

**In The Word at Bel Air with Dave and Nancy Worth – April 29
Running Ahead of God – Jonah 4**

A Vine Teaches Jonah About People

Jonah and the Vine	God and the People of Nineveh
Jonah cared for a vine	God cared for the people of Nineveh
Jonah was concerned for himself	God was concerned for the welfare of others
Jonah did not create the vine	God created all the people and animals in Nineveh
Jonah did nothing for the vine	God took care of Nineveh
The vine had temporal value	The people of Nineveh had both temporal and eternal value
Jonah's primary concern was for his own personal comfort	God's primary concern was for human life – and spiritual sensitivity toward Him
Jonah's values displayed selfishness and an upside-down perspective on life	God's values displayed His love and a proper perspective on life

Word in Life Bible Notes

Questions for thought and discussion:

1. When things don't go your way, how do you tend to respond?
2. Have you ever argued with God? Or been angry with God?
3. When have you experienced a surprising, undeserved measure of God's mercy in your life?
4. Jonah wanted Nineveh, Israel's enemy, destroyed. When have you wanted revenge rather than restoration in a relationship?
5. What is one way you can extend God's love and mercy toward others, particularly those who don't deserve it?
6. How do you feel about the way Jonah ends? How would you write the next chapter?

Jonah 4:1-11 (NRSV)

- 1 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry.
- 2 He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.
- 3 And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."
- 4 And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"
- 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.
- 6 The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush.
- 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered.
- 8 When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."
- 9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die."
- 10 Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night.
- 11 And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

Jonah 4:1-11 (The Message)

- 1 Jonah was furious. He lost his temper.
- 2 He yelled at GOD, "GOD! I knew it—when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That's why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness!
- 3 "So, GOD, if you won't kill them, kill *me*! I'm better off dead!"
- 4 GOD said, "What do you have to be angry about?"
- 5 But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city.
- 6 GOD arranged for a broad-leafed tree to spring up. It grew over Jonah to cool him off and get him out of his angry sulk. Jonah was pleased and enjoyed the shade. Life was looking up.
- 7 But then God sent a worm. By dawn of the next day, the worm had bored into the shade tree and it withered away.
- 8 The sun came up and God sent a hot, blistering wind from the east. The sun beat down on Jonah's head and he started to faint. He prayed to die: "I'm better off dead!"
- 9 Then God said to Jonah, "What right do you have to get angry about this shade tree?" Jonah said, "Plenty of right. It's made me angry enough to die!"
- 10 GOD said, "What's this? How is it that you can change your feelings from pleasure to anger overnight about a mere shade tree that you did nothing to get? You neither planted nor watered it. It grew up one night and died the next night.
- 11 So, why can't I likewise change what I feel about Nineveh from anger to pleasure, this big city of more than a hundred and twenty thousand childlike people who don't yet know right from wrong, to say nothing of all the innocent animals?"