Job: God Is in Charge

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About the Book of Job

Introduction

Job is not only the direct word of God but also a great literary masterpiece. Poet Alfred Tennyson called Job, “the greatest poem of ancient or modern times.” British author Thomas Carlyle viewed it as, “… one of the grandest things ever written with a pen … such free flowing outlines, grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and response of reconcilement.”

Job has a broad, rich, colorful vocabulary and uses dozens of words that are found nowhere else in the Old Testament. Nature becomes the canvas as words paint vivid pictures of not only the greatness of God’s grandeur, but also the depths of human suffering.

Though we know God is the ultimate author of Job, the human author of this great work is unknown.

The Layout of Job

Job is in the Old Testament, the books written before Jesus’ life on Earth. It is the first book in what are known as the “wisdom” or “poetry” books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

Chapters 1 and 2 comprise a prologue that sets the scene, tells us who Job is, and details a conversation between God and Satan that leads to Job’s suffering. Chapters 3–31 record three rounds of conversations (written in monologue) between Job and three friends: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. In chapters 32–37, Elihu the Buzite, a young man, enters into the conversation with a monologue of his own. God himself speaks directly to Job in chapters 38–41. The book ends with Job’s reply to the Lord and an epilogue in chapter 42.
About the Book of Job

Introduction

Some Themes in Job

Suffering, Wisdom & Trust

Job is generally known as a book that deals with suffering. While Job certainly suffers immensely (in fact, his name means “sorrowful” or “he that weeps”), this book is about God’s unfathomable wisdom and perfect plan. This book confronts us with the question of whether or not we truly trust God. Do we trust him even when his wisdom and plan are so far beyond us that we cannot begin to understand it? Or do we question his plans and ideas when a situation appears to be hopeless through our earthly eyes? When we suffer, do we throw up our hands in surrender, or do we stand strong in our trust in God and faith in Christ, rejoicing in the hope and glory of God?

We will see that Job, though “prostrated by total grief, still turns and cries to no one but God.” When everything else is gone, Job is able to say that God is enough. Job trusts God and turns his heart to him. We need to make a decision. Our choice to trust God will not just happen. It is a choice, a decision, we must make every day.

Knowing What We Do Not Know

Job’s friends are correct at times, but they usually take a portion of God’s truth and malign it to agree with their theories. That presents a challenge for us because even though the words of Job and his friends are Scripture and are, therefore, breathed by God, their usefulness in teaching often comes in an example of how not to think.

The challenge of Job provides us the opportunity to see the importance of comparing Scripture and studying God’s Word in its entirety. It also shows the danger of taking God’s Word out of context to make it suit our needs.

A Fallen Angel on a Leash

Job vividly depicts Satan’s role in our world, showing that while Satan does attack us, he cannot exceed the restrictions of God. As Christians, we do not need to fear Satan, because God is working for our good. Even when Satan surrounds us, we can trust in God’s plan.
In this first chapter, we get a glimpse of what goes on in the unseen world and meet the man called Job.

Job did not have the benefit of the written Word of God, a religious family heritage, a place to worship, a pastor to teach him, or hundreds of multimedia tools to help him know God. Yet he knew God. Job 1:1 tells us that Job knew God in a way that many of us today do not. He knew God enough to fear him and to shun all that was not of him.

Scripture: Job 1

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
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Seeing Behind the Curtain
Leader’s Guide

Part 1 Identify the Issue

Note to leader: Provide each person with the Participant’s Guide, included at the end of this study.

Read Job 1:1.

[Q] Does that opening captivate you? If so, why?

[Q] Have you ever known anyone you would describe as Job is described in this verse? What was that person's life like?

These concise and powerful words make us wonder what man might deserve such an introduction. Why should this description of Job as "blameless and upright" cause us to pause and ponder? Although the Book of Job is placed in the middle of the Old Testament in our Bible, most chronological timelines place it as early as Genesis 11:26 or 11:32. The customs described in Job lead scholars to believe that Job lived in the time of the Patriarchs—during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This means Job lived before Moses. He lived before God gave the law to the Jewish people. He lived before the Ten Commandments, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Exodus from Egypt. He lived in a time before prophets told people about God's plans. He lived before stories were passed around about the miracles God performed. He lived before there was a written Word of God or any system of corporate worship.

What about the land of Uz? Many scholars do not attempt to pinpoint the exact location of Uz. Those who do, disagree. We will take our clues directly from the text. In Job 1, we learn that Uz had land for grazing animals and growing crops (vv. 3, 14), was near a desert (v. 19), and was close enough to the Chaldeans and Sabeans to be raided by them (vv. 14–17).

[Q] How would you describe your relationship with God?

[Q] How do you think God would describe your relationship with him?

[Q] Of the qualities ascribed to Job in verse 1, which would you most like to see as part of your life? Why?

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Fear God and shun evil.
Look again at Job 1:1.

Job was “blameless and upright.” The picture painted in the original Hebrew is that of a man who is morally straight, perfect, and innocent. Bible scholar Adam Clarke describes Job this way: “All within was holy, all without was righteous; and his whole life was employed in departing from evil, and drawing nigh to God.” The New Living Translation says Job was “a man of complete integrity.”

Being described as “perfect” does not mean Job never did any wrong. Only Christ has lived a perfect life on earth. Job’s righteousness, perfection, and innocence came from God.

[Q] What action produces righteousness according to Genesis 15:6? What does that mean for us?

Job was “blameless and upright” because he “feared God and shunned evil.” The Hebrew word translated as “feared” is used to depict both fear and worship.

We lose our fear of God when we worship only a portion of God. This happens when we are only willing to see the image of a gentle Jesus and a God of love, mercy, and grace. We lose our fear of God when we worship the God of James 2:23, who is our friend, but not the God of Matthew 25:46, who is our judge. Yet to reduce God to nothing more than love, mercy, grace, and friendship is to create an idol. We have to worship God for all of his traits.

[Q] What attribute of God do you see in Romans 1:18–19, Psalm 76:7–10, and Nahum 1:12?

- Why would God need to express wrath? What does this tell us about him?

When we truly know God, we worship and fear him. Our fear makes us indescribably grateful for his grace. Because instead of giving us the death and punishment we deserve for our sins, he gave us his Son, Jesus Christ, who took the wrath and punishment we deserve.

[Q] Do you fear God? Why or why not? What do you think it means to fear God?
Optional Activity:

Break into groups of three or four. Assign each group one of the following passages, and ask them to write down reasons we should fear God based on their passage. When the groups are finished, ask them to share their answers with the whole group.

1 Chronicles 16:25–28
Psalm 89:7–15
Psalm 130:1–4
Proverbs 8:13

When we fear the Lord, we hate evil, pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech. Fearing the Lord is actually shunning evil.

Shunning evil, which led to Job being upright and blameless, is, in effect, turning away from sin completely—forsaking sin. In the original Hebrew the word for “forsake” is sûr, which means “to turn away, get rid of, take off, depart, forsake and reject.” Today forsake is defined as “to quit or leave entirely; abandon; desert.”

[Q] Where in your life are you tip-toeing on the edge of sin? Where do you need to leave entirely, to desert, and to abandon sin?


In our culture, it is easy to be lured into walking on the edge of sin. When sins are flaunted and accepted as normal behavior all around us, they lose their stigma and start to seem acceptable, just as the serpent in the Garden of Eden must have looked harmless to Eve. If it had been ugly and flashing danger signs, she would have turned and run. No, it seemed innocent enough in the beginning. Yet before she knew it, Eve was questioning God and doing that which he strictly forbade her to do. Do not be drawn into sin because you think “it’s harmless” or “it won’t really matter.”

When it comes to God, there is no neutral ground. Do not walk on the fringe. Shun evil. Desire to be blameless and upright in God’s eyes.

[Q] According to Galatians 1:3-4, how are we rescued from evil?

Teaching Point Two: Job had great wealth, but didn’t cling to it.

Read Job 1:2–5.
Count up the numbers of everything Job owned. These numbers demonstrate incredible wealth. In addition to his material blessings, Job’s sons and daughters would be considered a special, divine blessing.

Job’s sacrifices to God are amazing. There was no priest there to tell him to make sacrifices and no Scripture to reference, but Job understood sin and a holy God.

Because the punishment for sin is death, and a holy God requires justice, perfect animals were sacrificed to provide the blood (death) to pay for sin. This was the case until Jesus, the Lamb of God, offered himself as the ultimate and final sacrifice for sin. Because of Jesus’ death, we are no longer required to make animal sacrifices to be right with God. But that does not mean that sacrifice is not necessary today.

[Q] What do the following Scriptures tell you about the sacrifices God desires today? Psalm 51:17; Romans 12:1; 15:16; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:15–16.

God still desires our sacrifices. He wants us to give him our time, talents, and resources. And he wants our first fruits, not the leftovers. Picture a cup a two-year-old has been drinking out of all day – full of crumbs, saliva, and other disgusting stuff. God doesn’t want the dregs left at the bottom of the cup. He wants the first refreshing drink of our life.

[Q] Job was worried about the sins of his children. How can we protect our children and/or grandchildren from sin? (See Proverbs 22:6; 23:13–14; Joel 1:3; Ephesians 6:4.)

[Q] In the desire for children who honored God, Job made sacrifices for them. What God-honoring sacrifices can we make for our children? If you do not have children, what about the children in your church or neighborhood?

Making sacrifices was Job’s “regular custom.” The King James Version and New American Standard Bible tell us Job did this “continually.” To turn our hearts to God, our regular customs need to strengthen and build our faith. Prayer and Bible study need to be regular, daily events in our lives. When we determine to continually pursue God and do not wait for a crisis to pray and to study, we will find God has prepared us when a crisis comes.

[Q] What regular customs do you need to establish to further your relationship with the Lord?

[Q] What regular customs do you need to discontinue because they do not honor God?

Teaching Point Three: Satan wants to destroy us.

Read Job 1:6–7.
This is a mind-boggling passage. God holds a heavenly board meeting and Satan walks in. This gives a glimpse of another realm of which we know almost nothing.

Angels have become popular cultural icons, and in some cases idols. However, angels are created beings, accountable to God. We should never pray to a guardian angel or put our faith in them. Our faith is in God and God alone. When he sees fit, he will send his angels on our behalf. We should certainly praise and thank the Lord for his angels and the work he does through them, but it should end there.

Satan must love our cultural obsession with angels because even though angels do God’s work, they take our focus off God. And that is where Satan wants us: with our focus off God.


Satan is on the prowl. He wants to devour us by turning our hearts away from God. But when we determine to trust in God, Satan has no power over us. Read Job 1:8-11.

[Q] We studied Job’s characterization as “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” What does that mean? Remember, he was not perfect.

Now we see that God, from his heavenly throne, also calls Job “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” Consider the magnitude of those words as they are spoken by God, who is all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-powerful.

We may yearn for trips, money, health, friends, satisfaction, power, or possessions, but nothing we obtain can ever come close to—can even give a hint of—the reward we receive when our Creator looks upon us and calls us blameless and upright. The treasure of standing before God and hearing him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” is the treasure we should yearn for with all our being.

Satan attacks God’s assessment of Job, alleging that Job only fears God because there is something in it for him. he says that Job only puts God in high regard in proportion to the blessings God gives him: “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? … But … strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you.” Satan knows some souls have a price, and he believes Job’s soul is one of them.

[Q] What do these Scriptures tell you about your protection from Satan? 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 4:18.
Part 3 Apply Your Findings

As children of Christ, we turn from and avoid Satan, but we do not fear him. He is on a leash and subject to the all-mighty power of our God.

**Action Point (to do on your own this week):**

- Read through the entire Book of Job in one sitting. Use an easy-to-read version, such as the New Living Translation or The Message.

