

# Word One Bible Study

## What Do I Care?

by Marty Hasz

Text: Jonah 3:1-5,10 for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary Series B

### OBJECTIVES

Participants will have a thankful heart and a desire to reach out to others with compassion because of God's great mercy.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

Newsprint/markers OR

Paper and pen/pencils

### GROUP GUIDELINES

Each person should be committed to searching the Word for God's truth. As stories and perspectives are shared, respect should be given by keeping a high level of confidence rather than disrespecting with gossip.

Form groups of three to four people. Select a leader and recorder/secretary for each group.

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

In the groups of three to four, share the best and worst things that happened the past week.

### LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

Have a volunteer read the following to the entire group:

"What do I care? I mean...they were so undeserving! I saw those people. They didn't care about anybody but themselves. How could I even think about giving them the time of day? Why should I give attention to people who are so ungrateful? No one else does. In fact, God really wouldn't want me to be around them for fear that I would be negatively influenced by them."

That's what Jonah thought about the people of Nineveh. They were foreigners, not of the chosen nation, unbelievers, immoral and idol worshipers. All of us, at times, have some of Jonah's attitude. Have you ever wanted to stay away from certain people? We can be so concerned with our reputations and associations that we don't dare speak too much to those who aren't like us. After all, why reach out to someone who doesn't act like a Christian?

Each group should read these verses from Jonah and answer the questions:

1. Jonah 1:1-3 and 4:1-3. Why did Jonah flee? Describe Jonah's attitude.
2. Skim Jonah 1-2. How did God call Jonah on the carpet the first time?
3. Jonah 4:4-11. How did God call Jonah on the carpet the second time?
4. Jonah 3:1-5,10. For what purpose did God send Jonah?

### REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. Each small group should summarize for the large groups their learnings based on the previous questions.
2. Read Jonah 4:10-11. Have the group add their input following the italicized comments.

"But the Lord said, 'You have been concerned about this vine (*add your own items of concern*) though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh (*think of your own location*) has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people (*whatever the number*) who cannot tell their right hand from their left (*whatever our neighbors need*) and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city? (*God desires salvation for all people.*)" Jonah 4:10-11.

## **CLOSING**

Close with prayer. Include concerns from the group and those things mentioned in #2 above.

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