

The Pouting Prophet



R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries

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Lessons from Jonah Chapter 4



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A Doctrinal Bible Studies Catalogue will be provided upon request.

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This book belongs to

Before you begin your Bible study . . .

If you have not believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can take this opportunity right now. Tell God the Father that you believe His Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross for your sins. You will immediately become part of God's family and will someday live with Him forever in heaven.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten [uniquely born] Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
(John 3:16)

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.”
(Acts 16:31a)

If you are already a believer in Jesus Christ, then now is the time to *rebound*—name your sins to God the Father.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship (in the bottom circle), filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine.

Remember Jonah? He's the prophet who didn't obey God. God told him to go to Nineveh and tell everyone about His love and grace. But Jonah didn't like the people in Nineveh, so he boarded a ship and sailed the opposite way.

God had to teach this stubborn prophet a tough lesson. First, a fierce storm rocked Jonah's ship back and forth. Then, the sailors threw him overboard and a giant fish swallowed him. After a few days, the fish spit Jonah up on shore so he could finally go to Nineveh.



Jonah warned the people there that if they didn't stop worshipping false gods, the one true God would destroy them. Then something amazing happened—everyone believed in God! Lots of parents and children, even the rulers . . . all will live forever in heaven. God welcomed them into His family and decided to spare their city.

Jonah must've been super happy about that, right? Maybe he finally understood that God's grace isn't just for *some* people—it's for *everyone*. God wants everyone to be saved and live with Him forever. And He wants us to be strong and happy while we live on earth. So, do you think Jonah got it? Let's see.





Uh-oh! Jonah forgot about God’s love and grace in a hurry. “I still hate those people!” he fumed. “They don’t deserve God’s care and protection. It’s not fair!”

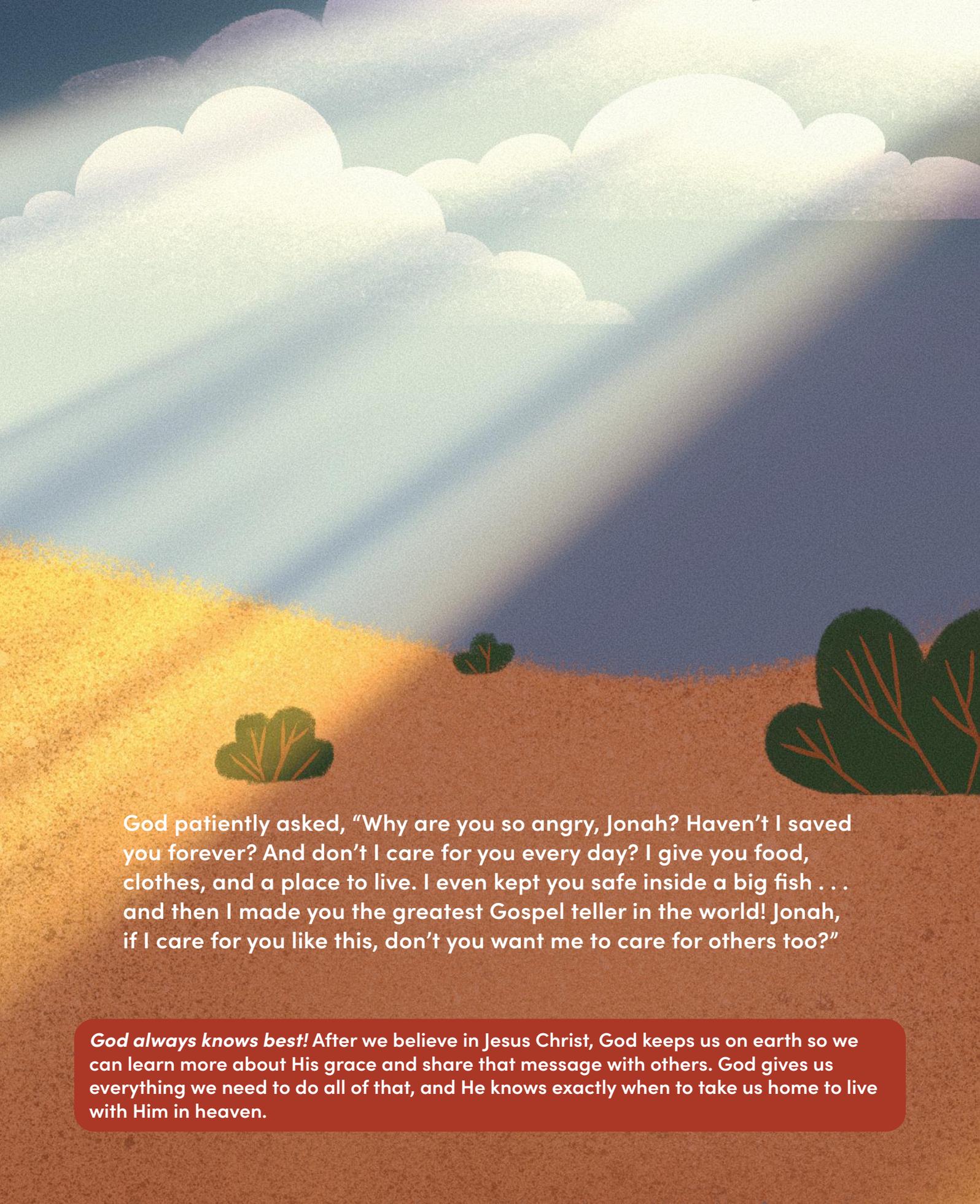
Really? Even after God gave him a speedy and safe ride to Nineveh . . . and even after all those people believed in God, Jonah was complaining? Yep. Instead of being happy and thankful, Jonah was grumpy. He stuck out his lip and decided to feel sorry for himself.