  — *Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon*
Job did not have the benefit of the written Word of God, a religious family heritage, a place to worship, a pastor to teach him, or hundreds of multimedia tools to help him know God. Yet he knew God. Job 1:1 tells us that Job knew God in a way that many of us today do not. He knew God enough to fear him and to shun all that was not of him.

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Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Fear God and shun evil.

Teaching Point Two: Job had great wealth, but didn’t cling to it.

Teaching Point Three: Satan wants to destroy us.

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Scripture: Job 1:12–2:13

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Part 1 Identify the Issue

Note to leader: Provide each person with the Participant’s Guide, included at the end of this study.

Read Job 1:12.

Everything in Job’s life has been handed over to Satan by the God he serves—the God who called him “blameless and upright.” This presents a hard truth. We like to think of God as cotton candy: sugary, light, fluffy, and with a short-term buzzing effect. Instead, he baffles us.

Read Romans 11:33.

[Q] What do think this verse means?

The inability to completely know the mind of God should not hinder us from putting our faith and trust in him. It’s a privilege to know the God in charge of this universe—and that he has knowledge and understanding about my life that I cannot comprehend.

God is trustworthy, even though he doesn’t make our lives easy. Sometimes parents let children experience a small pain or hurt to protect them from much greater suffering. The fact that a two-year-old does not understand his parents’ reasoning does not make the parents untrustworthy or cruel. It is the same for us with our Father.

Children are certain that they know how to do things better than their parents, so we continually encourage them, “Trust me; I know what I am doing.” That is God’s message to us as well. In some situations we have the pleasure of seeing his wisdom unfold in this life. Other times we have to wait till heaven to get the answers we seek.

[Q] Explain how a difficult experience helped you grow as a person.

[Q] How has your relationship with God grown as a result of suffering?

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Satan only wants death and destruction.

Read Job 1:13–17.
Satan destroys everything Job has. This is equivalent to us losing our clothes, our furniture, our computers, our cars, our jobs, our homes, and every dime we have to our name—in a single day. But the storm is not over for Job. Read Job 1:18–19.

Put yourself in Job’s position. You are reeling, trying to digest the loss of everything you own, when the news comes in: the building your children were in has just collapsed and there are no survivors. Your children are dead—every one of them.

You have absolutely nothing. Your world is dark.

Consider for a moment the magnitude of Job’s loss. Every one of Job’s ten children dies. We can gloss over the thought of losing possessions, but how can we respond to the unspeakable pain we imagine when we contemplate losing ten people we love?

[Q] What is the greatest suffering you have experienced?

Read Romans 5:3–5; 8:16–18, 35–39; and Hebrews 5:8. According to these verses, what can be the purpose or result of suffering?

[Q] From Job 1:13 to Job 1:19, how much time passed between Job’s losses?

Satan did not give Job a chance to recover. He bombards us, too, with one thing after another in rapid succession, giving us no time to recover. He wants to see us off-balance and off-focus. But we can learn to turn our hearts to the Lord and praise him in everything. So the next time Satan comes at you rapid fire, praise God and focus on him.

[Q] Read Matthew 8:23–27. How can this passage encourage you during the storms of your life?

Making the situation even more unthinkable, these calamities descended on Job—a man who lived a blameless and upright life. He was a good guy known to be respectable and honorable. How could this happen to him?

[Q] Why do you think God lets bad things happen to good people?

[Q] When bad things happen, what do you do with the anger you feel toward God?

Optional Activity:

Give people time to consider if they harbor anger toward God or question his wisdom. Encourage them to be honest and write down their true feelings. God already knows them, so it is for their benefit to get them out in the open.
Tell them: Ask God for understanding, and if you cannot have understanding, ask him for peace—we do not have to understand a situation to have peace in its midst. Tell God you want to overcome the pain and disturbing questions. Ask him to help you trust in him. Then sit quietly and let him speak to you. We do not always find instant peace or healing. It is often a process. Return to him every time the questions and concerns creep in. Ask him for help, wisdom, and strength.

Teaching Point Two: Job responded to tragedy with humility and praise.

Read Job 1:20–22.

Job showed his deep grief by tearing his robe and shaving his head. These responses were customs of the time, similar to wearing black for mourning.

According to 1 Corinthians 15:26, the last enemy Christ will destroy is death. Death is the enemy of Christ. Even though death brings us into eternal life, God intended for us to enjoy eternal life without the death that results from sin. He created humans to have one life with no illness, no pain, no suffering, and no death. But he gave people a choice in the Garden of Eden, and that choice brought death.

To experience deep sadness when we lose loved ones is an acceptable and normal response. Jesus himself was grieved at death, even though he knew he would overcome it for all of us (John 11:35).

While Job’s mourning was normal and customary, the rest of his response was amazing and exceptional.

**[Q]** From the second sentence of Job 1:20, what was Job’s response to his grief?

Job turned adversity into adoration and woes into worship.

**[Q]** Describe the outcome of a circumstance when you reacted to a seemingly negative situation with a positive attitude.

**[Q]** Compare the first sentence in Job 1:21 to Ecclesiastes 5:15 and 1 Timothy 6:7. What should these verses mean for our daily lives?

**[Q]** When the Lord takes away, he still provides. Explain his provision as you read Psalm 111:7–9 and Isaiah 43:18–19.

God is always trustworthy. There are no exceptions. Sometimes he takes away the physical in order to develop the spiritual. *The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible* makes this point about Job:
Job ascribes to God, not only the giving, but the taking away: he does not attribute his losses to second causes, to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to the fire from heaven, and the wind from the desert, but to God, whose sovereign will and overruling hand were in all; these were but the instruments of Satan, and he had no power but what was given from God; and therefore to the counsel of his will, who suffered it, Job refers it, and for that reason sits down satisfied and quiet. This is all to be understood of temporal things only; for of spiritual things it cannot be said that God gives and takes away; such gifts are without repentance, and are irreversible (Romans 11:29).

Job demonstrates an incredible knowledge of the sovereignty (all-knowing, all-seeing, ever-presence) of God. Job knew that everything good that we possess, material and otherwise, comes as a blessing and a gift from God. It is his to give and his to take away—or to allow to be taken away. And, even in the taking away, we are to praise him because of who he is, and because his plans and wisdom are holy and perfect—even if it doesn't always look that way to us.

Satan assumed that Job would no longer serve the Lord when the blessings of God were removed from his life. Satan was wrong. Job praised the Lord. He did not sin or turn away from God either in God's giving or in God's taking.

**Teaching Point Three: We can either encourage or discourage other people's relationships with God.**

Read Job 2:1–8.

Satan believed that if God did not protect Job, Job would curse God. Satan seemed to be accusing God of being naïve, of believing that Job praised him for who he is and not for what he gave Job.

The NIV Life Application Study Bible commentary makes several significant points about this passage:

Can Satan persuade God to change His plans? At first God said He did not want Job harmed physically, but then He decided to allow it. Satan is unable to persuade God to go against His character: God is completely and eternally good. But God was willing to go along with Satan's plan because God knew the eventual outcome of Job's story. God cannot be fooled by Satan. Job's suffering was a test for Job, Satan and us—not God.

Let's examine Job's state of mind. He has just lost everything. All of his children are dead. And now, he is afflicted with sores. He has more than a few blisters or itchy spots. Scripture paints a bleak picture of Job's condition (Job 2:7; 7:5; 19:20; 30:17, 27, 30).
Read Job 2:9.

Think carefully about this: Satan’s goal was to make Job suffer. To do that he took away everything good Job had, and brought about all the bad he could in Job’s life. Yet Satan left Job’s wife alive. What could be worse than being encouraged to curse God by the one closest to you?

As we think about encouraging those around us, we need to look at what to say to others.

- Read James 1:5. How can you tell if an issue matters?
- Read Proverbs 19:11. What does wisdom from God help you do?
- Read Proverbs 17:14. How should you avoid quarrels?
- Read James 4:1–3. What does James 4:1–3 teach us about quarreling?

That raises the stakes, doesn’t it? It is not just a matter of throwing out some words that sound good but have venom behind them. While that is sometimes a good first step, we need our heart attitude to match the words we speak.

Satan used Job’s wife for his own deceitful purpose. Satan encourages us to be hard and to live in a place of bitterness. In this case, he counted on Job’s wife to help him.

Read Job 2:10. Though Job lost everything, was in great pain, and had just learned that he had no support from his wife, this verse tells us again that Job did not sin.

**Teaching point four: True friends weather the storm with us.**

The British writer Samuel Johnson said, “True happiness consists not in the multitude of friends, but in their worth and choice.” Read about Job’s friends in Job 2:11–13.

- Read Job 2:9. What was Job’s friends’ purpose in coming to see him?
  - How did they react when they saw him?

Many commentaries agree that Job’s three friends were from areas known for the great wisdom of their people. Jeremiah 49:7 laments the loss of wisdom in Teman, suggesting it was an area known for its wisdom at one time. As friends of the “greatest man among all the people of the East” (Job 1:3), these men were probably the wisest of the wise.

Job’s afflictions and sores were so great that his friends hardly recognized him. After one look, they understood his deep pain and loss so clearly that they immediately grieved with him according to the customs of the time.
Job: God Is in Charge

The Mystery of How God Works

Leader’s Guide

[Q] Why did Job’s friends sit with him on the ground in silence? What might that have meant to Job?

They met Job where he was, and let him grieve while they comforted him in silence by simply being there with him. It is hard to know what to say when someone we love is suffering. Our lives are noisy. Our culture is noisy. We are far removed from the art of silence. But sometimes our presence is needed more than our words.

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Action Point (choose one to do this week):

- If you did not do the optional activity, do it on your own this week. Do you harbor anger toward God or question his wisdom? Be honest and write down your true feelings. God already knows them, so it is for your benefit to get them out into the open. Ask God for understanding, and if you cannot have understanding, ask him for peace—we do not have to understand a situation to have peace in its midst. Tell God you want to overcome the pain and disturbing questions. Ask him to help you trust in him. Then sit quietly and let him speak to you. We do not always find instant peace or healing. It is often a process. Return to him every time the questions and concerns creep in. Ask him for help, wisdom, and strength.

- Insignificant and petty things cause us to cease worship and stop praising God. If we burn the toast, get a flat tire, suffer the injustice of standing in a long check-out line or waiting in traffic, worshiping God goes out the window as we focus on ourselves and wallow in self-pity. It’s hard to trust God during the major setbacks of life when we cannot even trust him during the minor inconveniences. Practice praising God for the minor setbacks this week.

- Do you know anyone who might be suffering and in need of your friendship? Look up Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 and Romans 12:15. Then take the time to call, send a note of encouragement, or simply sit with them in silence.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
God gives Satan free reign in Job’s life, within limits.

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• If you did not do the optional activity, do it on your own this week. Do you harbor anger toward God or question his wisdom? Be honest and write down your true feelings. God already knows them, so it is for your benefit to get them out into the open. Ask God for understanding, and if you cannot have understanding, ask him for peace—we do not have to
understand a situation to have peace in its midst. Tell God you want to overcome the pain and disturbing questions. Ask him to help you trust in him. Then sit quietly and let him speak to you. We do not always find instant peace or healing. It is often a process. Return to him every time the questions and concerns creep in. Ask him for help, wisdom, and strength.

• Insignificant and petty things cause us to cease worship and stop praising God. If we burn the toast, get a flat tire, suffer the injustice of standing in a long check-out line or waiting in traffic, worshiping God goes out the window as we focus on ourselves and wallow in self-pity. It’s hard to trust God during the major setbacks of life when we cannot even trust him during the minor inconveniences. Practice praising God for the minor setbacks this week.

• Do you know anyone who might be suffering and in need of your friendship? Look up Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 and Romans 12:15. Then take the time to call, send a note of encouragement, or simply sit with them in silence.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Though most people associate Job with patience, he was not always a model of serenity. Though upright and blameless, Job was still human, as we’ll see in this lesson.

