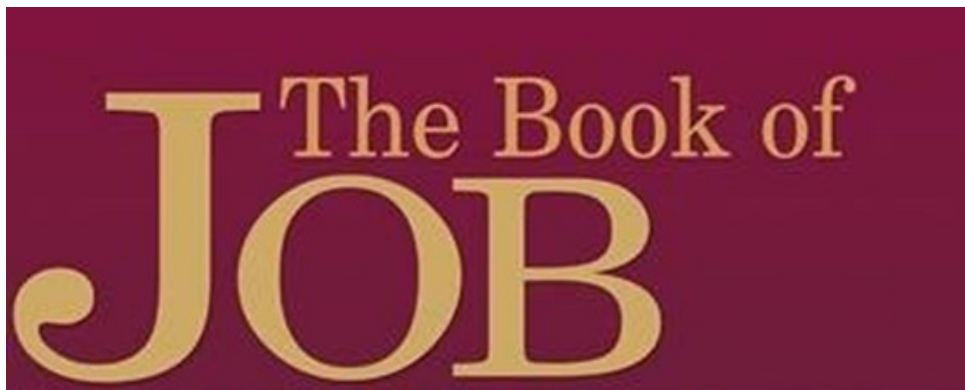




The Story of Job

Trusting God When Life Doesn't Seem to Make Sense

A Bible study series from the life of Job - Week 1

Job 1: 1-12

"When the author of Job picked up his writing utensil to write this book, he could have begun with a blunt, three-word sentence, 'Life is unfair.' Difficult, most of us have learned to handle. But unfair?" (Charles Swindoll)

Introduction: If something in your life has happened or is happening now that makes you say, "Life isn't always fair...", welcome to Job's world. And welcome to Job's journey of learning to trust God when life doesn't seem to make sense. Everyone struggles with all kinds of problems, difficulties, disappointments, headaches, heartaches, and sorrows. As a storm in life starts to subside, another battle begins - the battle of the heart. And the questions come as we wander: "Why would the God who loves me allow me to suffer like this?" Or "Why did this happen?" Or "Why didn't this happen?" Or "Why me, why now?" In this incredible story about suffering, we will learn why we can trust God even when life doesn't seem to make sense.

Meet Job. (Job 1:1-5)

1. Job was a godly man. (Job 1:1)

2. Job was a family man. (Job 1:2)

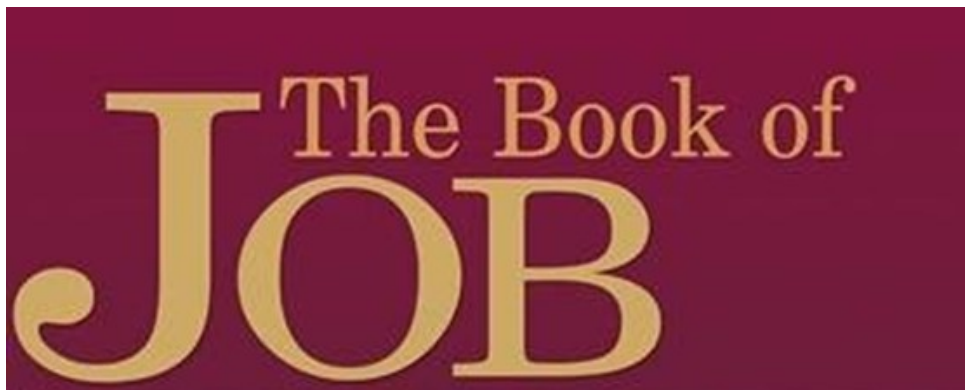
3. Job was a wealthy man. (Job 1:3a)

4. Job was a very well-known man. (Job 1:3b)

5. Job was a man who was the spiritual leader of his family and whose custom was to pray for them. (Job 1:4-5)

Something is always going on in Heaven regarding what's happening on Earth (Job 1:6-12)

Throne Control. Throne control means God is on Heaven's throne in absolute, supreme control over all the universe. Psalm 103:19 says: "The LORD has made the heavens His throne; from there He rules over everything." Remember, when your life or the world feels out of control, God is always in control, and we can fully trust Him.



When Our Faith and Questions Collide

Trusting God When Life Doesn't Seem to Make Sense
A Bible study series from the life of Job - Week 2
Job 1:13-22

From Week One: Meet Job. "In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil." (Job 1:1)

Ouch, but often true. Someone has suggested that when some Christians flee from evil like Job, they leave a forwarding address. They may not want to be stuck in sin, but they do want to stay in touch.

