

Running Like Jonah

INTRODUCTION.

- A. What is your motivation for running?
 - 1. You might run away from someone. Ex. A quarter back trying not to get tackled before getting rid of the ball. You run away when you are trying to avoid something.
 - 2. You might run to someone. Ex. A child running to the protecting arms of a loving parent. You run to something when you desire to be there with that something.
 - 3. You might run with someone. Ex. Two children running together to try to catch the school bus. You run with someone else when you possess the same desire or destination.
 - 4. You might run ahead of someone. Ex. Two children lost in the woods. One of the two takes the lead thinking that they know where they are going. You run ahead of someone when you think that you know the way to the desired destination.
- B. We can make a spiritual application of the previous question. Spiritually speaking, what is your motivation for running in regards to the Lord?
- C. In the Bible, we have an example of one who ran away, ran to, ran with, and ran ahead of the Lord. This man was Jonah.

I. JONAH RAN FROM GOD.

- A. The Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh. (1:2)
- B. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. Jonah chose to flee to Tarshish. (1:3) Jonah was attempting to flee from the presence of the Lord. (Cf. 1:10)
- C. Jonah's attempt to run from God nearly resulted in the loss of life of those on the ship. (1:4-9)
- D. The men threw Jonah into the water so that the Lord might deal with him. (1:12-17)
- E. The story of Jonah proves that no man can run from God.
 - 1. We can run from an responsibility. However, we cannot escape the consequences of running from our responsibility. (Heb. 10:26-31)
 - 2. The psalmist acknowledged that we cannot run from God. (Ps. 139:7-12)
- F. If you are not a Christian, but you know the Gospel's call, then please quit running from the Lord and obey His word today.

II. JONAH RAN TO GOD.

- A. In the second chapter, we see a repentant man.
 - 1. Jonah cried out to the Lord. (2:1-6)
 - 2. Jonah remembered the Lord and prayed to Him. (2:7)
 - 3. Jonah resolved to pay what he had vowed. (2:8-9)
- B. Jonah was repentant of having tried to run from God. As a result, Jonah ran to God.
- C. In order for Jonah to run to God, he had to have a change of mind and a change of heart.
- D. The same change must take place for a person to run to the Lord.
 - 1. Those who heard Peter's sermon had a change of heart. (Acts 2:35-41) We see that they ran to God.
 - 2. One must determine to show forth fruits of their repentant change.
 - a. Consider the citizens of Nineveh. (3:5-9)
 - b. John the baptizer taught the necessity to bear fruit. (Luke 3:8-14)
 - c. Consider the brethren in Corinth. (II Cor. 7:9-11)
- E. Consider the story of the prodigal son's return to his father. (Luke 15:11-24)
- F. If you are not a Christian, but you know the way to God, then run to the Lord by obeying the Gospel's call.

III. JONAH RAN WITH GOD.

- A. The Lord told Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh. (3:1-2)
- B. Jonah ran with the Lord by obeying His voice. (3:3-4)
- C. Every Christian must ask himself whether or not he is running with God. Like Jonah, we run with God every time we obey His Word. Consider the example set by Jesus. (Heb. 5:8-9)
- D. One can equate running with God with walking in the Light. (I John 1:7)
- E. We should all run with God the race set before us. (Heb. 12:1,2)

IV. JONAH RAN AHEAD OF GOD.

- A. When God saw Nineveh repent and turn from their evil ways, He relented on His decision to destroy Nineveh. (3:10)
- B. The decision of the Lord displeased Jonah. (4:1-3)
- C. Jonah tried to run ahead of God. He felt that God should have taken a different

course with Nineveh.

- D. Jeremiah wrote that the way of Man is not in himself. (Jer. 10:23; cf Isa . 55:9) Since man does not know his way, what makes any man think that they can tell God how to run His business.
- E. As Christians, we must never forget our relationship with the Lord.
 - 1. Jesus reminds us that we are mere unprofitable servants. The Lord says, "Do," and we say, "Yes, Lord." We do not question the Lord. We do not assume for the Lord.
 - 2. We can only live by the written word. Any questions unanswered by God should be answered by us with clear and unmistakable silence. Consider the words of Paul regarding the supposed wisdom of man. (I Cor. 3:18-20)
 - 3. As the saying goes, we should not attempt to whittle on God's end of the stick.

CONCLUSION.

- A. If you are not a Christian, then quit running away from the Lord and make the decision to run to the Lord. Once you run to the Lord through obedience to His word, you can then run with the Lord to eternal life with God in Heaven.
- B. If you are a Christian, you must make certain that you are running with the Lord. If you are not obeying the Lord, then begin by running to Him again, repenting of your sins. You can then run with the Lord to eternal life.
- C. If you are running with the Lord, work to make certain that you do not become guilty of running ahead of the Lord. Take the Bible for what it says and obey it. Do not add to the Bible, nor take away from the Bible.

Running Like Jonah - November 28, 1999 -- File # 692
by John M. Duvall -- Lawton, OK