Scripture: Job 3–5

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Job: God Is in Charge

Living Through Despair

Leader’s Guide

Part 1 Identify the Issue

**Note to leader:** Provide each person with the Participant’s Guide, included at the end of this study.

Job had months to think about his suffering, in addition to the seven days of silence with his friends. When he finally spoke, his words were not those of a man caught up in the passion of the moment, but of a man who had examined his situation.

Read Job 3 and record on a whiteboard or poster board an overview of what Job is saying in each of these three sections: Job 3:2–10, 11–19, 20–26.

Job cursed his existence in several different ways, but he did not curse God. But the Job of the third chapter does not seem to be the Job of the first two chapters. That Job appears to be legendary and heroic—man as he was created to be. This Job is “simply still alive, merely a man of flesh.”¹ The Job who stood anchored firmly in his faith has started to drift.

Though he is a far cry from the Job who praised God and said the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away (1:21), Job is speaking honestly from a heart full of grief and anguish. Since the Lord knows our thoughts at all times (Ps. 139), he already knew Job’s thoughts—that Job wished he’d never been born.

**Leader’s Note:** Job makes reference to cursers rousing Leviathan in 3:8. Leviathan is a sea monster from ancient Semitic mythology that belonged to the world of chaos. In Job’s time, they believed God had to subdue Leviathan to establish creation on a livable earth.² When aroused, the sea monster would cause an eclipse by swallowing the sun or moon.³ The “cursers” ready to rouse Leviathan were professionals; in that culture you could make a living as a professional mourner or a professional curser. Job’s reference to Leviathan doesn’t mean he believed in mythology. It is simply an illustration of the darkness he wishes upon the day of his conception and birth.

**[Q]** What three “why” questions did Job ask in 3:11–19?

Job’s questions paint a picture of a man in unspeakable anguish. Yet he still does not curse God—even though he believes God is the cause of his suffering (1:21).

**[Q]** What do these verses show of Job’s view of death?

**Leader’s Note:** Though the Hebrew belief was that life is good and death is evil, Job seemed to see death as a form of peace and as the great equalizer.

² IBID., 926
In light of what you know about the New Testament, how is death now viewed for believers in Christ? (See John 3:16–18, 35–36; 5:24; 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10.)

When Job was blessed, he could feel the presence of God. His anguish shows that in his suffering, though he does not curse God, he no longer felt God’s peaceful presence. The same can be true of us; sometimes we might not “feel” God in our lives. But God’s presence has nothing to do with our feelings.

How have you experienced God’s presence?

Our faith should be based firmly on the biblical truth of who God is. God never changes. Who he is now is who he was at the beginning and who he will be through all eternity. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and never-changing (Genesis 1:1–2; John 1:1–3; Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). Who we are and how we feel may change, but the Lord does not change. He is there when we feel him. He is there when we do not feel him.


The lies of Satan take away our hope. Unfortunately, he can be rather effective in his lies at times, helping us to picture a life of bleak hopelessness and despair. He can convince us that the world would be better off without us and that we would be better off dead. No matter how much the lies pound upon you, choose to trust in God. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the truth. Believe him when he says he will not give you more than you can bear. Believe that Christ will be your strength and will get you through this time.

Compare Job 1:10 and 3:23.

In Job 1:10, Satan used the word “hedge” to describe God’s protection. Now Job uses the term “hedge” to describe God’s restriction.

Do you see the Christian life as restrictive or freeing? Why?

What do Galatians 2:4; 5:1, and 13–15 have to say about it?

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: God’s truth can intermingle with a human version of truth, and become very confusing.
Job: God Is in Charge

Living Through Despair
Leader’s Guide

The Interpreter's Bible describes Job 3 as “the beating of a pulse behind a tired and aching forehead, the writhing of a human soul under incredible torture of mind and body.”4

[Q] If you were talking to a suffering friend who just told you she wished she had never been born, had died at birth, or could die now, what would your response be?

Read how Job’s friend responded in Job 4:1–21.

[Q] Recording answers on a whiteboard or poster board, as a group sum up chapter 4.

The question Eliphaz starts out with in 4:2 seems sarcastic. After hearing Job’s lament in chapter 3, he may have been justified in his question, but imagine if you were filled with grief and that was how your friend responded. It is as if Eliphaz forgot he came to comfort Job.

We already know Job as blameless and upright. Eliphaz gives us further insight into the man Job once was.

[Q] What do verses 3–4 tell you about Job’s reputation?

After pointing out what a great man Job is, Eliphaz chastises Job (vv. 5–6) for not comforting himself as he had comforted others—for not taking his own advice. As Matthew Henry notes, “Men make few allowances for those who have taught others.”5

What Job discovered is that no matter how well we are able to give others advice or to encourage them, it is an entirely different story when we go through trials ourselves. We need to be careful how we counsel others, knowing that we are not in their shoes and don’t know what they are going through, even if we have been through a similar situation.

[Q] In verses 7–11, we learn Eliphaz’s theory on suffering. What two questions does Eliphaz ask in verse 7?

• Considering those questions, what do you think Eliphaz is saying in verses 7–11?

[Q] Eliphaz declares to Job that if he is being punished, he must have done something to deserve it. This declaration demonstrates his theory on suffering: that “the good live a good life and the bad live a bad life.” Is that always true? Is that sometimes true? Explain.

Read Luke 13:4–5a; John 9:1–3; and Galatians 6:7–9 for more light on this subject.

5 Henry, Matthew. Concise Commentary on Job 3, Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible.
Eliphaz starts with truth, but exceeds its boundaries. It is true that those who continually cause trouble and seek out sin will eventually be punished. Yet it is not true that those who are good and innocent will never suffer. We have to keep in mind the “not ifs, but whens” of the Bible. Isaiah 43:2 is a good example.

Optional Activity:

Write Isaiah 43:2 out. Circle the three uses of “when” and note the significance of God saying “when” instead of “if.” When everyone is finished, reconvene as a group and discuss your findings.

In Job 4, Eliphaz gives two authorities as support for his theory on suffering.

[Q] From verse 8, what is his first reason for his theory on suffering?

The New Living Translation simplifies the primary argument within verse 8 to “My experience shows …” Eliphaz simply said he has seen this to be true in the past and, therefore, it must always be true.

[Q] What kind of bad advice do you often hear based on human experience rather than on God’s wisdom.

[Q] From verses 12–13, how does Eliphaz give credibility to his theory on suffering?

Eliphaz claims he received this information secretly through a dream. From verses 14–16, we learn the dream caused fear and trembling to seize him and to make his bones shake. A spirit who spoke in a hushed voice glided past him and caused the hairs of his body to stand on end. Take a moment to read through Job 4:12–21 carefully.

[Q] Do you think this vision was from God? Why or why not?

Leader’s Note: Sometimes a dream is just a dream. We should never look to our dreams instead of the Word of God for guidance or answers.

Teaching Point Two: Even though someone may not understand us, they can speak truth.

Chapter 4 ends, but Eliphaz is still talking. Read Job 5.
Recording the group’s answers on a whiteboard or poster board, give an overview of what Eliphaz is saying in each of these three sections: Job 5:1–7, 8–16, 17–26.

Eliphaz again offers words that few would find comforting or encouraging. In verse 2 he calls Job a fool killed by resentment. The Hebrew word translated as “resentment” appears three other times in Job, translated as “anguish” (6:2), “anger” (10:17), and “grief” (17:7). The word means “to be angry, be vexed, be incensed.” It is as if Eliphaz does not understand Job’s grief, anger, and anguish even though Job’s afflictions were so severe that Eliphaz did not recognize Job when he first saw him.

Eliphaz continues to insist that Job’s suffering is the result of sin (vv. 3–7). We have the advantage of reading Job 1 and 2. But Eliphaz, along with Bildad and Zophar, only knows that Job has suffered unimaginable loss. He assumes that Job deserved the suffering.

[Q] Describe a time when you have suffered for no apparent reason.

[Q] Do you now have additional information that changes your perspective or gives you a glimpse into something positive that came from it?

It is a blessing when we are able to view life through God’s eyes or have a glimpse of his plan, but it doesn’t always happen. There are some things we simply will not understand on this side of heaven.

Not knowing that God called Job upright and blameless (1:8), Eliphaz gives sound advice to Job to appeal to God (v. 8). Turning to God is never bad advice! Eliphaz then presents an eloquent reminder of God’s greatness.

[Q] Which descriptions of God do you see in verses 8–16?

• Of these, which mean the most to you? Which help you gain a better understanding of who God is?

[Q] In this section, Eliphaz speaks the verse from the Book of Job that is quoted in the New Testament. What verse from Job 5 does Paul use in 1 Corinthians 3:19?

Even though Eliphaz continues to wrongly assume that Job is being punished for sin and accuses Job of despising the discipline of the Lord (v. 17), Eliphaz gives a beautiful reminder of the blessing of God’s discipline in verses 17–26.

6 Walvoord. 726.
Here God is presented as a protective disciplinarian. It would be nice if we could just read our Bibles, soak up his truth, and get it right. For most of us, it doesn't always work that way. Like a two-year-old who continually heads for a hot fire, we need to be shown, and not just told, why we do not want to go there.

[Q] What do the following verses tell you about God’s discipline: Job 5:17; Proverbs 1:7; 3:11–12; Hebrews 12:7–11?

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Action Point (to do on your own this week):

• Are you confusing God’s truth in the Bible with human truth? If you think you may be doing so, look up what you can find in the Bible on the topic that may be confusing you. Use a Bible concordance or an online tool such as Gateway.com.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Living Through Despair

Job feels the anguish we all feel in difficult circumstances.

Though most people associate Job with patience, he was not always a model of serenity. Though upright and blameless, Job was still human, as we’ll see in this lesson.

Scripture: Job 3–5

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Part 1 Identify the Issue

Job cursed his existence in several different ways, but he did not curse God. But the Job of the third chapter does not seem to be the Job of the first two chapters. That Job appears to be legendary and heroic—man as he was created to be. This Job is “simply still alive, merely a man of flesh.” The Job who stood anchored firmly in his faith has started to drift.

Though he is a far cry from the Job who praised God and said the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away (1:21), Job is speaking honestly from a heart full of grief and anguish. Since the Lord knows our thoughts at all times (Ps. 139), he already knew Job’s thoughts—that Job wished he’d never been born.

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: God’s truth can intermingle with a human version of truth, and become very confusing.

Teaching Point Two: Even though someone may not understand us, they can speak truth.

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—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Job: God Is in Charge

The Defense Begins

Leader’s Guide

Job understandably begins to defend himself against the charges his friends throw at him.

As we progress in Job, we see the beauty described by The Interpreter’s Bible:

“Its speeches are hung like pearls on so tenuous a string of narrative as almost to shimmer, each in its own right, in midair … there are kaleidoscopic moods of the soul … visions and images, hopes and fears, memories … the face of God and the faces of men; but shadows sweep over them, as clouds sweep over the sky—the divine loving kindness hiding itself away behind implacable enmity, or so it seems.”

Scripture: Job 6–10

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown

Part 1 Identify the Issue


Job answers Eliphaz’s harsh words by saying that the heavy weight of his anguish justifies his impetuous and rash words. He asserts that his complaints are borne of his suffering—if there were no reason to complain, he would not complain. He supports this by stating that even animals complain when they have reason (v. 5).

In verses 6–7, Job could be saying that just as he would not eat tasteless food, neither will he listen to Eliphaz’s rebuke. Or he could be saying that as food and salt go together, or just as an egg white goes with an egg yolk, complaining accompanies suffering.2

At any rate, Job responded, as many would, by defending his actions.

[Q] Glance back at Job 3. Do you think Job was justified in his complaints? Why or why not?

[Q] What do the following verses have to say about complaining: Numbers 11:1; Philippians 2:14–15; 1 Thessalonians 5:18?

Complaining dims the light of Jesus that shines from us. It tarnishes our gleaming reflection of God's glory. It certainly does not draw people to Christ through us. You cannot complain if you are praising God.

