

Jonah

A Study in Obedience and Attitude

Lesson 7



Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum - Summer 2008

Created for use with young, unchurched learners • Adaptable for all ages including adults

Lesson 7

A Vine Versus the People

Scripture References

Jonah 4:6-11

Lesson Goals

Understand that God deserves respect and obedience
Understand that God sent His Son for everyone
Understand that we should care more for others than for our own wants

Memory Verse

When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves.
Philippians 2:3 (NCV)

What do you remember about Jonah after the big fish spit him up on the beach? (Encourage your students to share what they remember, prompting with information where necessary.) Jonah knew and understood what God is like. He was willing to experience God's kindness and love for himself, but he wasn't willing for it to be offered to his enemies the Ninevites.

Jonah had no reason to be angry. But instead of asking for God's forgiveness, instead of caring about his enemies the way God did, Jonah left the city. He went out towards the east of the city and he sat down. He found some branches and put them over his head and there he sat, in the shade. He waited to see if God would destroy Nineveh.

"Then the Lord God sent a vine and made it grow up over Jonah. It gave him more shade for his head. It made him more comfortable. Jonah was very happy he had the vine." (Jonah 4:6a NIV) In his misery while waiting for God to destroy his enemies, God provided Jonah a bit of comfort from the hot sun. A vine grew up quickly and gave Jonah more shade than the branches had. And Jonah was happy. Jonah was comfortable as he waited for the destruction of Nineveh.

But before the sun came up the next morning, God sent a worm. The worm chewed and chewed and made a meal of the vine that was sheltering Jonah. The vine dried up. And when the sun came up, God sent a strong, hot wind from the east. Without the vine, the sun beat down on Jonah's head. Jonah became very weak. Jonah even wanted to die! Jonah was still angry about Nineveh. Jonah preferred to die rather than see Nineveh spared from God's anger.

God spoke to Jonah, "Do you have any right to be angry about losing the vine?"

"I do," Jonah whined. "In fact, I'm angry enough about it to just die!" Jonah's vine was gone and he was upset. The sun made Jonah weak and uncomfortable. On top of that, Jonah didn't want to live any longer if Nineveh wasn't punished. Jonah was being selfish and angry. It's not very pretty, is it?

Application

We find ourselves at the end of the book of Jonah. It doesn't end "happily ever after," does it? Jonah, God's prophet, was a selfish, angry man. Even in his obedience to go to Nineveh, he was disobedient with his attitude.

How about you? Are you obeying God by doing what you know He wants you to do? It's impossible if you don't know Him. Have you prayed, asking God to come into your life and take control? If not, why not today?

And if you have given God control of your life, are you letting Him make the decisions so that you can follow Him or are you trying to be in control of your own life? Don't follow Jonah's example. "When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves." Philippians 2:3 (NCV)
That's what God wants you to do!



God wasn't finished with Jonah. God told him, "You've been all worried about this vine that grew up yesterday and died today. You didn't plant it, water it, or make it grow. But I've been concerned about Nineveh! There are more than 120,000 people in Nineveh. They don't know the difference between right and wrong the way you do. Don't I have a right to be concerned for them?"

Review Questions:

- What did Jonah do when God took pity on the Ninevites? (Jonah became angry.)
- What did Jonah do in his anger? (He went outside of the city. He sat in the shade waiting to see Nineveh destroyed.)
- What did God do next? (He made a vine grow up to give Jonah shade and make him comfortable.)
- What happened to the vine? (God sent a worm to eat it.)
- What was Jonah concerned about? (himself)
- What was God concerned about? (the people of Nineveh)

Preparing for Lesson 8

The Sign of Jonah
Matthew 12:39-41

Learning Activities

- Decorate your space to resemble a secluded place, like Jonah's place outside the city. Reuse the cardboard box lean to from last week. Decorate one wall of your space to resemble a city in the distance. Include a plant, possibly an inflatable tree so that as the story is told, the plug can be opened allowing the air to escape and, voila!, a withered, dried up tree.
- Provide pictures from different parts of the story of Jonah. Mix the pictures up and help your students order the pictures according to the story.
- Ask your students to think of times when they have been angry. Thinking of God's question to Jonah, ask your students, "Was it right for you to be angry?" Be sure they remember who God is and why He is to be obeyed. Then review what you've learned about Jonah as well as the memory verses. Prompt your students to think about whether their anger is right or wrong, and why.
- Make stick puppets or finger puppets of Jonah and the worm. Ask for volunteers to retell the story.
- Quiz your students about facts from the entire study.
- Review all previous lessons by playing Hangman, "Jonah Jeopardy," with a picture drawing game like Pictionary, or by playing charades.
- Be sure to continue practicing your play. Now would be a good time to send out invitations for your Open House. Make printouts your students can color and fill in. Help them hand-deliver their invitations.
- **A Deeper Look** - Read Philippians 2:1-4 from the Message. (FYI-We will look at verses 5-15 next week.) Discuss what your students have learned from the life of Jonah. Compare that to what you see in Philippians 2:1-4. What does it mean to follow Christ? How should our lives be different?

Memory Verse



When you do things,
do not let selfishness or pride
be your guide.

Instead, be humble
and give more honor to others
than to yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

Word Fun

What was Jonah concerned about? Trace the lines to find out.

HUMBLE

When you do things,
do not let selfishness or pride be your guide.
Instead, be humble and give more honor
to others than to yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

A Vine Versus the People

I F U L D E S E R S E E D W H
F K W H M L T H R S N R N E S
Y S L O O T O A N E D I R P V
O T H E R S R B T N V N E H R
U D H N E L B M U H O N I I I
R N D U H R N R E S L R V L D
S E T A O E P I G I F E L I N
E S R S N R E N L F O B M P I
L S E R O I I U E L L D N P K
V I D E R H L U V E L G O I S
E O M J T R A C I S U S Y A V
S O C O E M D E R I F H L N F
I E D I U G T R B R N E W S E
K W H A M E R C I F U L E H P
O R H N H E E I R B R A V E L

When you _____,
do not let _____ or _____ be your _____.
Instead, be _____ and give _____
to _____ than to _____.
_____ 2:3

A Vine Versus the People

I F U L D E S E R S E E D W H
F K W H M L T H R S N R N E S
Y S L O O T O A N E D I R P V
O T H E R S R B T N V N E H R
U D H N E L B M U H O N I I I
R N D U H R N R E S L R V L D
S E T A O E P I G I F E L I N
E S R S N R E N L F O B M P I
L S E R O I I U E L L D N P K
V I D E R H L U V E L G O I S
E O M J T R A C I S U S Y A V
S O C O E M D E R I F H L N F
I E D I U G T R B R N E W S E
K W H A M E R C I F U L E H P
O R H N H E E I R B R A V E L

When you do things,
do not let selfishness or pride be your guide.
Instead, be humble and give more honor
to others than to yourselves.

Philippians 2:3