



A publication of DISCIPLE, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- 1 Critique this logic: "Supernatural events are impossible. The book of Jonah records supernatural events. Therefore the book of Jonah is fiction."
- Pastor Doug said: **"Liberal scholars try to discredit Jonah as mere fiction, parable or allegory, but I believe it is an accurate account of actual history."** Read Matthew 12:38-41 and let's see why...
- 2 In v. 38, the Pharisees request a **sign** from Jesus, and Jesus gave them "the sign of Jonah" (v. 39). The "sign" of Jonah is that **"just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** Were Jesus' three days in the grave fictional, parabolic, allegorical, or were they actually historic?
- 3 If Jesus actually, historically spent three days in the tomb, then what **must** be true about Jonah?
- 4 How does John 7:17 support Pastor Doug's assertion that **"God will always reveal His will to the believing heart"** and therefore that **"Ultimately, the issue for us is not God's will, but our will"**? **How can we know** if we have a "believing heart"? How do these passages describe such a heart?
- 5 Psalm 25:9 & 14 _____
Proverbs 3:32 _____
John 8:43-45 _____
- 6 Furthermore, we learned that **"The will of God is found in the Word of God."** What are the advantages of this fact? Are there any disadvantages to it? If so, what are they?
- 7 Pastor Doug noted that many people regret their failure to do the will of God, but that he's never heard anyone say, *"I regret that I did the will of God."*
What is **your** experience with the will of God?



Application-Challenge

- 8 The small but powerful Book of Jonah takes just ten minutes to read.
 - This week, read it through as many times as you possibly can.



1 The classic syllogism is: **All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.** (If the major and minor premises are true, the conclusion is valid.) This opening question will give you insights into your group member's worldviews—are they “naturalists” (ie, believing that all things must be explained by natural causes) or are they open to the supernatural (ie, miracles can happen). This question qualifies as “soft ball” since it deals only in the realm of the rational (not requiring any vulnerability on the part of group members), so it's good for getting the discussion going—and it can yield valuable insights. Make sure group members give their honest comments, rather than the “right” answer.

2 Read down through the bracket (ie, the first question), taking time to read Matthew 12:38-41. Then, keeping your Bibles open, focus on v. 38 and ask the first question.

3 Make sure group members understand the importance of “just as...so will” (ie, it makes a logical connection: “in the same way that _____, so also _____”). Then, ask this question. The bottom line is: a **fictitious** Jonah cannot be used to establish a **historical** resurrection, and vice versa). If one is historical, the other one has to be, and if one is fictional, the other one has to be, because one is an illustration of the other. Christians need to recognize that our faith is supernatural. One must believe that Jesus rose from the dead in order to be a Christian, and if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, then it establishes the existence of supernatural events, and therefore we must not be biased against other supernatural claims (such as Jonah being swallowed by a fish, the virgin birth, the parting of the Red Sea, etc.).

4 Ask this question before moving onto 5

5 Now, look ask this question, look up these passages, and answer the question.

6 This is **not** a trick question; we're looking for honest answers.

Advantages include:

- The Bible is printed, objective and “stable”—you can go back to it again and again to make sure you've understand the passage correctly. You don't have to rely on your memory.
- The Bible is permanently available—we're not left waiting on God for him to communicate to us.

Perceived disadvantages include: [Note: I'm not saying that these are valid—but they are common!]

- The Bible doesn't feel “personal” or “individual”—I want God to speak directly to me!
- Studying the Bible takes work—I just want God to tell me what he wants me to do. etc.

7 This question gives group members the opportunity to reflect on and to evaluate their walk with the Lord.

8 Pastor Doug really wants folks to become familiar with the story-line of Jonah.

It's an easy story to read (or, to listen to). It's brief and interesting.

Try to get group members to commit to reading it at least daily.

(Pastor Doug's going to ask for a show of hands next week—let's try not to disappoint him!)