggest Jonah was concerned would happen if he went to Nineveh?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

Read Isaiah 6:8-10

- How does Isaiah give us a positive example to set against Jonah's negative one?

Apply

6. What challenging or unasked-for tasks has the Lord called you to, whether individually or as a church?

- In what ways might we be in danger of avoiding whole-hearted obedience to the Lord in these areas?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Regardless of who we are or what job we do, we can be sure that the Lord will ask us to do uncomfortable things.

Are there ways that you are resisting a command from the Lord to you, choosing instead to see it as an optional choice?

"For you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

God goes with you into what he calls you to do, strengthening and comforting you. How can knowing this change the way you view what he is asking of you?

Investigate

 Read Jonah 1:4-6

DICTIONARY

Mariners (v 5): sailors.

Tarshish was in the region of southeast Spain, about as far away from Nineveh as was physically possible within the known world at that time.

7. Why is Jonah unsuccessful in his attempt to reach Tarshish?

8. In what way do those on board attempt to deal with the storm?

Apply

9. Has God allowed his reluctant prophet to run away from him? Is this a comfort to us or a challenge to us, do you think?

10. Scan-read Luke 15:11-32. In what way has the story of Jonah so far mirrored the story of the younger brother?

11. What was the younger brother able to appreciate more because he had run away than if he had stayed at home in the first place?
12. Can you identify episodes in your own life where your disobedience has led you to be able to appreciate more fully the kindness and discipline and compassion of your God?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

We will see that Jonah's stubborn revolt against God was used by God for all kinds of good. This doesn't justify Jonah's disobedience, but it does point us to the redemptive nature of God. His plans are powerfully at work, even when it seems like we do everything in our feeble power to unravel them.

Do you need to allow these truths to reassure your own heart? Or is there a fellow believer you know who needs to hear this?

Pray

Use your answers to question 12 to prompt your prayers of praise and thanks. Then bring before the Lord the areas you discussed in question 6 and ask him to give you what you need to be ready to do what he asks.