Let go of that grudge! Staying angry and wanting to get even is a bad, sinful attitude that makes you unhappy. God wants you to forgive others the way He forgives you. That way you can forget your troubles and enjoy God's blessings.



Jonah's thoughts were so selfish that he started whining to God. "How could you do this to me? Don't you see how rotten those people are? It's bad enough you've made a place for them in heaven, but why are you letting them stay here now? Please, wipe them out!"





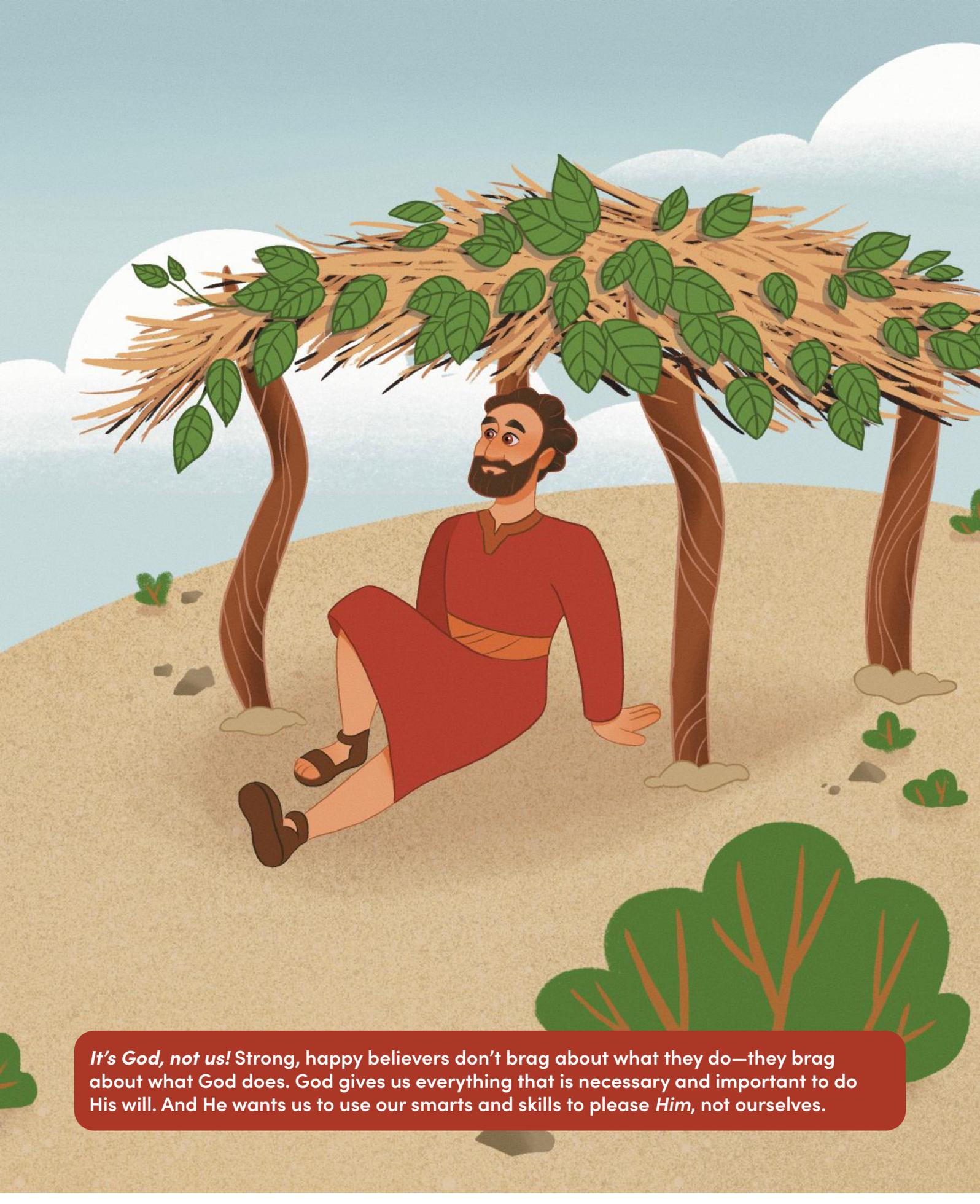
God patiently asked, “Why are you so angry, Jonah? Haven’t I saved you forever? And don’t I care for you every day? I give you food, clothes, and a place to live. I even kept you safe inside a big fish . . . and then I made you the greatest Gospel teller in the world! Jonah, if I care for you like this, don’t you want me to care for others too?”

God always knows best! After we believe in Jesus Christ, God keeps us on earth so we can learn more about His grace and share that message with others. God gives us everything we need to do all of that, and He knows exactly when to take us home to live with Him in heaven.