[Q] That said, what is the difference between complaining and working through our emotions when we are extremely disappointed?

[Q] A gifted Bible teacher once said that since God uses suffering to refine us, during those times our prayers should not be for the trials to pass quickly, but for us to learn quickly. How does Romans 5:3–5 support this?

[Q] What do we gain from trials according to James 1:2–4?

[Q] According to Job 6:10, what was Job’s joy during his time of unrelenting pain?

When we studied Job 3, it seemed as though we were reading about a different man than the one we met in chapters 1 and 2. Job’s words in verse 10 show that he is not a different man; he
is just in different circumstances. Job still knows what is important and what we should value in life; the glory of Job’s life was that he had not denied God.

What a privilege it will be for us if we can stand before the throne of God and know the joy of not denying him.
When we know God’s Word as truth, we know that he is our strength, power, and hope. When we know his Word, we know he is trustworthy.

### Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

**Teaching Point One: We all have times when we are disappointed with God.**

Read Job 6:14–23.

[Q] How would you sum up the message of these verses?

It appears that when Job was the greatest man in all the East, he had the greatest friends in all the East. But in his dry season, they could not produce even a drop of water for him.

[Q] According to Philippians 4:6–7, what hope can we find when friends fail us?

Matthew Henry said it well: “It often happens that, even when we expect little from man, we have less; but from God, even when we expect much, we have more.”

[Q] Give an example of a time when God gave you more when you expected less.


Job seems to be saying, “Either prove to me that I did something wrong or be kind.”

Read Job 7:1–10.

Job compares himself to an enlisted soldier (“hard service,” v. 1), a hired man (v. 1) and a slave (v. 2), none of whom have control over their days of work. Yet while they would at least get rest at the end of the day, the night only brings misery to Job in his physical condition.

2 Henry, Matthew. *Concise Commentary on Job 3, Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible.*
If you have had pain that did not let you sleep, you understand the frustration. But Job has had more than a handful of sleepless nights; he has “been allotted months of futility” and sleepless nights.

From Job 7:7, it is clear that Job is talking to God. As he turns to God, he focuses on the brevity of life and the ever-closer call of the grave—as if to tell God that he’d better look on Job with favor now, before it is too late.

Job knew God. He trusted God. But he did not have knowledge of life after death through Christ. We have the advantage of having both the Old and New Testaments at our fingertips to help us know and trust God.

Read Job 7:11–21.

[Q] Anytime you see a therefore in the Bible, you need to go back to see what it is “there for.” What does “therefore” refer to in v. 11?

Optional Activity:

Because his life is but a sliver of time, Job speaks out to God and complains. Appoint someone in the group to reread Job 7:11–21 aloud, knowing that Job is speaking to God. As a group, give your reactions to Job’s words to God. Are you comfortable with speaking to God this way? Why or why not? When do our complaints lead to sin and when are they valid?

Teaching Point Two: All suffering is not a punishment for sin.

Bildad the Shuhite was less understanding than Eliphaz. Read Job 8.

Look at verses 1–4. Bildad asks Job if God perverts justice. Then he gives Job what he believes to be an example of God’s justice in verse 4.

Bildad tells Job that his ten children deserved their deaths as a form of punishment for their sins. Think of the pain his misunderstanding caused Job with that comment. Like Eliphaz, Bildad believes that all suffering is punishment for sins. Matthew Henry explains, “Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, sometimes they are the trials of extraordinary graces.”

[Q] What does Matthew Henry’s comment mean?

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4  Henry, Matthew. Concise Commentary on Job 3, Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible.
[Q] What do you think Bildad is saying inverses 5–7?

In Job 7:8, Job said God will look for him. Bildad counters that point and tells Job he needs to look for God, to plead with him. Bildad is only partially correct. We should seek God, but the Lord does not only “rouse himself” for the “pure and upright,” which is great news since not one of us fits that description. The Lord answers all those who sincerely call out to him.

[Q] What is Bildad’s message in verses 8–19? What source of authority does he give for his viewpoint (v. 8)?

Though Bildad is wrong in accusing Job of finding security in something other than God, this is a good message. True security comes only from God. There is no other person or thing we can depend on every time and in every situation.

Because Bildad, like Eliphaz, erroneously believes that Job’s suffering is a punishment for sin, he calls for Job to confess his sin so that God can stop punishing him and can instead restore him.

**Teaching Point Three: Our righteousness before God can only come from Christ.**

Read Job 9.

First, note that Job agrees with Bildad’s statement in Job 8:20–22: the good get good and the bad get bad. This brings confusion for Job because while he does not claim to be perfect (7:20–21; 9:20), he has been good and faithful (6:29–30). As a result of this misunderstanding, Job asks the question (9:1–2) Eliphaz posed earlier: “How can a mortal be righteous with God?” Because we have the whole of Scripture, we know the answer. A mortal can be righteous with God through the blood of Jesus Christ, our Savior, which covers our sins. Jesus Christ is the only way a person can be righteous with God—the only way that a person does not receive the punishment of eternal death for sins.

Though Job’s enthusiasm will quickly diminish, he starts out with a moving expression of God’s greatness. Look again at verses 3–10.

[Q] Which descriptions of God in this passage most moved you, and why?

[Q] What wonders or miracles has God done in your life that you cannot fathom (v. 10)?

**Leader’s Note:** Job further illustrates God’s strength, might, and power in v. 13 by saying that not only are mortal creatures subject to God’s sovereignty, but also mythological creatures, such as the “cohorts of Rahab.” The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains “the cohorts of
Job: God Is in Charge

The Defense Begins

Leader’s Guide

Rahab” as a reference “to the Babylonian creation myth in which Marduk defeated Tiamat (another name for Rahab, and for Leviathan) and then captured her helpers. Later Rahab became a nickname for Egypt.”

Read verses 14–24. As a group, list the legal terms used.

In some ways, God’s justice is similar to the justice systems in place today. This is God’s world. He created it, he created us. He has laws for this world as we have laws for our country. Because we have all broken his laws and none of us are innocent, we will each be summoned to a hearing where we come before the Judge to argue our individual case and to plead for mercy. However, because God knows everything, there will be no arguing or pleading. There will simply be a guilty verdict as our sins are glaringly and obviously laid before us.

[Q] What does Job ask for in verses 32–35?

Job’s plea is answered for us in Christ. Now is the time for arguing and pleading. Now is the time to present your case to God and to ask him for mercy, because if you get right with God now, Jesus will step forward at your hearing and claim you as his own. He will appease the Judge by accepting your punishment and by allowing you to be declared “not guilty.” You are not “innocent,” but the Judge will acquit you because atonement has been made and you are in right standing with him.

Teaching Point Four: We all question God when we go through difficult times.

Read Job 10:1–2.

This time we do not have to look far to find what the “therefore” is there for. Job declares that since his life is not worth living he might as well take his chances and complain to God. Read the rest of Job 10 to examine his bitter cry. Job demands to know why God is destroying him.

[Q] What do you think is the answer to Job’s question in verse 3?

Romans 8:18–39 and Jeremiah 29:10–14, as well as many other passages, confirm that God always works for the good of his children, even when we don’t understand his plans. This brings to mind Romans 9:20, “But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”

[Q] How would you answer Job’s questions about God in verses 4–5?

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Picture yourself as the ruler of a perfect kingdom. You live in great comfort, and your days are filled with delights and joy. You have all that you desire. The people of your kingdom are joyous and prosperous as well. There are no problems.

You know of another kingdom, one of despair. There are no structures to house people. There is no plumbing and drinking water comes from mud holes. Food is scarce; most survive on bugs and plants. People lie, steal, and kill; their hearts are full of hate.

Would you ever consider leaving the first kingdom to live in the second one?

That is just the smallest version of what Jesus did. He left heaven, which is wondrous and perfect and good beyond our wildest imagination, and came here, to Earth, to be a helpless baby born among animals, to be persecuted, to be hated, to be spit upon and beaten.

Why would God ever become man and go through all that? To give you life. Read Job 10:8–9 with Psalm 139:13–16.

[Q] What new thoughts do these verses give you about where you came from?

Our parents did not create us. Yes, they supplied the sperm and egg. But saying a sperm and an egg create us is no more correct than saying that a hammer and nails create a home. As the hammer and nails are tools, the sperm and egg are God’s biological tools. He created our inmost being. He knit us together in our mother’s womb.

[Q] In verses 21–22, Job describes his view of the afterlife. What do you find in Revelation 21–22 that contradicts Job’s view of life after death for believers?

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Action Point (to do on your own this week):

• Where do you find your security? In whom or in what do you trust? One of the many blessings of the Bible is that it is full of God’s promises to us. Do you have some memorized for when you need comfort? If you do not, choose five verses to begin to memorize over the coming weeks. Our God is a personal Lord. He is not in a galaxy far, far away. He is right next to us, walking with us, carrying us, and comforting us. Hold on to his promises, knowing they are not for some day in the distant future, but for today and for every day. Here are some suggestions:
• But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

• “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

• And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13–14)

• But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength … The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:17a, 18)

Close: Read Job 9:1–13 aloud as a prayer of worship.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
The Defense Begins

Job understandably begins to defend himself against the charges his friends throw at him.

As we progress in Job, we see the beauty described by The Interpreter’s Bible:

“Its speeches are hung like pearls on so tenuous a string of narrative as almost to shimmer, each in its own right, in midair … there are kaleidoscopic moods of the soul … visions and images, hopes and fears, memories … the face of God and the faces of men; but shadows sweep over them, as clouds sweep over the sky—the divine loving kindness hiding itself away behind implacable enmity, or so it seems.”

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Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: We all have times when we are disappointed with God.

Teaching Point Two: All suffering is not a punishment for sin.

Teaching Point Three: Our righteousness before God can only come from Christ.

Teaching Point Four: We all question God when we go through difficult times.

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—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Zophar the Naamathite, Job’s third visiting friend, speaks. Zophar makes Bildad and Eliphaz look like pillars of empathy and understanding. And, understandably, Job comes back swinging, defending his innocence and accusing God of being cruel to him.

Scripture: Job 11–16:21

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Zophar the Naamathite, Job’s third visiting friend, speaks. Read Job 11.

Zophar makes Bildad and Eliphaz look like pillars of empathy and understanding. Job’s friends decisively dismiss his declarations of innocence. As Eliphaz and Bildad before him, Zophar is convinced Job’s sin caused his suffering. But Zophar goes a step further and boldly denounces Job.

Our flat reading tone hinders the magnitude of emotions their voices would convey. We often plod through the Bible simply noting the words, instead of recognizing the drama of these real people’s lives and emotions. Job, Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz, as well as everyone in the Bible, were real people. They lived lives full of emotion, just as we do.

Put yourself in Zophar’s place. He is angry at his friend for not listening to his good advice. If only Job would listen to him, he could set his friend straight. Read Zophar’s words in verses 2–6 aloud, with the sarcasm and contempt he would express.

There! Did you feel it? Do you see what he is saying to Job? Zophar even claims that Job, who is suffering beyond what we can imagine, got off easy and has sins God did not punish (v. 6)! Zophar will get his wish (v. 5) before we are done, and God will speak, but it won’t be in support of Zophar’s narrow beliefs.

While Eliphaz cited observation and a dream as the source for his wisdom (4:8), and Bildad credited former generations for his wisdom (8:8), Zophar stands on his own wisdom (11:6). The paradox of wisdom is that if you think you have it, then you probably don’t. It would be like bragging about being humble. Those who are truly wise know how little they know.

[Q] What does Psalm 111:10 tell us is the beginning of wisdom? What do you think that means?

[Q] From James 3:13–18, list the actions of “earthly wisdom” and those of “heavenly wisdom.”
Be Slow to Judge

Leader’s Guide

[Q] What would Job’s friends be saying if they had heavenly wisdom instead of earthly wisdom?

[Q] How do you know if you have earthly or heavenly wisdom?

