

Which Jonah are You?

Ready:

“Those who cling to worthless idols forsake faithful love, but as for me, I will sacrifice to You with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation is from the Lord!”
-Jonah 2:8-9

Set

We are all familiar with the story of Jonah being swallowed by the giant fish. But, what is intriguing to me is that in the four chapters in the book of Jonah, he goes through four different phases with God. In chapter 1, Jonah is running away from God. In chapter 2, he is running to God. In chapter 3, he is running with God. And, in chapter 4, he is running ahead of God. I believe that in our Christian lives we all go through these phases as coaches and athletes.

In chapter 1, God asks Jonah to go to Nineveh and “preach against it.” But, instead Jonah hops on a ship for Tarshish in the complete opposite direction. How many times has this happened in our athletic careers or in our personal lives? I recall coaching one of my first tennis teams. We’d worked very hard through challenge matches to establish our ladder. However, when we faced our toughest opponent, I took it upon myself to juggle the lineup. I was hoping that this would strengthen the lower part of the ladder. This is commonly known in team tennis as “stacking.” Not only did this idea not feel right, it completely backfired. I had sent a negative message to my players that I didn’t believe that we could win with our regular lineup, and worse yet, went against what I knew God wanted me to do. Needless to say, we got smoked in that match.

In chapter 2, we find Jonah in the belly of the fish, praying to get out. This happens to all of us when we realize that we have sinned. We sincerely and quickly ask God to correct us. In this phase we are running toward God.

In chapter 3, Jonah goes to Nineveh and does everything that the Lord commanded him to do. This is where God wants all of us to be: running with Him! I’m sure we’ve all been here at times, and we wish we could remain here. This is the phase in which we are obeying Him and doing everything for His glory. Whether we are on the court, in the classroom, at home or in public, we are doing everything to honor Him.

In chapter 4, Jonah becomes greatly displeased with God. He is angry because God has allowed the people of Nineveh to be saved. How many times does this happen to us? We might say, “They shouldn’t have won. We work harder than they do. We should have won that game!” Or, “Our team prays, and they don’t. Why did You let them win, God?” Let’s all be very careful not to let ourselves or our players slip into this phase. Remember, we do everything for

His honor and glory. It not just about us!

Go

1. Which Jonah are you right now?
2. Can you identify a time in your life when you have been in each of these phases?
3. What can you do today to ensure that you are running with God?

Workout

Deuteronomy 6:5
1 Chronicles 16:31
Jeremiah 29:11

Bible Reference:

Jonah 2



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