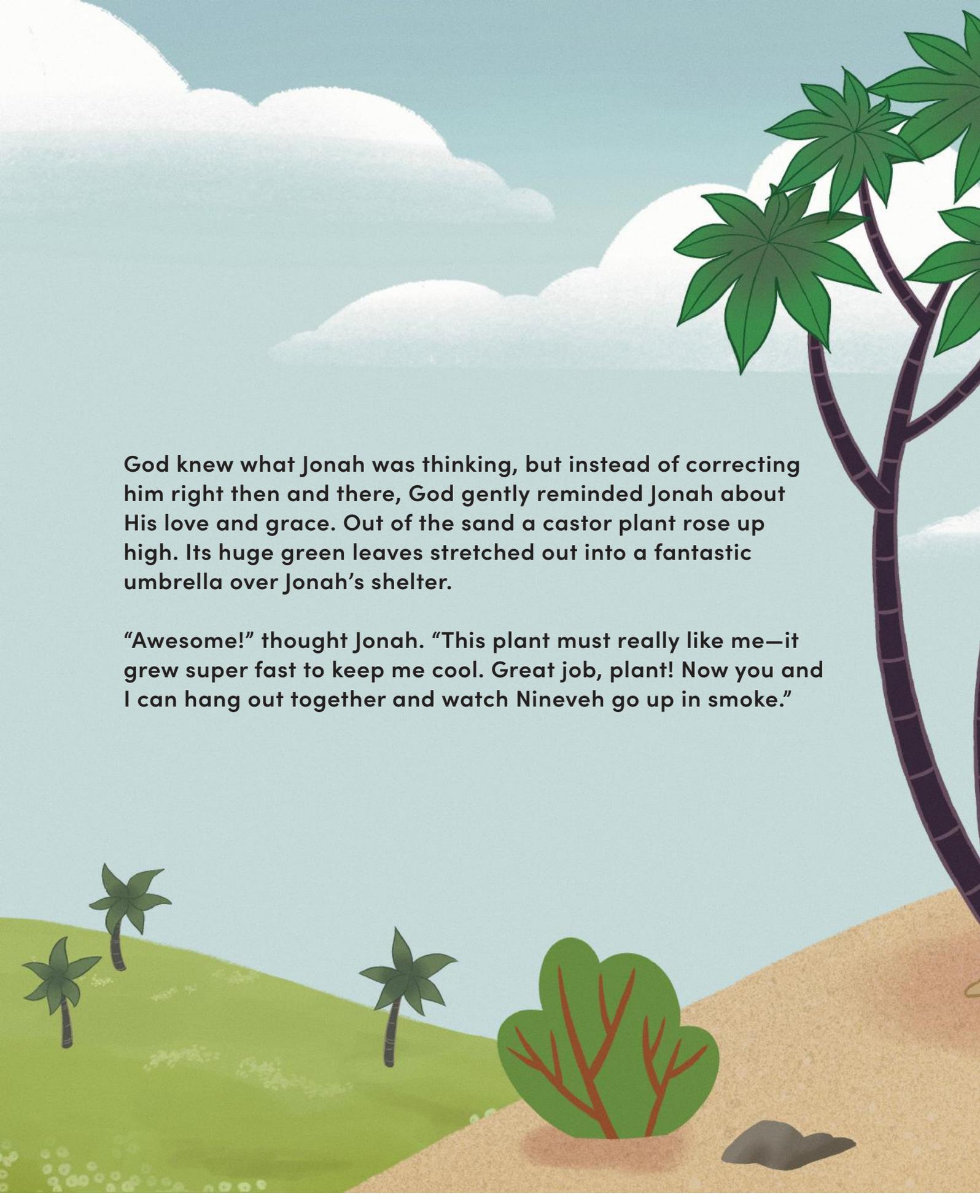
Jonah didn't want to listen to God. So he went for a walk and let his mind race. "Once God thinks about it," Jonah told himself, "He'll know I'm right—those people deserve to be wiped out. Oh boy, I can't wait to watch that happen!"

Just outside the city, Jonah built himself a shelter in the sand. He plopped down inside and boasted, "Wow, I'm pretty smart—look what I made! This will keep me cool and comfy while I wait for God to change His mind and blast those people out of here."





It's God, not us! Strong, happy believers don't brag about what they do—they brag about what God does. God gives us everything that is necessary and important to do His will. And He wants us to use our smarts and skills to please *Him*, not ourselves.



God knew what Jonah was thinking, but instead of correcting him right then and there, God gently reminded Jonah about His love and grace. Out of the sand a castor plant rose up high. Its huge green leaves stretched out into a fantastic umbrella over Jonah's shelter.

"Awesome!" thought Jonah. "This plant must really like me—it grew super fast to keep me cool. Great job, plant! Now you and I can hang out together and watch Nineveh go up in smoke."



Keep your eyes on God! We get ourselves into a mess when we think more about our favorite things than we think about God. All those nice things can disappear quickly, but God's love and faithfulness never disappear.



Hmmmm. It was going to take a bit more to shake that selfish attitude out of Jonah—and God knew exactly how to do it.