To be wise is to know the power, might, and wisdom of God. To be wise is to trust and obey the Lord, even when you don’t understand what he’s doing.

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: When speaking to others, we need to emphasize both truth and love.

Like Bildad and Eliphaz before him, Zophar is partially correct. His descriptions of God’s greatness are beautiful and true, supported by Scripture over and over again. You read Zophar’s earlier words in anger. Now read Job 11:7–9 aloud in a humble attitude of love.

[Q] How would you describe God’s greatness?
Optional Activity:

Form groups of three or four. Provide magazines that contain a lot of pictures, poster boards, scissors, and glue. Let each group decide how to present a glimpse of God’s greatness. They can make a collage, pick a passage of Scripture to read dramatically, sing a hymn or chorus together, or come up with their own ideas.

Truth has its greatest impact when we speak it with love. Love without truth is usually nothing more than enabling, while truth without love is usually just mean. It is when we combine truth and love that we live as Jesus calls us to.

[Q] Describe a time when you have dealt with someone emphasizing only truth.

[Q] Describe a time when you have dealt with someone emphasizing only love.

[Q] How might each of those situations have been better if you had used both truth and love?

Look again at verses 10–12. These verses make us wonder if Zophar even likes Job. First, he accuses Job of being deceitful and doing evil (v. 11). Then he calls Job a nitwit (“witless” literally means empty-headed and is comparable to calling someone a nitwit today).¹ Finally, he declares that a wild donkey (considered to be the dumbest of animals) would have a better chance of giving birth to a man than Job would have of becoming wise.

Consider all that Job has lost, as well as the physical, emotional, and mental suffering he is experiencing. In the midst of this, his friends shower him with cruelty. They firmly believe they are correct in their assessment of Job and will not consider that they might be wrong. It is easy for us to do the same as we study and learn Scripture and doctrine and develop our own beliefs. We are influenced by our religious denomination, our pastor’s teachings, the views within the books we read, and the beliefs of our friends and family.

[Q] In Philippians 2:12, Paul exhorts us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Do you know what you believe and why you believe it? How have you developed those ideas?

[Q] Tell us about a time you called on the Holy Spirit to help you understand Scripture. What was the result?

Zophar’s advice to pray (v. 13) and repent (v. 14) to be in good standing with God (vv. 15–19) is good advice, even though he incorrectly applies it to Job, who is not suffering as a punishment for sins.

[Q] Verse 14 tells us to put away our sin and allow no evil to dwell in our lives. According to Galatians 5:16–26, how can we do that?

¹ Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck, eds. The Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 1985, 733
**Job: God Is in Charge**

**Leader’s Guide**

Teaching Point Two: When speaking to others, we need to remind them that God can turn the bleakest circumstances into something good.


Job’s frustration shows as he sarcastically remarks that the three men must think they are so wise that surely there will be no wisdom left when they die (12:2). Using his friends’ examples, Job declares that they do not know anything the animals do not already know (12:7–10), they speak words as obviously wrong as tasteless food (12:11), and they should at least have the wisdom of the aged (12:12).

[Q] Review Job 12:5. How have you seen this to be true? Give an example.

[Q] Read Job 12:23 with Daniel 2:21 and Luke 1:52. What do these verses tell you about world politics?

**Leader’s Note:** Nothing in this world happens without the knowledge and consent of God. His sovereignty does not end at the line of politics.

[Q] Read Job 13:7–12. What do you think Job is saying in these verses? How would you answer the questions in verses 9 and 11?

The splendor of God should terrify us because he is greater and holier, more powerful and perfect than we can imagine. Because he wraps us in grace, mercy, and love, we sometimes get comfortable enough to forget he is God and not one of us. Bringing him down to our level turns him into an idol, a pocket-sized god. Be on guard; do not lose your awe and fear of the Lord. Read Job 13:13–14:22 and list his correct views that come from his trust of God and his incorrect views that come from his frustration and pain.

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Job is desperate for a trial before God. He wants the unknown to go away. He would rather die than continue on in the mystery of his suffering. Trusting God in the unknown is Job's greatest trial. It addresses a key issue: When your life makes no sense, when pain and disappointment loom endlessly, do you trust God? In all situations and in all circumstances, do you trust that he is good and that his plans are for your good?

[Q] Describe a time your trust in God wavered.

[Q] Describe a time you trusted God when life didn't make sense.

[Q] Were you able to see the good of God’s plan in either situation?

Job doesn't know why he is suffering, but he does know the only place he can go for the answers: God.

[Q] What perspective do we gain from 1 John 3:2–3?

Job did not have our knowledge of Christ’s death and resurrection. When he lived, the traditional view of death was the one he gave in 10:21–22: “the place of no return … the land of gloom and deep shadow … deepest night … disorder.” Yet even in the midst of suffering and despair, Job still hopes in God. Read 14:14–17.

Job looks for a redeemed future. Even though he is unaware of Christ’s future work of redemption, Job knows God well enough to have hope. Job still trusts God because he knows who God is. Job knows God as a personal God who listens, answers, and is aware of all we do.

Read Jeremiah 29:11. This promise is always true in your life, no matter what information is missing, no matter what our culture believes, and no matter how much you are suffering.

Job, like us, is all-too-human. After his burst of hope, he gives in to despair once again. But Job’s hope isn’t gone. His story is like ours: starts and stops, steps forward and back, side trips and detours.

**Teaching Point Three: When speaking to others, we need to be careful in our judgments.**

We now enter the second round of discussions. Rather than backing down, Job's friends are gearing up. Roy Zuck describes round two in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*:

In this second duel of the desert discourses, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar persisted in their theory that suffering always stems from sin. Here they become more vicious than in the first round. Missing from these speeches is a call to repent. Added is a more hostile,
hardened attitude. Underscoring the fate of the wicked, these arguers at the ash pile stressed the dangers facing the wicked (Eliphaz, chap. 15), the traps awaiting the wicked (Bildad, chap. 18), and the short-lived wealth of the wicked (Zophar, chap. 20).²

Read Job 15. You may want to glance back at Eliphaz’s first speech in Job 4–5.

It seems Eliphaz has not heard a word Job has said. We know Eliphaz has been listening because he declares that Job’s own mouth condemns him (v. 6), a response both to Job’s claim that his mouth would condemn him (9:20), and also to Job’s instructions for his friends not to condemn him (10:2). But it appears Eliphaz listens only to gather proof that he is correct, not to hear the cries of a friend in need.

[Q] In verses 17–35, Eliphaz attempts to scare Job into a confession of sin. Of course that didn’t work since Job was not being punished for his sin. Do you think such a method would work if a person was suffering because of their sin? Why or why not?

Imagine how different this book would be if Job’s friends suggested joining hands and praying instead of self-righteously accusing Job. Their words might hold comfort if they sought the counsel of God instead of relying on their own wisdom.

[Q] How will this study affect how you help suffering friends in the future?

Do not let “I will pray for you” become a meaningless answer when you do not know what to say to someone who is suffering. When a person is in need or hurting, pray with them on the spot instead of offering to pray for them later. When someone needs your prayers, it benefits them to hear and be present in your prayer. The opportunity for God to give them immediate peace as you pray could be the opportunity he uses to change their heart and open their eyes to Christ.

Read the beginning of Job’s response to Eliphaz in 16:1–5.

Job’s thoughts can be summed up: Will these “friends” ever shut up and leave me alone? The wisdom of God elevates word quality over word quantity. Proverbs 18:7 says, “A fool’s mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul.” Matthew 12:36–37 agrees, “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

[Q] Read Matthew 12:33–37 and Proverbs 16:23. Based on these verses, why will we be judged for our words?

² Walvoord and Zuck. 736.
Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Read Job 16:6–21.

Job has found no relief from his suffering (16:6), and goes on to blame God for his suffering in verses 9 and 11–14.

TVs scream out headlines of violence: war, random shootings, terrorist attacks. All these situations lead to questions about evil that we will not know the answers to in this life. But we do know that God is in control and is trustworthy—even in situations of violence. We learned in chapters 1 and 2 that evil is under his reign. Like Job, we do not understand why God sometimes protects us from evil and other times allows us to experience evil. But we know he has a reason, and it is the holy, perfect, true, and right reason. And we have Romans 5:8.

**Action Points** (choose one to do on your own this week):

- Ephesians 1:13 says, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” This verse is one of the most amazing promises in the Bible—a grand demonstration of the Lord’s grace, mercy, and compassion. It promises that when we believe in Christ and are saved, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. God gives us not only the promise of and knowledge of him, but also his presence within us. His Word would be enough. His Son would be enough. But our God is not a god of “enough.” He gives us more than enough.

- The Spirit of the Lord dwells within us and gives us power to overcome sin. Do not struggle to overcome sin on your own. No human can do that. Call on the Spirit of God. When you pray to God in the name of Jesus, the promise of Job 11:15–19 becomes true: “You will be secure, because there is hope” (v. 18). Your hope is in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

- Take time to sit quietly this week and thank the Lord for his Spirit within you. Ask him to make you aware of his presence, and to be able to see your life circumstances from his perspective.

- If this study has left you with a broken heart and a need to repent because of how you’ve treated someone who is suffering, you are not alone. Know that as your heart cries out for forgiveness, the Lord forgives you. Pray for the Spirit to guard your mouth in the future, and to give you courage to ask forgiveness of the one you’ve hurt.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Job’s friends continue to demonstrate what not to say to someone who is suffering.

Zophar the Naamathite, Job’s third visiting friend, speaks. Zophar makes Bildad and Eliphaz look like pillars of empathy and understanding. And, understandably, Job comes back swinging, defending his innocence and accusing God of being cruel to him.

Scripture: Job 11–16:21

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Part 1 Identify the Issue

Zophar makes Bildad and Eliphaz look like pillars of empathy and understanding. Job’s friends decisively dismiss his declarations of innocence. As Eliphaz and Bildad before him, Zophar is convinced Job’s sin caused his suffering. But Zophar goes a step further and boldly denounces Job.

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Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: When speaking to others, we need to emphasize both truth and love.

Teaching Point Two: When speaking to others, we need to remind them that God can turn the bleakest circumstances into something good.

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—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
In spite of his despair, Job yet clings to God.

Job continues to rail against God, crying out against his perceived injustice. It’s no wonder Job badgers God and looks forward to death. But in the midst of his cries, he declares, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” These words shine brilliantly against a backdrop of hopelessness, and recall the legendary Job of chapters 1 and 2.

Scripture: Job 16:22–21:34

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Job: God Is in Charge

My Redeemer Lives

Leader’s Guide

Part 1 Identify the Issue

Note to leader: Provide each person with the Participant’s Guide, included at the end of this study.

Read Job 16:22–17:5.

In what Job believes are the final days of his life, he finds hostile companions who mock him rather than gentle friends to comfort him. In 17:3 Job calls out to God, asking him to put up security for him. Because of the legal terms, it is easy to miss the importance of this verse. The translations below use different terms to describe the same concept.

Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor?
(Job 17:3, NASB)

Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?
(Job 17:3, NIV)

You must defend my innocence, O God, since no one else will stand up for me.
(Job 17:3, NLT)

Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?
(Job 17:3, KJV)

God, please pay the price to have me set free. Who else would put up money for me?
(Job 17:3, NIRV)

In his role as prisoner, Job asks God, who is his Judge, to post his bail, to guarantee and be responsible for him, to serve as his defense attorney, and to be his witness. Job asks for the seemingly impossible to be possible. How wonderful that with God all things are possible!