Four tragedies that brought great losses to Job

Tragedy #1 - The loss of oxen, donkeys, and servants.
(Job 1:13-15)

Tragedy #2 - The loss of sheep and more servants. (Job 1:16)

Notice this. The rightness or wrongness of what happens in life can only be judged by the measure of eternity, not the measure of this life. As only God can, we must see life's circumstances through the eternal picture. Only then do we trust what Abraham knew of God: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).

Tragedy #3 - The loss of camels and more servants. (Job 1:17)

Tragedy #4 - The loss of all his sons and daughters. (Job 1:18-19)

Three things faith won't always do when suffering

1. Choosing faith in God in the midst of suffering won't always eliminate the pain.
2. Choosing faith in God in the midst of suffering won't always eliminate our questions.
3. Choosing faith in God in the midst of suffering won't always provide a satisfying reason for the suffering.

What faith in God will do when suffering. Choosing faith in God in the midst of suffering will remind us that God is in control and that we can trust, "Because God's got this, He will get me through this."

Five ways Job responded to his life losses (Job 1:20-22)

1. **Job released his grief to God.** (Job 1:20a)
2. **Job remembered the greatness of God.** (Job 1:20b)
3. **Job reflected on the goodness of God.** (Job 1:21)
4. **Job remained guiltless before God.** (Job 1:22a)
5. **Job refused to assign any guilt to God.** (Job 1:22b)

You're not alone in asking your questions. The book of Job is estimated to contain about 330 questions, making it the book in the Bible with the most questions. Job himself asks well over 100 questions as he struggles with his suffering and seeks God for answers.

Some people say, "I know I'm not supposed to question God ..." I share that I don't question God (His character), but I never hesitate to bring my questions to Him. Wondering why something happened or didn't happen is entirely different from questioning God's goodness and faithfulness. Struggling with our questions is not the same as questioning God's sovereignty or attacking His character. Like Job, we can take our questions to God ("In all of this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.")

The Book of JOB

Satan vs. Job ... Round Two

Trusting God When Life Doesn't Seem to Make Sense

A Bible study series from the life of Job - Week 3

Job 2:1-13

Introduction: In chapter one, Job never indicates that he felt God was trying to get him. In fact, Job 1:22 tells us, "In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with any wrongdoing." However, as we will see in chapter two, Job's wife and Job's three friends seemed to think it was a very strong possibility because he lost all his livestock, all his camels, 99% of his servants, and, most devastatingly, the death of his ten children. Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee somberly wrote before beginning chapter 2, "Very frankly, I would never want to go through what Job had to suffer."

Round Two - Job's suffering intensifies (Job 2:1-8)

What chapter two shows us about Satan

1. We see Satan's persistence. (Job 2:1-5)

Catch this: 1 Corinthians 1:31 says, "As Scripture says, "Whoever brags must brag about what the Lord has done."

We should always brag about the Lord. We should always make sure the hero of any story in our lives is ultimately the Lord. So, it's surprising that in the story of Job we see someone the Lord could brag about – Job. Job wasn't perfect, but he did his best to love what God loved (truth, right living, and mercy) and to hate what God hated (sin, lying, and pride).

2. We see Satan's need for permission. (Job 2:6)

Note this: God is always in control. Satan could not attack Job until God gave him permission. Satan does not have unrestricted power to do whatever he wants; he must get permission from God. Whatever God permits, He does so for a purpose.

3. We see Satan's persecution. (Job 2:7-8)

Note this: Job had lost almost everything, including the death of his children. The only thing he still had was a wife who encouraged him to end his life. Job is now sitting on an ash heap where people took their garbage. There were probably dogs at the dump fighting over any thrown-out food along with the rats. Can the Lord help someone that far down? We know He can!

(1.) Job's wife's advice. (Job 2:9)

Note this: It is sad to see that Job's wife was trying to get him to do the same thing Satan wanted him to do – curse God. We need to recognize that even people close to us can still give us wrong advice. Mrs. Job's advice was for her husband to give up his faith in God and end his life.

(2.) Job's answer to his wife's advice. (Job 2:10)

Note this: Job didn't listen to his wife's advice. Instead, he knew that in this broken world, with blessings will come some suffering. Whatever happens, by faith, trust in the Lord and praise His name.

Three things the three friends of Job did right (Job 2:11-13)

(1) The friends stopped everything they were doing to go help their suffering friend, Job. Love does inconvenience. (Job 2:11a)

(2) They sympathized with Job, comforted him, and even wept with him. (Job 2:11b)

(3) They provided the ministry of presence with Job. (Job 2:13)

The Book of JOB

Job Speaks from His Grief and Asks Why?

