

Study Guide: Jonah (Dr. Paul David Tripp)

ONE: What Controls Your Heart?

Before we get into the book of Jonah, you need to understand what this story is about. In only forty-eight verses we will see four major themes:

- 1) At the center of the universe is a God of awesome, stunning, incalculable glory.
- 2) We live in an incredibly sinful, broken world.
- 3) We were designed to live for something greater than ourselves.
- 4) There is a beautiful reality of powerful transforming grace at work in the world.

Our diseased hearts tell us a different story. Sin tells us we are the center of the universe, that we don't need Jesus, and that our personal kingdoms are greater than God's eternal kingdom. Far too often we live as God-amnesiacs: we know the facts about God but live as if He doesn't exist. We live as if the most holy things in our lives are our wants, our feelings, and our needs. We are all controlled by something. The question is: what controls you?

"We can be God-amnesiacs in our marriages, in our parenting, at our work, in our finances...we can forget that we don't live in the center of the world, God does."

1) If God is not dominating the center of your life, you will put yourself in His place. How have you lived as a God-amnesiac this week? Be specific.

2) Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-16

How does the Word of God confront your God-amnesia? How could you have acted differently this past week?

"It's impossible for you to minimize sin without devaluing God's grace, because the only people who get excited about God's grace are people who get up every morning and name themselves as sinners."

3) It is tempting to minimize our sin rather than admitting how incredibly broken we are. How are you "a very skilled self-swindler" when it comes to your sin? Be specific.

4) The theology of sinfulness of man is the one thing none of us believe. We prove this when we minimize our sins and become defensive when others point out our sins. Do you live in a way that shows you believe you are sinful? How, specifically?

5) When was the last time you got angry? Was it about God's kingdom or your own little kingdom? What really controls your emotions?

"I have one hope in life and death. It's the grace of God. It's forgiving, rescuing, transforming and ultimately delivering grace. Jonah preaches that grace from beginning to end."

STREET LEVEL TRUTH: There is a God who controls the universe, and you were meant to live for him and not for yourself. This world is broken by sin, and grace is your only hope. You need a Savior. Jonah's life is a huge neon sign pointing us to Jesus.

Prayer: God, I confess I live for my own little kingdom far too often. I confess I live like your grace and commands are insignificant. I know I am called to live for something bigger than myself every day. Give me the strength and grace to live for your holy kingdom. I know my heart is diseased and my only hope is Jesus who has taken my sin and shame to the cross. Lord, I pray that truth alone will control my heart. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Cor. 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (ESV)