The Interpreter’s Bible explains it:

“Lay down a pledge for me with thyself.” No one else will do it, no one else can. Job is compelled to fall back on the same “impossible possibility” … the God who is himself the judge must himself go (provide) bail, and when the case comes up, somewhere on the other side of death, see to it that all the wrongs are set right. Only in that way, by God’s own gracious act, can the old relationship which has so mysteriously been broken off ever be restored, or better still, yield to another which shall be deeper and richer. It is not that Job ever expects to be “justified” by reason of his “works”; he pleads for a justification that shall have its source in the very being of God.1

Job’s question applies to all of humanity. Since we are all sinners and have all fallen short, not one of us can stand before a just and holy God. How can God restore our relationship with him? What sacrifice could ever bridge the gap? Jesus Christ is the answer. Nothing we do will ever bridge the gap. Our good deeds do not save us; only Christ saves us.

[Q] Give an example of a legal situation that might demonstrate what God does for us in Christ.

Read Job 17:6–16.

As we read about a man who is spit upon and made fun of, who has cried so much his vision has weakened, and who appalls people who look upon him, it’s hard to believe we are still reading about “the greatest man among all the people of the East.”

Declaring that his friends lack the wisdom to console him (v. 10), Job once again falls into despair and believes his only hope comes from the grave.

[Q] If you had a chance to console Job, what would you tell him?

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Job is in great despair, but God reveals an amazing truth to him.

Bildad the Shuhite, who previously stated that Job suffered as a punishment for sin, responds to Job’s despair. Read Job 18:1–4.

[Q] What do you think about Bildad’s opening response?

Read 18:21 to know the premise of Bildad’s comments, and then read 18:5–21.

[Q] What picture does Bildad paint of “the dwelling of an evil man … the place of one who knows not God” in these verses? How would you describe it?

Many people don’t acknowledge God, yet don’t live in the condition Bildad describes. Instead, they appear to escape God’s judgment. After God’s Final Judgment, however, their situation will change and Bildad’s description will be their reality (see Matthew 8:12).

Read Job 19:1–12.
Job rails against God, crying out against his perceived injustice. Job then reminds his friends of the reasons for his laments. As you read Job 19:13–22, make a list of how other people react to him.

Job, the “greatest man among all the people of the East,” a man God considered “blameless and upright,” is shunned, scorned, dismissed, and ignored. It’s no wonder Job badgers God and looks forward to death. Furthermore, his three “friends” persecute him rather than comfort him. But Job’s next words shine brilliantly against this backdrop of hopelessness, and recall the legendary Job of chapters 1 and 2.

Before we proceed, think back on all you know about Job’s suffering and briefly describe it.

Read Job 19:23–27, remembering that Job attributes his losses and suffering to God and that he does not know Satan was involved.

What most amazes you about Job’s words?

During Job’s life there was not a developed doctrine of resurrection, and yet Job believed he would see God in the flesh. Job’s declaration that he would be redeemed made him one of the first people in history to talk about bodily resurrection.

In Job’s time, a redeemer was the next of kin who had the right to buy (redeem) the estate of a dead person. Since Job’s sons were dead (1:18–19) and his relatives had deserted him (19:17), we know Job is not talking about a kinsman redeemer.

The Hebrew word Job used for “redeemer” means to “redeem or deliver.” It is the same word used for God when Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage. The verb form was also used to describe individuals saved from oppression, evil, or death. Job is describing a God redeemer who would save him from death.

If Job’s words amaze you, you are not alone. “Commentators usually maintain that Job … suddenly breaks through the wall of his isolation, passes from the stage of vain wish into that of positive conviction and declares his unshakeable knowledge that God himself will be the vindicator of his innocence, the defender of his good name, and the restorer of his honor.”

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4 Ibid.
What do you think it means to “pass from the stage of vain wish into that of positive conviction”?

Would you describe yourself as being in the stage of “vain wish” or “positive conviction”? Why?

What an amazing gift God lavishes upon Job in providing this understanding. Job has been through unbearable and unspeakable trials. In addition, he has been shunned, abandoned, ridiculed, and spit on (17:6). Yet, because Job knows God from the depth of his being, he turns his hope skyward in a full-hearted pursuit of the God he knows is good and trustworthy.

**Teaching Point Two: God uses people despite their glaring faults.**

Job suffered beyond what we can imagine, yet he still trusted God. He questioned God and complained to God. He even got nasty with God. But he still had faith in God.

In Job 1, we learned about Job’s regular customs of honoring God. As we practice regular customs, such as daily Bible study and prayer, God refines and strengthens our faith. He shows us how to turn our hearts to him.

Read Job 19:23–24.

Why do you think Job wished this?

If only Job knew the plans God had for him! His words were recorded and will endure forever. They are in the best-selling book of all time and have been translated into at least 2,018 languages. God had great plans for Job’s life story.

If Job had such great faith in God, why do you think he lapsed into complaint and anger, accusing God with crude words?

If we suffered like Job, imagine the whines, gripes, and complaints we would have. However, we would likely direct them at the earthly causes (Chaldeans, Sabeans, fire, wind storms, etc.). But Job directed his complaints to God, a sure sign that Job knew God is in control and all things are subject to him.

The beauty of Job’s lapses is that they show a fragile, flawed human—someone we can relate to. God used (and, therefore, filled the Bible with) unlikely candidates for righteousness. After obediently leading the Israelites out of captivity, Moses acted in pride and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. The great King David committed adultery and then tried to cover it up by commissioning a murder. Noah, the only man on Earth God did not find fault with
before the flood, got drunk and embarrassed himself after the flood. The apostle Paul, who wrote many of the New Testament books, persecuted Christians before God called him.

The women were not perfect, either. The earthly ancestors of Jesus included Tamar, who tricked her father-in-law Judah into sleeping with her, and Rahab, a prostitute.

God used people despite their glaring faults. Living in Christ is not about perfection and obeying every detail of every law. It is about the condition of our hearts. The Bible calls Noah righteous and David a man after God's own heart. Moses is considered the greatest Jewish leader. Rahab's faith was so great it was noted 1,500 years later in the Book of Hebrews.

It is not because of who we are or what we have done. It is because of who he is and what he has done. Since it is not about being perfect, we do not have to be discouraged when we sin.

**[Q]** How does Lamentations 3:22–23 describe the Lord's compassions and faithfulness?

This oft-quoted verse was the inspiration for “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” the 1923 hymn by Thomas O. Chisolm. Because the term is so popular, it is easy to skim over these few words. Yet they provide an astoundingly broad picture of God.

**[Q]** What does Isaiah 47:10 tell us about trusting in ourselves?

Do not intentionally sin so God can forgive you, but when you do get it wrong (because we all do), be thankful for the reminder that you need the Lord and your life is about him. Job echoes this in Job 19:28–29.

**Optional Activity:**

_Sing the hymn “Great is Thy Faithfulness” or play a recording of it as the group meditates on its words._

**Teaching Point Three: God not only commands us, but also carries us in our efforts to obey.**

Zophar speaks for the final time. Read Job 20:1–3.

**[Q]** What words does Zophar use to describe himself, and what reasons does he give for his need to reply?

_Leader’s Note: Zophar still bases his argument on his own understanding and wisdom._
Interestingly, Zophar is greatly disturbed that Job’s words might have dishonored him, a mere man, but seems to have no concern about any of them dishonoring God with their words.

[Q] How do Zophar’s words sound like Psalm 34:1 and 140:3?

[Q] If you’ve ever sounded like Psalm 140:3, how does Psalm 141:3–4 tell you how to avoid that in the future?

God not only commands us, but also carries us in our efforts to obey.

Read Job 20:4–19.

Zophar makes a final attempt to prove that Job’s suffering is a punishment for his sins with a claim that the wicked have always suffered for their wickedness (vv. 4–5). His statement is inaccurate, but once again, we find gold nuggets of truth hidden in a heap of misunderstanding.

[Q] According to Job 20:6–7, what happens to the person whose “pride reaches to the heavens”?

• Give an example of when you’ve seen that demonstrated in someone’s life.

[Q] What do you learn about pride from Proverbs 16:18, and how does this differ from popular opinion?

Read Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:12–19.

Scholars interpret Isaiah 14:12–14 as a description of (1) Satan; (2) a powerful king like Nebuchadnezzar; or (3) both Satan and a human king. Likewise, they believe the Ezekiel passage condemns not only the King of Tyre, but also Satan, who motivates sin.

These verses get to the origin of pride: that in our hearts we want to be great in ourselves. We do not want to believe someone else is in control of our lives. We do not want to believe our knowledge, skills, and abilities are gifted to us and not something we created. Zophar correctly describes the wicked as proud.

Read Job 20:12–15.

[Q] According to verse 12, how does evil initially taste?

• Can you give an example of something that initially seems good, but turns out to be evil?
[Q] According to verses 13–15, what is the true result of evil?

It’s not always easy to recognize sin. One of Satan’s tricks is to candy-coat sin so we will take another look and decide it’s harmless. The Lord gives us eyes to see through the sugary coating Satan puts on sin and recognize it for what it really is. He helps us see what Zophar describes, that though sin appears sweet at first, it will soon turn sour in our stomachs.

Make sure the good and sweet thing you seek in your life is the Lord Jesus Christ, and let your happiness flow from your relationship with him. If you look for good and happiness from any other source, it will become bitter and venomous. Pray for the Lord to drop the scales from your eyes so you can see beyond Satan’s lies to God’s truth.

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Believers and the wicked will not lay side by side in death. The wicked, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, will be thrown into the lake of fire. Those who have accepted Christ as their savior will live with God in a new heaven and new earth, one with “no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev. 21:4).

Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):

• Read Job 19:25–27 out loud, making the words your own.

• Read and meditate on Psalm 73. Record how these words affect you. Give yourself extra time to quiet yourself and listen to God.

• Read Job 21 this week, since we did not have time to cover it in this study.

• Read Revelation 20:11–15 and 21:1–8. What do these passages say about the future of the wicked? What do you learn about the future of believers?

Close: Using the words of Psalm 73:21–28 as a guide, end with prayer.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Job continues to rail against God, crying out against his perceived injustice. It’s no wonder Job badgers God and looks forward to death. But in the midst of his cries, he declares, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” These words shine brilliantly against a backdrop of hopelessness, and recall the legendary Job of chapters 1 and 2.

Scripture: Job 16:22–21:34

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Part 1 Identify the Issue

Read Job 16:22–17:5.

In what Job believes are the final days of his life, he finds hostile companions who mock him rather than gentle friends to comfort him. In 17:3 Job calls out to God, asking him to put up security for him. Because of the legal terms, it is easy to miss the importance of this verse. The translations below use different terms to describe the same concept.

Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor?
(Job 17:3, NASB)

Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?
(Job 17:3, NIV)

You must defend my innocence, O God, since no one else will stand up for me.
(Job 17:3, NLT)

Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?
(Job 17:3, KJV)

God, please pay the price to have me set free. Who else would put up money for me?
(Job 17:3, NIRV)

In his role as prisoner, Job asks God, who is his Judge, to post his bail, to guarantee and be responsible for him, to serve as his defense attorney, and to be his witness. Job asks for the seemingly impossible to be possible. How wonderful that with God all things are possible!

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Job is in great despair, but God reveals an amazing truth to him.

Teaching Point Two: God uses people despite their glaring faults.

Teaching Point Three: God not only commands us, but also carries us in our efforts to obey.
Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Believers and the wicked will not lay side by side in death. The wicked, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, will be thrown into the lake of fire. Those who have accepted Christ as their savior will live with God in a new heaven and new earth, one with “no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev. 21:4).

Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):

• Read Job 19:25–27 out loud, making the words your own.

• Read and meditate on Psalm 73. Record how these words affect you. Give yourself extra time to quiet yourself and listen to God.

• Read Job 21 this week, since we did not have time to cover it in this study.

• Read Revelation 20:11–15 and 21:1–8. What do these passages say about the future of the wicked? What do you learn about the future of believers?

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
We start round three, where Eliphaz and Bildad speak for the final time and Job responds passionately to his friends’ increased intensity.

Job erroneously questions God’s judgment, believing he is not just. He asks why some wicked people avoid punishment. It’s difficult to know if Job is crying out in frustration and confusion because of his own suffering, or if he is refuting Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar’s declarations that the wicked are always punished and the righteous always prosper. But through it all, Job is struggling to understand God.

