

"Psyche Me Up"

A Monthly Newsletter : Brought to you by: Simpson University Wellness Center

Naw, I'm Good.

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Do I view obedience to God's Word as optional?

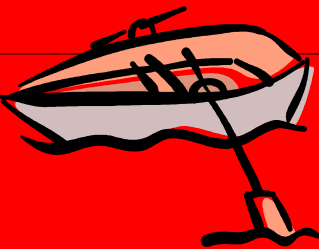
Have I mistaken God's patience with me as permission to continue on my current path?

Am I "sleeping" through the impact of my actions on those around me?"

How far, how long, can I run before I end up in the dark, suffocating belly of God's discipline?

What are my actions causing someone else to "throw overboard" in their life?

What will it take to "wake me up" to the conviction of the hardening of my heart?



Need More Help?

Talk to someone!

Talk to your roommate, a friend, your RA, your SRD, or stop by the Counseling Center!

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*Maybe it's just me, but it seems sometimes like the very thing we need most is that thing that we most avoid. Whether it's getting lost in facebook or texting for 3 hours instead of writing that paper that's due tomorrow ... or spending time with people who aren't good for us versus those whom we know are healthier for us ... or staying up all night, for whatever reason, instead of getting the sleep I know I desperately need ... you get the picture. We aren't always the best judge of what's truly best. And even if we know it, why is it so hard to do it? I submit to you that maybe it's not just "stress" or that we feel like we "deserve some down-time", but perhaps something a more dangerous ... a **hardened heart**.*

Remember that guy who got swallowed by, and was later vomited from the belly of a "great fish,"? He became the poster-boy for what happens when we do what we think is best and see the Word of the Lord as "**optional**". When the Word of God came for him, we find him **running**, making **his own plans** instead. Three times as he is **running** from the presence of the Lord scripture states that Jonah went "**down**". Ironically, Jonah didn't see how his actions were **taking him "down"**. He seems to have thought that he was **getting away with** not following God's plan for him. Maybe he thought God had "bigger fish to fry", and that He had moved on to someone else to do His bidding. In Divine humor, Jonah just "happened" to find a ship to Tarshish, and "happened" to have enough money to "pay the fare."

There is **great danger** in allowing circumstantial providence to **replace the truth** of what God has spoken. Jonah **could not actually escape** the presence of God, but because of the **hardness of his heart** he was getting **farther away** from God and there was a **high price** to pay. Jonah "paid the fare," all right. We always pay a price for **our own way**. Though the bill may come due in different ways for each of us.

*Unfortunately, Jonah was **not the only one** to pay a high price. The hardness of his heart **caused everyone else around him to pay a price** as well. The hardness of Jonah's heart **caused him to "sleep"**. Despite God hurling a storm to gain his attention, Jonah simply slept. He **slept through God's pleading** and caused a **heavy price to be paid by everyone on the ship**. They threw **their future and their livelihood overboard**, while Jonah slept on. Ultimately, Jonah's heart became so hard that he failed to see the need to turn back to God. In order to stop the storm, **his companions were forced to do what he should have done himself**: He was thrown from the ship instead of taking everyone "down" with him. It was the **ultimate selfishness**; not taking responsibility for his own actions nor caring about the **consequences for others**.*

Before we throw stones at Jonah, or others like him, it would do us well to **examine our own hearts** a little deeper. It doesn't take much self reflection to see that Jonah is me ... Jonah is you, and **we must wake from our slumber too** and recognize how our **actions or attitudes** just might be taking others "down" with us.

*"**Community**" at a small, Christian university, for some, may **seem restricting, even judgmental**, at times. Jonah may have thought the same about his shipmates. Some, here, were called by God to be here, others may have been **"running" away from something else** and just ended up here and they're not yet sure why. Whatever the reason, we are all on this "ship" together, and it can be **pretty tough getting along** in such tight quarters. We would all do well to remember that in any community of people, **our actions and attitudes—good and bad, right and wrong—really do affect those around us**.*

*Instead of a "Naw, I'm good" attitude that often means, "I'll just do my own thing in my own way", may we seek hard after loving the Lord with ALL of our unhardened **heart, mind and strength** ... And a heart that loves well our "neighbors" around us. A heart that considers the impact of our personal choices on others.*

Obedience to God is **not some oppressive submission** to authority ... it is the result of "having been persuaded by Truth." Believing, or "**being won over**" by the truth, I act in accordance with it.

I'm guessing Jonah was eventually "won over" by the truth, for **from inside the fish Jonah prayed**: "In my distress I called to the Lord and He answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the deep...all your waves and breakers swept over me...but you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God ... **those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs** ... but I, with a song of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you ..."

No matter how far, or how many times, we run ... at the end of our days we will find ourselves in the dark, suffocating belly of the fish, or, in repentance and submission we will end up on the beach.