

# Loosing Your Grip

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**Then the LORD said, “You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”**

**~Jonah 4:10-11 (NASB)**

## 1) A Frustrated Response

- A) When God relents from destroying Nineveh (Jonah 3:10), Jonah responds to God’s gracious act with unbridled anger toward God (4:1), and a frustrated prayer revealing Jonah’s bitter hatred of the Ninevites (4:2).
- B) In dramatic fashion, Jonah’s frustration with God’s compassion & lovingkindness (4:2) is so extreme, he begs God to take his life (the same life which God has preserved in miraculous fashion) from him, “for death is better to me than life” (4:3).

- C) God asks the first of three questions to Jonah (4:4) challenging whether or not Jonah’s anger is justified. In seeming frustration, Jonah walks out on God’s question and departs Nineveh to the East (4:5).

## 2) Get A Grip & Loose Your Grip!

- A) Jonah’s departure from the city is simply to build a shelter (lit., “booth”) for himself and see if God, given Jonah’s objections and appeals, will destroy Nineveh after all (4:5).
- B) God provides Jonah with better shade for his shelter by “appointing” a leafy plant to deliver him from the desert heat (4:6).
- C) In contrast to Jonah’s “great displeasure” (4:1), Jonah is “greatly pleased” (4:6) by the shade produced by this blessed plant. Jonah is more pleased by the temporal “salvation” provided by a plant, than with the eternal salvation of the people of Nineveh!
- D) In order to illustrate this reality for Jonah, God “appoints” a worm to kill the plant (4:7) and scorching heat to bake Jonah’s head. It is so hot, Jonah becomes faint.
- E) Jonah is so distraught over his circumstances, he once again (4:3, 4:8-9) begs God to take his life, “death is better to me than life” (4:8).
- F) Once again, God questions Jonah’s misplaced anger and reveals His purposes in the plant & worm (4:10). God’s questions are designed to cause Jonah to consider his evil attitudes toward Nineveh, and to reveal to Jonah that it is God who is in control, and not His prophet (or people)!