Scripture: Job 22–28

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Part 1 Identify the Issue

**Note to leader:** Provide each person with the Participant’s Guide, included at the end of this study.

Read Job 22, in which Eliphaz speaks for the final time.

**[Q]** What four questions does Eliphaz ask in verses 2–3?

1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________

**[Q]** Using the following verses, how would you answer Eliphaz’s questions: Psalm 69:30–31; Proverbs 15:8, 26; 2 Corinthians 5:7–9; Ephesians 5:8–10; 1 Timothy 2:1–3?


Eliphaz makes some strong accusations. Let’s see if they are accurate.

**[Q]** What do you learn when you compare Job 22:6 with Job 31:19–20?

**[Q]** What do you learn when you compare Job 22:7–9 with Job 31:16–17, 21–22?

Eliphaz switched from commending Job for his good deeds to condemning him for false deeds. In an effort to prove that Job is being punished for guilt, Eliphaz lies. He has moved from simply not knowing to outright sinning.

**[Q]** Describe a time when you were so certain you were right about something that you went too far to prove you were right. What was the result?

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

**Teaching Point One:** Sometimes we experience the painfully raw cry of Job’s heart as we seek the Lord.
Job: God Is in Charge

Seeking to Understand God

Leader's Guide

Read Job 23:1–9.

[Q] Describe a time you felt as though you could not find the Lord. What were you going through?

• What do you know now that you could not feel then?

[Q] According to the following verses, what can you know about the Lord’s presence in your life: Exodus 33:14; 2 Chronicles 15:2; Psalm 23:4; 139:5–12; Isaiah 58:9; Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 3:17?

When we trust the Lord, we trust that he is there for us. We do not live by what we feel or think; we live by what we know to be true—that Christ dwells in our hearts and when we seek him with all our heart, we will find him. The truth is reflected in one of the Hebrew names for the Lord, Jehovah–Shammah, “the Lord who is there.” He is not “the Lord who is there when you feel him” or “the Lord who is there sometimes.” Wherever you are physically, wherever you are mentally or emotionally, the Lord is there.

Read Job 23:10.

[Q] What does it mean to “come forth as gold”?

Leader's Note: Gold is hidden in ordinary rock until a chemical process brings it out. According to Wikipedia.com, gold is the most malleable and ductile metal; a single gram can be beaten into a sheet of one square meter, or an ounce into 300 square feet.


[Q] What do you learn about the paths we walk from Jeremiah 6:16–19?

[Q] What further information do Proverbs 21:16 and 22:5 provide?

[Q] From Psalm 119:105, how do we stay on the path?

It is a great first step to read the Word of God and know the path, but it is not sufficient to only know and see the path. Even Satan knows God’s Word. We must act on God’s Word and choose to walk the path.

[Q] What path are you walking and where does it lead? What do you need to change in your life to get on or stay on the right path?

Teaching Point Two: No one can oppose God.
Job: God Is in Charge

Seeking to Understand God

Leader’s Guide

Job tells Eliphaz that yes, he is terrified of the Lord. But not, as Eliphaz suggested, because he has sinned. Job is terrified and faint of heart because of the Lord’s awesome nature.

**Optional Activity:**

*Read Job 24 and summarize each section on a whiteboard or poster board. Discuss what each section means.*

Job 24:1 ____________________________________________________________

Job 24:2–12 __________________________________________________________

Job 24:13–17 _________________________________________________________

Job 24:18–21 _________________________________________________________

Job 24:22–24 _________________________________________________________

Job 24:25 ___________________________________________________________

(Job erroneously questions God’s judgment, believing he is not just. He asks why some wicked people avoid punishment. It is difficult to know if Job is crying out in frustration and confusion because of his own suffering, or if he is refuting Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar’s declarations that the wicked are always punished and the righteous always prosper.

Bildad’s final words are the last we hear from Job’s trio of friends. Read Job 25.

Bildad correctly assesses God’s power. And, yes, man is but a worm compared to God. But God does not see us as maggots and worms. God created us in his image and tells us we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139).

**[Q]** What do you learn about approaching God from Hebrews 4:14–16?

We do not crawl to him like worms; we approach his throne of grace with confidence. Yes, we are unworthy sinners, but because of Jesus, we can go boldly before the throne.

**Teaching Point Three: Righteousness before God only comes by faith.**

In Job 26:1–14, Job starts his final defense by sarcastically noting that his friends have been of no help (vv. 1–4). Though his friends declared that God was powerful, Job seems intent on proving he already knows this by giving an even stronger proclamation of God’s power (vv. 5–14).
But Job stands strong in declaring his innocence, proclaiming that his conscience is clear and he is righteous. He has no doubts. Read Job 27:1–6.

**[Q]** Was Job right in defending his righteousness? Why or why not?

**Leader’s Note:** Job was not claiming that he was sinless, but was simply defending himself against the false claims against him.

**[Q]** What encouragement do we find in Philippians 3:12–14 to help us conquer sin?

In Job 27:7–23, Job points out to his friends that yes, the wicked will be punished. He wonders why he has to tell them since they have seen this for themselves. Finally, he launches into a description of their punishment.

## Part 3 Apply Your Findings

Meditate on this prayer from Daniel, who turned to God for wisdom and was granted it:

> Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.

> He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them.

> He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

> He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

> I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king. (Daniel 2:20–23)

**Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):**

- Meditate on Job 22:21–30 and express what it means to you to submit and be at peace with God, to be restored by the Almighty, to find delight in the Almighty and lift your face to God, and to be heard by the Lord.
• Read Job 28:1–11. We go to great lengths to find “valuables” like gold, iron, copper, and gemstones. We literally move mountains to mine them. When they are found, they are in high demand and sell for extravagant amounts of money. Do you hold true valuables in the same high regard? Do you want God above all else? How does your life show this?

• Read Job 28:12–28. Wisdom’s worth is so great that not even the most valuable possession would be enough to purchase it. What do you learn about the source of wisdom from the following verses: Psalm 51:6; Proverbs 2:6; 9:10; Isaiah 33:6; Colossians 2:2–3; James 1:5? After reading these verses, what new thoughts do you have on wisdom? What will you do to seek wisdom? How will you protect yourself from lies?

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
Seeking to Understand God

We start round three, where Eliphaz and Bildad speak for the final time and Job responds passionately to his friends’ increased intensity.

Job erroneously questions God’s judgment, believing he is not just. He asks why some wicked people avoid punishment. It’s difficult to know if Job is crying out in frustration and confusion because of his own suffering, or if he is refuting Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar’s declarations that the wicked are always punished and the righteous always prosper. But through it all, Job is struggling to understand God.

Scripture: Job 22–28

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
**Part 1 Identify the Issue**

**[Q]** What four questions does Eliphaz ask in verses 2–3?

1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________
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Eliphaz switched from commending Job for his good deeds to condemning him for false deeds. In an effort to prove that Job is being punished for guilt, Eliphaz lies. He has moved from simply not knowing to outright sinning.

**Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles**

**Teaching Point One:** Sometimes we experience the painfully raw cry of Job’s heart as we seek the Lord.

**Teaching Point Two:** No one can oppose God.

**Part 3 Apply Your Findings**

Meditate on this prayer from Daniel, who turned to God for wisdom and was granted it:

*Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.*

*He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them.*

*He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.*

*He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.*
I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king. (Daniel 2:20–23)

Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):

• Meditate on Job 22:21–30 and express what it means to you to submit and be at peace with God, to be restored by the Almighty, to find delight in the Almighty and lift your face to God, and to be heard by the Lord.

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In this study, we see Job redirect his comments from his friends to God. It is as though he has finished arguing his case and now turns to the judge to present his closing arguments. In Job’s final plea, he remembers the glorious days before he was struck (Job 29), he reviews his present suffering (Job 30), and he repeats his claim of innocence (Job 31). We also hear from a new friend named Elihu.

Scripture: Job 29–37

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
All his suffering has created a deep longing in Job. Read Job 29:1–6.

**[Q]** What does Job long for in these verses?

**[Q]** Describe a time you experienced God's intimate friendship.

During deep, intense prayer we can feel the presence of the Lord. These are amazing mountaintop moments! But these moments pass quickly.

When the disciple Peter saw Jesus transfigured and glimpsed Jesus' true glory, he wanted to build shelters and stay on the mountain (Matt. 17:1–4). Peter was not allowed to and neither are we. Life is not lived on mountaintops. God takes us there to strengthen us and to keep us focused on the glorious hope of our future, but then he sends us back to work. Whether we have fallen into a lifeless routine with the Lord, have stopped making time for him, or have turned away during a time of suffering, we miss him. We long for the times of peace, comfort, and closeness we have had with the Lord. We attempt to soothe our longing for him with insufficient replacements: shopping, work, relationships, food, alcohol, or drugs.

There are times when it seems as though we cannot find God no matter what we do. Sometimes the valley is so wide and deep that we lose sight of the mountaintop. In those times we have to trust the promises from our faithful, trustworthy, steady God. The Lord will never leave nor forsake us (Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; Heb. 13:5). The Lord will not desert us (Neh. 9:17, 19). When we seek him with all our heart, we will find him (Jer. 29:11–14). We are co-heirs with Christ, and though we share in his suffering, we will also share in his glory (Rom. 8:17). We will have eternal life (John 3:16). God himself will be with us, wiping every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain (Rev. 21:4).

**[Q]** Are you presently in a valley, on a mountaintop, or someone in between? How do you know?

Read Job 29:7–25.

Job was a city councilman and a judge. These important positions of community management and dispute settlement would have been bestowed upon Job because he was highly respected. Job had life by the tail; as he looked ahead, he saw nothing but blue skies and smooth sailing (vv. 18–20).
Job: God Is in Charge

Defense Before the Judge

Leader’s Guide

Though we know Job was righteous, he walks the line of pride as he recalls his glory days. When our life seems perfect, we can lose our perspective and forget we need God.

However, just as we turn to the Lord in our struggles, we should also turn to the Lord in our victories. When we have days that seem gloriously perfect, we should praise the Lord.

[Q] Do you feel closer to God when your life is running smoothly, or when you are in a crisis? Why?


Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Elihu, a new voice, is heard.

After 29 chapters of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, we hear a fresh voice. Read Job 32:1–9.

[Q] What happened to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (v. 1)?

[Q] Why is Elihu angry with Job (v. 2)?

Leader’s Note: Elihu is angry because Job is justifying himself instead of justifying God. Job was concerned with telling God what he was doing wrong instead of looking to see what God wanted him to do. We know God simply wanted Job to remain faithful.

[Q] Why was Elihu angry with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (v. 3)?

[Q] Why did Elihu not speak before (vv. 4, 6–7)?

[Q] Why is he speaking now (vv. 5, 8–9)?

[Q] Through the Holy Spirit, God gives wisdom when and to whom he wants. Can you describe a time the Spirit has given you wisdom and understanding in a certain situation?

Elihu had certainly been listening. If your Bible has cross-references in the margins, you’ll note that Elihu often refers to specific comments and questions from Job and his friends. Still making his case to speak, Elihu now turns from the three friends and addresses Job. Read Job 33:1–7.
[Q] How does Elihu describe himself and his words (vv. 3–4)?

[Q] Some commentators brush off Elihu as young and brash. Others see him as being sensitive to Job’s needs while still defending God’s justice and sovereignty. What do you think?

Teaching Point Two: We are to trust that God is good, even when we don’t understand what he’s doing.

Read Job 33:8–25, noting that Elihu first recalls Job’s comments and then responds to them.

[Q] How does Elihu say God speaks in vv. 14–22?

The Life Application Study Bible explains this passage:

Elihu told Job that God was trying to answer him, but he was not listening. Elihu misjudged God on this point. If God were to answer all our questions, we would not be adequately tested. What if God would have said, “Job, Satan’s going to test you and afflict you, but in the end you’ll be healed and get everything back”? Job’s greatest test was not the pain, but that he did not know why he was suffering.