First, God sent a hungry worm to munch away at Jonah's plant. In no time at all, those big shady leaves were shriveled up and flopped flat on the sand. Then, a scorching wind came whipping through and the blazing sun beamed down on Jonah.

That would've been a perfect time for Jonah to think about God's Word—all those promises about how God loves and provides for us, even when things get really bad. But nope. Not Jonah. That poor, pitiful prophet just got poutier.



God will keep on shaking you! If you ignore God and His instructions, He'll keep reminding you until you shape up and get back with His plan. He does this only because He loves you.

“Pleeeeee God, give me a break!” cried Jonah. “It’s bad enough you’re letting those Ninevites live it up, but why are you being so mean to me? You took my plant that I *really* loved. And now I’m hot and dried up just like those leaves! Why, God . . . whyyyyyy?”



“Jonah, Jonah,” rang God’s voice. “You’re upset over a silly plant. But what about the people in Nineveh? How sad do you think I would be if I had to destroy them all . . . the moms and dads, boys and girls, and their animals? They were lost in evil, but now they’re My children, Jonah, just like you. Shouldn’t I care about them? And shouldn’t you, Jonah?”



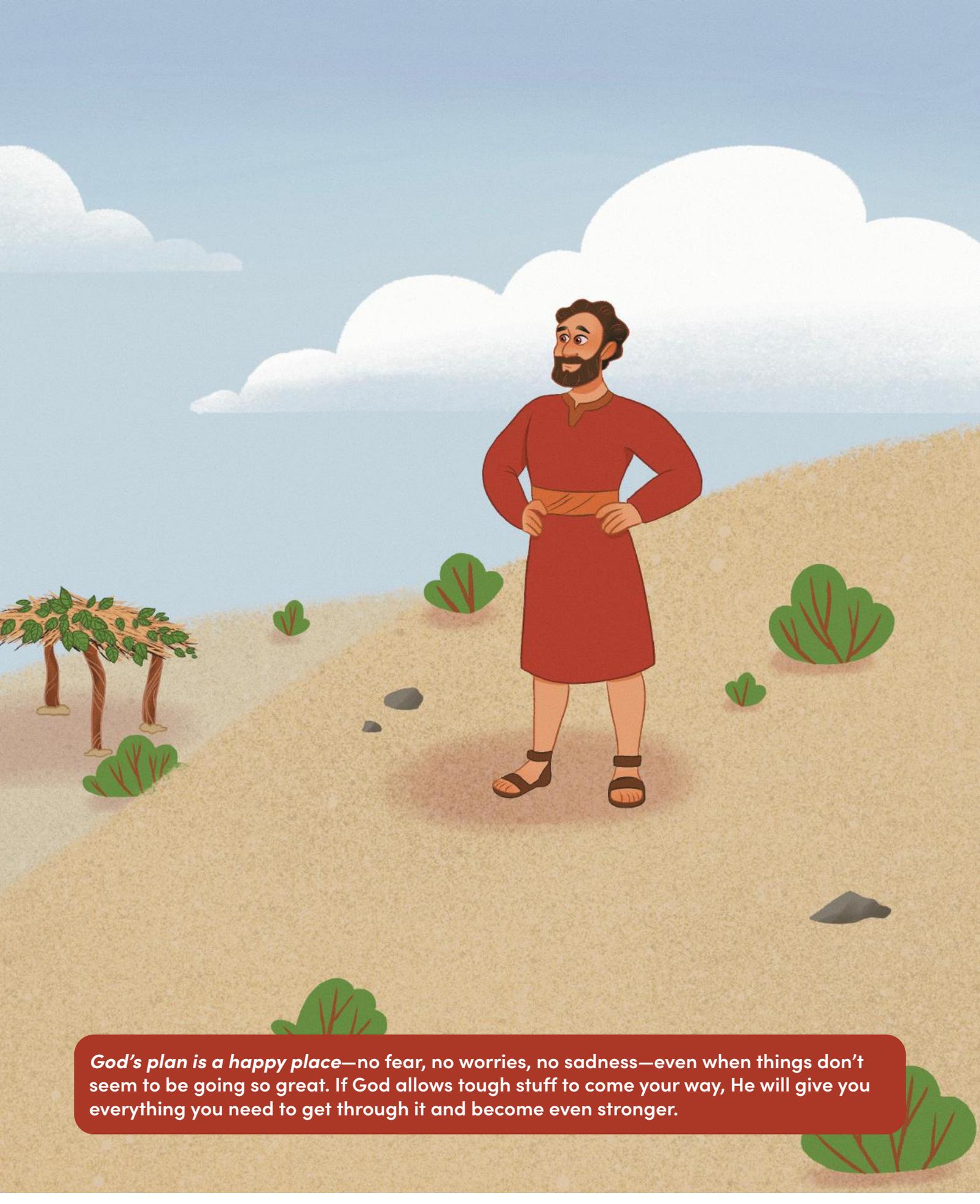
Don't feel sorry for yourself! This is a sin that makes you an unhappy fool. When you are full of self-pity, you blame others for your problems and try to make them feel bad. You care way too much about yourself and not at all about others.

