

Character Study: Jonah
Part 4 – Jonah Learns an Important Lesson
Jonah 4:1-11

What's happening?

- Following the people of Nineveh's repentance, Jonah became upset that the Lord withheld His judgment against them. (4:1)
- Jonah's stated that knowing God's grace and slowness to anger was the reason he had fled to Tarshish in the first place. Now, after telling the Ninevites of a judgment that would no longer come, Jonah was embarrassed and asked the Lord to take his life. (4:2-3)
- The Lord responded by asking Jonah if it was right for him to be angry. He decided to teach Jonah an important lesson. (4:4)
- Jonah waited outside the city to see what would happen. God made a plant come up that provided him shade. But the next day God sent a worm to wither the plant, causing the sun to beat down on Jonah. Miserable in his situation, Jonah wished death upon himself. (4:5-8)
- God questioned Jonah about his anger, showing that if he could have pity over a plant, then he should not question the pity God had for the many people of Nineveh. (4:9-11)

What's God doing?

> God was using Jonah as His spokesperson to bring repentance to the people of Nineveh. Jonah's purpose was accomplished, though through it another problem arose. God had to give Jonah a lesson to help him better understand the grace and mercy God has for His creation.

What's to learn?

→ In Jonah's frustration, he became extremely self-focused. He was more worried about his image and well-being, than the thousands of souls in Nineveh. We must be careful not to let temporal issues take our focus off the eternal needs of those around us!

→ A key way to show you truly understand God's grace and compassion is by having a gracious and compassionate heart toward others.

→ God has a desire to show His love and compassion to all people. The fact that Jonah closed his book without answering God's final question (4:11, concerning God's desire to show compassion), implies that Jonah finally understood this truth was obvious. As we see how God relates to His creation, He is no doubt a God of love and compassion!

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