Our greatest test may be that we must trust God’s goodness even though we do not understand why our lives are going a certain way. We must learn to trust in God who is good and not in the goodness of life.

[Q] How has the Book of Job helped you have the faith to trust in God and not in the goodness of life?

[Q] What circumstances might God be using to refine you right now?

Read Job 33:23–33.

[Q] What does a person do when he or she hears God (vv. 26–28)?

• Share a time that you felt what this verse describes.

Because of Christ, we can be restored if we believe and call upon him. Then we are made new and find great joy. When we sin, we repent because we desire to please God and be restored. We walk away from our confession joyful because we will not receive the punishment we deserve but a reward instead.

Teaching Point Three: Elihu praises God’s justice.
Elihu addresses Bildad, Zophar, and Eliphaz, as well as Job, in Job 34. While Elihu is kinder than the three before him, he also has errors in his thinking. He wrongly accuses Job of keeping company with evildoers, but correctly rebukes Job for condemning God. Then Elihu praises God’s justice. Read Job 34:10–30.

[Q] What do you learn about God’s sense of justice through this passage?

Optional Activity:

_Break into groups and provide each group with several news magazines or newspapers. Ask each group to pick one news story that deals with someone suffering. Ask them to discuss how knowing that God is just could help you to deal with this difficult circumstance._

Read Job 35:1–8.

[Q] How would you answer Job’s question in verse 3?

Leader’s Note: Our sins do not change who God is or what he does, but God does care about our sins, because they are destructive to us and offensive to him.

Read Job 36:1–14.

Elihu’s claim that “one perfect in knowledge is with you” could be: (1) a brash and incorrect claim about himself; (2) a reference to the God being present in general terms; or (3) a direct reference to God as in Job 37:16.

[Q] Verse 13 says that the godless harbor resentment. Why is this so destructive?

Elihu next addresses people who are suffering. Read Job 36:15–17.

Verse 16 is evidence of God’s love for us. God does all the work in our creation and our salvation. That would be enough. He could simply put it on the table for us and walk away, letting us take it or leave it. But he does not. He woos us.

He does not just put a ring on the table and say, “You interested?” He brings roses, writes love letters, and serenades us. He lavishes us with gifts. He rubs our back when we are tired and brings us soup when we are sick. He comforts us when we are down and provides strength when we are weak. He woos us.

[Q] Describe ways you know God has wooed you to himself.
Read Job 36:18–21.

[Q] How do Elihu's warning and question in verses 18–19 apply to you?

[Q] Describe a time you turned to evil to avoid affliction (v. 21).


How great is God! Amen! Elihu's voice rings with praise of God for his might, reminding us that he is exalted in power and that there is no teacher like him.

[Q] In what ways have all of mankind seen God in his power (v. 25)?


[Q] List some of the phrases Elihu uses to describe the power of God.

Elihu now addresses Job directly, summarizing God’s great power and sovereignty, noting that we are in no position to question his wisdom and plans. Read Job 37:14–24.

[Q] What questions does Elihu ask Job in verses 14–18?

[Q] How does Elihu summarize God’s justice and power (v. 23)?

Elihu reminds Job that God is beyond our understanding. He is to be trusted rather than taunted; worshiped rather than whined about.

**Part 3 Apply Your Findings**

**Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):**

- Like Job, you may at times feel like an outcast. Look up the following verses and jot down the encouragement you find in them: 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 72:12–14; 113:7–8; Matthew 5:3–12.

- What truth Job packs into chapter 31! Look up each passage listed below and soak in the truth being proclaimed.

  **Job 31:1–12**  
  Our inward thoughts are as great a sin as our outward actions, and the Lord knows our hearts intimately.
Job 31:13–15  Regardless of our station in life, we were all created equal in God’s love.

Job 31:16–23  It is a sin to not help others when you are able.

Job 31:24–28  Our trust should be placed in God alone, not in wealth, power, prestige or possessions.

Job 31:29–30  We should pray for our enemies.

Job 31:33–34  Our sins are to be confessed to God, not hidden. We should be transparent with others, showing our true selves.

Job 31:35–37  We will all be held accountable for our actions.

Job 31:38–40  All sin has consequences.

[Q] Which of these would you most like to sink into your life and change it? Why?

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
In this study, we see Job redirect his comments from his friends to God. It is as though he has finished arguing his case and now turns to the judge to present his closing arguments. In Job’s final plea, he remembers the glorious days before he was struck (Job 29), he reviews his present suffering (Job 30), and he repeats his claim of innocence (Job 31). We also hear from a new friend named Elihu.

Scripture: Job 29–37

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
Part 1 Identify the Issue

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Whether we have fallen into a lifeless routine with the Lord, have stopped making time for him, or have turned away during a time of suffering, we miss him. We long for the times of peace, comfort, and closeness we have had with the Lord. We attempt to soothe our longing for him with insufficient replacements: shopping, work, relationships, food, alcohol, or drugs.

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Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Elihu, a new voice, is heard.

Teaching Point Two: We are to trust that God is good, even when we don’t understand what he’s doing.

Teaching Point Three: Elihu praises God’s justice.
Part 3  Apply Your Findings

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[Q] Which of these would you most like to sink into your life and change it? Why?

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
God Speaks

This final study deals with the remarkable and powerful answer God gives Job.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is how we gain our knowledge of God. Yet Job had the remarkable experience of hearing directly from God. The last few chapters of Job allow us to listen in.

Scripture: Job 38–42

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
God Speaks

Part 1 Identify the Issue

Expect God to speak and train yourself to listen. You most likely will not hear an audible voice as Job did. It will probably be much more subtle. You might find peace in your heart. A Scripture will suddenly come to mind. You will think of someone you need to pray for, to call, or to forgive. Maybe you will be made aware of a sin you have committed and need to confess. But in Job’s case, the Lord finally answered him, and what an answer! Read Job 38:1–3.

[Q] How does God address Job and his friends (v. 2)?

[Q] What does the Lord say he will do (v. 3)?
  • How would you respond if God said this to you?

Read Job 38:4–41 as though God is speaking to you directly.

[Q] What word picture do you most like in this passage, and why?

In Bible times, a seal on clay tablets or bricks indicated ownership. In verse 14 the Lord indicates that the earth is his possession. He created it and stamped it with his own seal.

Verses 22–23 have special meaning when we read them with Joshua 10:11, where God used hail to help the Israelites win a battle, or Exodus 9:25, where God used hail as a plague against Egypt. All the forces of nature are under his control, according to his plans and purposes.

In verses 31–32, Pleiades is a star cluster also known as the Seven Sisters, which is part of the Taurus constellation. Orion is a constellation also known as the Hunter. The Bear probably refers to Ursa Major, a constellation that contains the Big Dipper.

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Job admits that he is unworthy and has no answer.

Read Job 38:39–39:30, which focuses on God’s preeminence over the animal kingdom.

[Q] According to these verses, how does God view the animal kingdom?
God Speaks

Reread Job 39:11–12, substituting “the Lord” for each “him.” How might you put those questions in today’s language, and how would you answer them?

Read Job 40:1–5.

Why do you think Job responded this way?

- How would you answer the Lord?

Job 38:1 says that God answered Job out of the storm. If this was a literal storm, reflect on what this must have been like. Job is in a storm, which probably includes wind and noise. There might be dust flying or rain falling. The Lord is speaking directly to Job during this storm in an audible voice.

In the Lord’s awesome presence, Job is finally able to see his situation with great clarity; he knows now that he is simply unworthy and has nothing to say.

When we truly encounter the Lord, we have the same response: that we are simply unworthy. We have not created anything. We do not control anything. We have no knowledge or understanding. We have no arguments for our mighty God. He is God, and we are not.

Teaching Point Two: Job’s trial was to trust God, even though he didn’t understand what he was doing.

In chapters 40 and 41, the Lord speaks of his power over the behemoth and the leviathan. Some think the behemoth was a giant hippopotamus and that the leviathan refers to a giant crocodile. While both the behemoth and leviathan were actual animals, they were also considered symbols of chaotic evil. God is showing that he alone can control large animals, and he alone can control evil.1

Read Job’s final reply in Job 42:1–6.

This sounds repentant. What do you think Job was repenting for?

This is Job’s cry of repentance to the Lord. Job’s friends were not right; he did not need to ask forgiveness for a sin that led to his downfall. Instead he needed to repent for questioning and doubting God.

God asked Job numerous questions but never answered any of Job’s questions. Why?

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Job’s trial was to trust God in the unknown. Even though God spoke to him, Job still did not know why he had lost everything and suffered so greatly. Yet he now knew he did not need any answers; he simply needed to trust God. He realized the need to trust God simply because he is God and he is good. Job once again chooses to fear the Lord and shun evil.

**Teaching Point Three: Job, and God, forgave Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.**

Read Job 42:7–9.

**Q** Who was the Lord angry with, and why?

**Leader’s Note: Note that Elihu is not listed.**

- What were they to do because of their sin?
- What was Job to do because of their sin?
- What was the Lord’s reaction?

God asked Job to take action for the sin of his friends. In all the time his friends spent hurling accusations and badgering Job, they never once prayed for him.

**Q** Why do you think God asked Job to pray for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar?

**Q** Have you ever prayed for someone you disliked or were angry with? How did it affect you?

**Q** Is there someone you need to pray for now?

**Part 3 Apply Your Findings**

After Job had repented and done as God commanded by praying for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again. Job did not die during his suffering as he wished, but instead, according to God’s perfect and trustworthy plan, he died old and full of years.

When we are in the midst of suffering, it can seem impossible to find hope. Life appears to be senseless and pointless. Job certainly could not find a reason for his life or for his suffering. It was because Job did not know what God knew, just as we do not know what God knows. We simply are not meant to understand all his ways. We are not intended
to have his knowledge. We are not God’s equals and should not judge him, challenge him, or criticize him.

We are to trust God simply because he is God. He is the Lord Almighty. He calls us by name and we are his. He created us purposefully, specifically, and individually. He has a plan and a purpose for our lives, no matter how bad they seem at times.

We are to worship him out of love and awe. We are to go beyond simply believing in him and fully surrender everything to him.

**Action Points (choose one to do on your own this week):**

• Pray Job’s words as your own:

  I know that you can do all things, Lord. No plan of yours can be thwarted. There are things I do not understand; things too wonderful for me to know.

  Repent of failing to believe this for the details of your life.

  My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

  How has this study helped you see the Lord? How will it change your actions and habits?

  Therefore I despise myself and repent.

  How has the Book of Job humbled you?

• Read Job 38–42:6 aloud, with meaning. Let the power of these words sink deep within so that you can worship God as he is.

**Close:** Give those in the group time to share what they’ve learned from this study, how their thinking has changed, and what they would most like God to do in their lives as a result.

—Study by Jennifer Brown, with JoHannah Reardon
This final study deals with the remarkable and powerful answer God gives Job.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is how we gain our knowledge of God. Yet Job had the remarkable experience of hearing directly from God. The last few chapters of Job allow us to listen in.

Scripture: Job 38–42

Based On: “Trusting God in All Things: A Journey of Heart and Hope Through the Book of Job,” by Jennifer Brown
God Speaks

Part 1 Identify the Issue

Expect God to speak and train yourself to listen. You most likely will not hear an audible voice as Job did. It will probably be much more subtle. You might find peace in your heart. A Scripture will suddenly come to mind. You will think of someone you need to pray for, to call, or to forgive. Maybe you will be made aware of a sin you have committed and need to confess. But in Job’s case, the Lord finally answered him, and what an answer!

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Job admits that he is unworthy and has no answer.

Teaching Point Two: Job’s trial was to trust God, even though he didn’t understand what he was doing.

Teaching Point Three: Job, and God, forgave Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

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