



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 6: No Compassion
Suggested Week of Use: October 9, 2022
Core Passage: Jonah 4:1-11

News Story Summary

Last August, Sherri Papini, a mother of two from California, was sentenced to prison for faking her own kidnapping in 2016, a crime to which she pled guilty in April 2022. Her defense attorney asked for a lenient sentence of eight months, but the judge sentenced her to eighteen months in jail. She could have been incarcerated for up to five years for lying to federal law enforcement and twenty years for mail fraud. Papini was also ordered to repay more than \$300,000 to a victims' support group, the Social Security Administration, and law enforcement agencies involved in searching for her.

Papini disappeared in November 2016. When she was found three weeks later on the side of the road, she told police that two Hispanic women took her at gunpoint while she was out for a jog. Investigators later discovered that instead of being taken by force, she had been staying with an ex-boyfriend 600 miles away the entire time. She decided to come home because she missed her children, but she continued to make false claims about the kidnapping until August 2020.

To make her story believable, Papini harmed herself physically while in hiding. She purposely tried to lose a lot of weight and cut off her blond hair. She also covered herself in bruises and burns. She even asked her ex-boyfriend to brand her on her right shoulder and to “gently” hit her with a hockey puck.

For more about this story, search “Sherri Papini sentencing.”

Focus Attention

To replace the opening activity under Focus Attention, explain that you will read a news story. Read only the first paragraph. Ask: *Do you think the sentencing was too lenient? Too harsh? Proportional to the crime?* Call for a show of hands and write the tally down on a board. Next, read the second paragraph. Ask again: *Do you think the sentencing was too lenient? Too harsh? Proportional to the crime?* Again, record the responses. Finally, read the last paragraph of the story and ask one more time: *Do you think the sentencing was too lenient? Too harsh? Proportional to the crime?*

Note any changes in the tally from the first paragraph to the final paragraph. Discuss why some adults changed their minds and others did not. Say: *Today, we will discuss grace, mercy, and what happens when we try to decide who deserves them.*

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the activity under Summarize and Challenge, point out that all believers should celebrate God's grace toward all people. Recall the story of Sherri Papini. Ask: *If our group was going to show her mercy and grace, what could it look like?* Discuss the possibilities. Point out that there are many individuals in your community who need the same gestures of grace and mercy. Discuss the how the group can put one of those ideas into action. Close in prayer.