Aha! Jonah hadn't thought of it like that. Finally, he knew it was time to stop pouting and start listening to God's Word. That's how he could stay calm and happy, even when things didn't go his way.

Jonah also remembered, "God's grace never runs out! No matter how many times I mess up, God has special plans for me. All I need to do to get back on track is name my sins to Him. I can tell God I've been selfish and hateful, that I complained a lot, and that I didn't trust Him to do things the right way."

Once Jonah used *rebound*—admitted his bad choices to God—the prophet was back in fellowship, ready to move forward and obey. No more pouting. From now on, Jonah was excited to do the jobs God had for him. He couldn't wait to tell others how incredible and loving God is.





God's plan is a happy place—no fear, no worries, no sadness—even when things don't seem to be going so great. If God allows tough stuff to come your way, He will give you everything you need to get through it and become even stronger.



Now that you've learned more about Jonah, let's think about a few things:

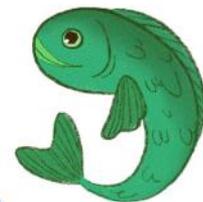
God made sure Jonah got to Nineveh safely. And when the people there believed God's message, God protected them and their animals.

After all that, God made a plant grow super fast to shade Jonah from the sun. God also fed a hungry worm while Jonah received a helpful lesson. God even warmed up the wind to get Jonah's mind off of Jonah and back on God.

It sure sounds like God knows what's best for us. He has a plan that is perfectly right and good . . . and He does everything to help us follow that plan.

If Jonah were here today, he'd tell you, "Don't be like me—selfish and proud, pouting and whining when things don't go your way. Open your eyes and watch God's grace all around you! Even when you mess up big time—like me—remember that God is right there, ready to pour out more grace and bring you back into His plan."





Here are some things that God wants you to learn and do:

Treat others as God treats you. No matter how many mistakes you make, God is patient, loving, and forgiving. Since you are God's child, you need to treat others that same way, even when they let you down. That's how they see God's grace in you.

Be grateful, not grumpy. God gives you exactly what you need to follow His plan: enough food, clothes, shelter, and other things to learn and enjoy. So instead of pouting over something you *want*, thank God for always giving you everything you *need*.

Boast about God, not yourself. Before you brag about how great you are, think about how great God is. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins. God gives you everything to live inside His perfect plan on earth. And someday, God will bring you to heaven to live with Him forever. Now *that's* something to brag about!

Watch your attitude. If you think bad thoughts, you'll say and do bad things. You'll be unhappy, and you'll miss out on God's wonderful blessings. That's why the Bible says don't be selfish and pouty, and don't have mean thoughts about others.