Trusting God When Life Doesn't Seem to Make Sense

A Bible study series from the life of Job - Week 4

Job 3:1-22

The three friends of Job did three things right

- (1) The friends stopped everything they were doing to help their suffering friend, Job. Love does inconvenience. (Job 2:11a)
- (2) The friends sympathized with Job, comforted him, and even wept with him. Love places others' pain in our hearts. (Job 2:11b-12)
- (3) The friends provided the ministry of presence (being present) to Job for seven days and nights. Love doesn't rush. (Job 2:13)

Job's story is about more than suffering. We may think Job's story is mainly about life's losses. However, Job's primary problem was not financial, emotional, or physical; it was theological (the study of God). Job had to struggle with the fact that, in his life, God was not acting the way he thought God would and should. Ever been there?

Don't miss this: Instead of asking where God is in the midst of our pain, the book of Job asks, "Where are we in the midst of our pain? Are we trusting the Lord our Creator, even when we cannot understand our circumstances? Or are we battling fear or anger?" Our journey with Job shows us that God is always trustworthy, even when life doesn't make sense.

Section 1 - Job finally speaks, but probably not what we expected.
(Job 3:1-10)

Section 2 - Job questions the meaning of life. (Job 3:11-23)

Note this: When a person is grieving from any significant loss in life, a person might say things they normally wouldn't say. Job 6:2-3: "If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore, my words have been rash."

Section 3 - Job laments his life. (Job 3:24-26)

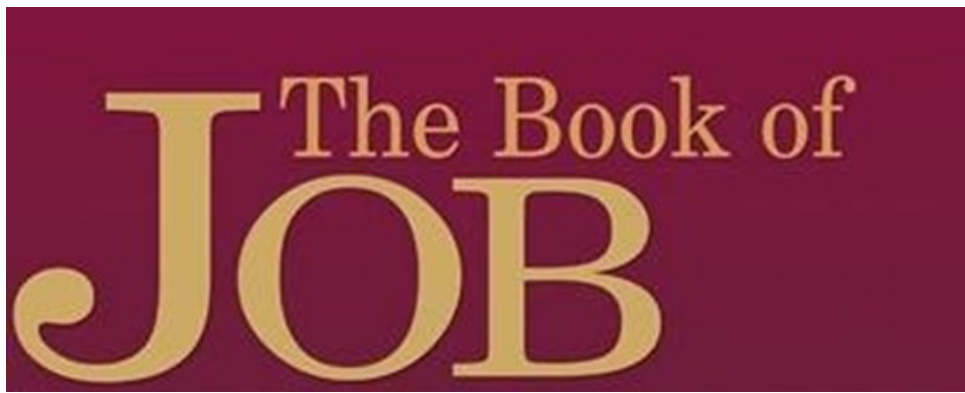
We have limited understanding. Proverbs 3:5: Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

God has limitless understanding. Isaiah 55:8-9: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

- (1) We have limited wisdom. God has limitless wisdom.
- (2) We have limited knowledge. God has perfect knowledge.
- (3) We have limited perspective. God has eternal perspective.

Don't miss this: No one is immune to the darkness of depression – an ongoing feeling of sadness that changes how a person feels, thinks, and acts - not even Job. Psalm 42:11: Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise Him again - my Savior and my God!

Remember this: Job didn't know why, but he knew Who. We may not always know the whys, but we, too, know the Who and can always trust our God.



Bad Advice from Good Friends

Trusting God When Life Doesn't Seem to Make Sense

A Bible study series from the life of Job - Week 5

Job Chapters 4-5

Job's story is about more than suffering. We may think Job's story is mainly about life's losses. However, Job's primary problem was not financial (losing all his wealth), not emotional (losing his ten children), or physical (losing his health); it was theological. Job was struggling with the fact that, in his life, God was not acting the way he thought God would and should.

What people need when hurting

Section 1 - Hurting people need support, not sarcasm.

(Job 4:1-6)

Section 2 - Hurting people need love, not logic.

(Job 4:7-11)

Section 3 - Hurting people need encouragement, not examination. (Job 4:12-21)

Section 4 - Hurting people need assurances, not assumptions.

(Job 5:1-7)

Section 5 - Hurting people need affirmation, not advice.

(Job 5:8-16)

Section 6 - Hurting people need care, not clichés.

(Job 5:17-27)

Chuck Swindoll: "Somewhere in that bad sermon, accusation overran compassion. And don't think Job missed it. A person in pain doesn't feel well, but that doesn't mean there's a lack of discernment... There are those moments when reproofs are necessary, but while covered with boils? No."

Conclusion: It has been said there are two kinds of friends in the world. Some friends brighten the room when they enter, and others brighten the room when they leave. Be the kind of Christian friend who brightens the room of hurting people as you show and share God's love with your care.