



06

JONAH 4:1-11

AN ANGRY PROPHET



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

It's okay to feel anger when someone hurts us, but we shouldn't let that anger control us. God commands us to forgive (see Eph. 4:32), not just for the sake of the person who hurt us, but also for our sake. Grudges make us miserable. They muddy our thinking, change the way we behave, make it hard for us to appreciate God's blessings, and rob us of joy. We may think we are doing what's fair when we hold a grudge, but when we zoom out and ask God to help us see things more clearly, we see that we are really no better than anyone else. This being true, we should celebrate the fact that God shows grace to everyone and extend that same forgiveness to the people in our life.



CENTRAL **truth**

We should celebrate the fact that God shows grace to everyone.



EXPLORE

scripture

JONAH 4:1-11

JONAH 4:1-4

1 Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. **2** He prayed to the LORD, "Please, LORD, isn't this what I said while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate

God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. **3** And now, LORD, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." **4** The LORD asked, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

JONAH 4:5-9

5 Jonah left the city and found a place east of it. He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. **6** Then the LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew over Jonah to provide shade for his head to rescue him from his trouble. Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. **7** When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked

the plant, and it withered. **8** As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so much that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, "It's better for me to die than to live." **9** Then God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "Yes, it's right!" he replied. "I'm angry enough to die!"

JONAH 4:10-11

10 And the LORD said, "You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. **11** So may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which

has more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?"

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JONAH 4:4

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JONAH 4:1-4

DWELL



Why was Jonah angry with God for being gracious and compassionate?



What can we learn from Jonah about the importance of humility?

Jonah went to Nineveh and preached as God had commanded him, and miraculously, the people repented! So God forgave them and didn't send the disaster He had threatened. But Jonah wasn't relieved—he was angry. He still preferred death over seeing God forgive a city that he thought deserved punishment. In his pride, Jonah thought that he was a better judge of what Nineveh deserved than God was.

MEMORIZE

Add reminders to your phone, computer, or calendar to read Jonah 4:4 every morning and night this week.

PRAY

Ask God to forgive you for times when you thought your thoughts and plans were better than His.

day 2

JONAH

4:5-9

DWELL

God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry?” He was trying to teach Jonah a lesson. He made a plant grow over Jonah’s shelter to give him shade from the scorching heat. Jonah rejoiced—not only did he have some relief from the heat, but God was showing him favor! But the next day, God made that same plant wither and die. But Jonah still didn’t understand—now he was just angry about the plant. God had withdrawn His blessing almost as soon as He had given it.



What lesson was God trying to teach Jonah about His mercy and authority?



Do you think it is right for God to show mercy to anyone He chooses, even if you don’t think they deserve it? Why or why not?

MEMORIZE

Write Jonah 4:4 on a sticky note and place it on your bathroom mirror. Read it to yourself each time you brush your teeth or wash your hands.

PRAY

Pray that God would open your eyes to see the people around you as He sees them.

day 3

JONAH

4:10-11

DWELL

Finally, God drove His point home. Jonah was angry about a plant that had grown without any work on his part, a plant that had grown overnight by God’s grace, and he was angry that God had chosen to forgive an entire city full of people with lives and families and animals. Didn’t they deserve God’s grace, too? Jonah still didn’t understand his own hypocrisy: he wanted God’s mercy for himself, but wasn’t willing to watch God give that same mercy to the Ninevites.



The book of Jonah ends after verse 11. How do you think Jonah responded to God’s final question?



What can God’s forgiveness toward Nineveh teach you about the way you should forgive people in your own life?

MEMORIZE

Pick a song you enjoy and read or sing Jonah 4:4 aloud to the beat of that song. Read the verse this way throughout the week, trying to recite more of it from memory each time.

PRAY

Thank God that He gives His gifts of mercy and forgiveness to anyone who believes in Him and follows His son, Jesus.

day 4

MATTHEW 20:11-16

DWELL

God is just, but because our idea of justice isn't always the same as God's, we tend to get frustrated with Him when He doesn't see things the way we do. Jesus demonstrated this in His parable of the vineyard workers. The landowner paid all the workers the same wage, regardless of how long they had been working. The workers who had been there all day complained, but the landowner pointed out that he had the right to do what he wanted with the things that were his. It's the same with God—we are all His to treat as He sees best, and unlike us, He sees everything perfectly.



Why were the workers upset? Would you have been upset? Why or why not?



Are you ever upset about the people to whom God chooses to show mercy? How might these verses help you think differently?

MEMORIZE

Write Jonah 4:4 on the center of a sheet of paper, then add drawings or doodles around the edges that relate to the verse. Hang it somewhere you will see it every day.

PRAY

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 as a prayer to God. Tell Him that you will trust in Him with all your heart and lean on His understanding rather than your own.

day 5

JAMES 4:13-17

DWELL

The world around us teaches us to make plans for our future—and making plans is good! But we should also remember that we don't see the future as clearly as God does, and that we can't say for certain that our plans will work out. That's why James points out that we "do not know what tomorrow will bring" (v. 14). God sees all things clearly: the future, the past, our presents, and even our hearts. When we arrogantly act as though we can know what the future will hold, we are saying that we know better than God and His will.



What did the merchants not understand about God? Why was their boasting wrong?



How can we be sure that we are including God in our future plans and relying on His guidance?

MEMORIZE

Write each word of Jonah 4:4 on a separate note card. Shuffle the cards and try to put them in the correct order. Do this throughout the week until you can do it without checking the answer.

PRAY

Thank God for His wise and gracious guidance through life. Pray that you would look to Him whenever you are making plans or decisions.