Rebound. As soon as you sin, use 1 John 1:9 and name those sins to God. He'll bounce you right back into fellowship. When you're in fellowship with God (in the bottom circle), you can talk to Him and remember your Bible lessons.





God's Words for You

As for God, his way *is* perfect. Psalm 18:30*a*, KJV

Do everything without grumbling or arguing. Philippians 2:14, NIV

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves. Philippians 2:3

Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; *it leads* only to evildoing. Psalm 37:8

When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom. Proverbs 11:2

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

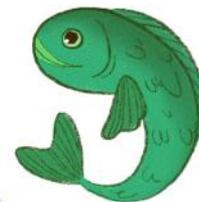
Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12*b*

Whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Colossians 3:13*b*

The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. Psalm 145:8

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins. 1 John 1:9*a*





Were You Listening?

1. Choose the correct answer:

Why was Jonah grumpy after the people in Nineveh believed in God?

- a) *Jonah was tired and hungry from all the preaching.*
- b) *Jonah hated them and wanted God to destroy their city.*
- c) *Jonah missed his family back home.*

2. Why did Jonah leave Nineveh and go out into the desert?

3. What were some of Jonah's bad ways of thinking (mental attitude sins) that made him want God to destroy Nineveh?

4. *True or False:* When Jonah finished building his shelter, he thanked God for giving him everything he needed to do it.

5. *True or False:* God made the plant grow fast and tall to remind Jonah about God's grace.

6. Why did God send a worm to gobble up Jonah's plant?

7. Why did God send the hot wind storm?

8. *True or False:* When someone lets you down or upsets you, you should always forgive them, even if you don't like them.

9. Choose the correct answer:

When we ignore God, He gives us tough reminders because . . .

- a) *He wants us to know how angry He is.*
- b) *He loves us and wants us to follow His perfect plan.*
- c) *He's bored and enjoys showing off His great power.*

10. What did Jonah need to do to stay calm when things weren't going his way?



Were You Listening? (Answers)

1. *b) Jonah hated them and wanted God to destroy their city.*
2. *Jonah hoped God would destroy the city, and he wanted to watch.*
3.
 - *Jonah wouldn't let go of his grudge against the Ninevites (hatred, anger, revenge).*
 - *Jonah thought God was not being fair—he deserved grace but the Ninevites didn't (self-pity, selfishness, self-righteousness).*
 - *Jonah thought his plan was better than God's plan (arrogance).*
4. *False. Jonah bragged about himself and didn't think about God at all.*
5. *True. Even when Jonah didn't deserve it, God cared for and protected him.*
6. *Jonah needed to learn that God is more valuable and important than the nice things that keep us comfortable.*
7. *God needed to get Jonah's attention and teach him more about grace.*
8. *True. When you treat others like God treats you, they see an example of God's love and grace.*
9. *b) He loves us and wants us to follow His perfect plan.*
10. *Jonah needed to name his sins to God (rebound) and think about all he knew about God from His Word.*

The Legacy of Betty Thieme

Betty Beal Thieme, the wife of Pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr., began teaching children's Bible classes in her Houston home in the mid-1950s. These lessons reflected her husband's systematic Bible-based teaching, but they were presented in a style that young people could easily follow. Betty's skillful use of visual aids and verbal imagery introduced a new generation of believers to key vocabulary and concepts, beginning with salvation then gradually covering the basics of the spiritual life.

In the mid-1960s, Betty documented her lessons to create the youth curriculum for Berachah Church. Youngsters, ranging from toddlers to teens, learned night after night, year by year, the intricate workings of God's grace in their lives. Over the decades, that curriculum was compiled into *Children's Bible Studies*, currently published in multiple volumes by R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries.

The content and doctrinal principles in this work are drawn from Betty Thieme's legacy. Her dedication to God's plan for her life continues to impact each generation of young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.



For more on studies for young believers, call us at 713-621-3740 or visit rbthieme.org.

