

October / November Studies

the book of Job
a path through suffering.



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A PATH THROUGH SUFFERING

In a moment, everything can change. Everything.

Has God taken something precious from you? Do the storms in life leave you breathless? Does trusting God with your situation seem too hard?

Or maybe you haven't experienced much loss in your life so far. Are you unsure how you will respond when suffering comes? Are you unsure how to walk with someone buried in a sea of sorrows? Do you find yourself with no idea what to say to those who are really struggling?

These are important questions. And they're all questions that we're faced with in the book of Job. The inescapable reality is that we must all face loss in this life. Either we'll lose something we once had, or we'll face the loss of someone we love, or we'll lose something we wanted but never received. Although there are varying degrees of

“ *The inescapable reality is that we must all face loss in this life.* ”

loss, living in this broken world means that no one can escape. But the book of Job asks us: What does faith look like when we've lost something significant to us? If we face loss, does it mean that God is punishing us? How can we know what God thinks about us if our world is falling apart? And what does real comfort look like for people whose world has fallen apart?

It's our prayer that we will be strengthened as a church to know Christ more deeply through this series, and to deepen our love for the one who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3), so that we might stand in faith, through whatever storms and losses we might face.



WEEK 1

WHEN LIFE FALLS APART

Job 1-2

“

Naked I came from
my mother's womb,
and naked I will
leave this life.
The Lord gives, and
the Lord takes away.
Blessed be the
name of the Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Take some time to answer these questions. You might want to give time to write answers, and maybe take time to share with the group, if people are comfortable doing so. But take five or ten minutes to answer them—or more, if that's the honest thing to do.

What is the most significant suffering you've experienced in the past?

What is the hardest thing that you're facing now?

What are you afraid you might go through someday?

Read Job 1:1–5. In the first verse, Job is characterized in what four ways? What do you think each means?

What does God's response in verse 8 tell us about what the Satan may have been looking for as he patrolled the earth?

Put into your own words what the Satan is saying to God in verses 9–11.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Is this an accusation against Job or an accusation against God?

What does this granting of permission tell us about God and the Satan?

Job's righteousness didn't mean that he was without sin. To be blameless is not the same thing as being sinless or guiltless. To be blameless means that no matter how horrible the offense, all charges have been dropped. No blame has the power to stick or condemn.

Compare the suffering of a righteous man, Job, to the suffering of the only perfectly righteous man, Jesus, in the following verses:

Compare Job 10:1 to Mark 10:45.

Compare Job 19:25 to Acts 13:34–39.

Compare Job 27:5 to Matthew 27:12.

How does the suffering of Jesus rid us of the notion that if we are good and godly we won't suffer?

In what ways does Job show his grief? What are some ways that people show grief in our culture?

What personal experiences have you had with grieving or comforting someone who is grieving?

From these two chapters, what would you guess is the big question at the heart of Job's story?

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



The Bjorems (Outland Denim)

Pray for Caleb, Katie and Atticus and their work for Outland Denim in Cambodia. If you're praying for them as a group, why not send them a photo to encourage them, and remind them that our church is supporting their gospel work through prayer.

WEEK 2

I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE
FEELING LIKE THIS

Job 3

“

Why is life given
to a man whose
path is hidden,
whom God has
hedged in?



STUDY QUESTIONS

Last week, we asked you to think of the most difficult experience of you past, present and future. Take a moment to reflect on those experiences before we begin the study. What words come to mind to describe those experiences? Write them down in the space below?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Read Job 3.

Which words do you find most uncomfortable? Which words resonate with you the most?

In chapter 3, Job is painfully, revealingly honest about his life and his faith, and parts of it can make us uncomfortable. Why do you think we are more comfortable with “tidy” faith than with pained, searching faith?

“When suffering, God can seem invisible, silent, far away. Threat and pain and loss cry out loud and long. Faith can seem inarticulate. Sorrow and confusion broadcast on all channels. It can be hard to remember anything else, hard to put into words what is actually happening, hard to feel any of the force of who Jesus Christ is. You might mumble the right answers to yourself, but it’s like reading a phone book. You might pray, but your words sound rote, vaguely unreal, pious generalities. You’d never talk to a real person that way. Meanwhile, the struggles churning within you is anything but rote and unreal.” David Powlison, *God’s Grace in Your Suffering*.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Can you relate to that quote?

What do you think godly prayers through suffering might sound like?

Read John 11:32-36, Luke 19:41-44, Luke 22:42-44, and Mark 15:34.

Do you think that we accurately present the emotional aspects of Jesus when we present him to others? How do the gospel writers portray his emotions?

Jesus faced his death with significant sorrow—he was sorrowful to the point of death. How does this help you to face uncertainty or doubt as you face loss?

Are your emotions in tune with Christ's as we deal with our joys and struggles?

Now think back to the words that you wrote at the start of the study. Write down any fears or hurts that you have about those words.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Spend some time speaking them to God.

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



The Djamaludins (Thailand)

Pray for the Djamaludin family and their work to reach the people of Thailand. If you're praying for them as a group, why not send them a photo to encourage them, and remind them that our church is supporting their gospel work through prayer.

WEEK 3
WHAT NOT TO SAY WHEN
WE'RE HURTING
Job 4-5

“

I heard a
whispering voice:
“Can a mortal be
righteous before
God? Can a man
be more pure
than his Maker?”

STUDY QUESTIONS

Have you ever tried to be a source of comfort for someone? What happened?

There's something dark and oppressive about viewing grief as only a private experience and not something that can lead to worship, gladness, joy and affirmation. At times, worship is deeply rooted in what we believe. At other times, it is deeply rooted in what we aspire to believe. In worship we remind each other and ourselves what we aspire to, as we keep God in view.

Read Job 4. What are the helpful words here?

What are the unhelpful words?

What do you think was happening in Eliphaz's vision? (4:12–17)

Eliphaz asked: "Who, being innocent, has ever perished?" Only one: Jesus Christ. "In my experience, those who plow injustice, and those who sow trouble reap the same." But not Jesus; Jesus reaped what we sowed.

How does the cross of Christ change the way we understand suffering?

What do you look for in a friend when you're hurting and feeling alone?

"You need other people. It's easy to forget this and try to fly solo through hard times. Who can walk with you? Ask yourself: 'Who is the person I trust most? Who will handle with care the fine china of my honest struggles? Who will draw me out and listen well? Who keeps confidences, prays thoughtfully, and is willing to speak candidly with godly wisdom? Who is the most sensible, straightforward, humble, believing, experienced, courageous person I know?'" David Powlison, *God's Grace in Your Suffering*.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Who do you think of when you read those words?

If you're in a place to do so, ask God to place someone who is facing loss on your heart. Consider how you can intentionally be a partner in their suffering and their comfort.

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



The Birchleys (PNG)

Pray for Keith and Marion, and their work to reach uni students at PNG. If you're praying for them as a group, why not send them a photo to encourage them, and remind them that our church is supporting their gospel work through prayer.

WEEK 4
WHERE IS GOD
WHEN I'M HURTING?
Job 6-7

“

What is a mere
human, that you
think so highly of him
and pay so much
attention to him?



STUDY QUESTIONS

When you pray and talk to God about how you feel, are you honest and lay it out for him, or are you worried you might say something wrong?

How would you say 6:1–2 in your own words? How does Job seem to feel about Eliphaz's words?

Read Job 6:4–10. How does Job seem to feel before God?

Have you ever felt like that? Do you think it's okay to feel like that?

How would you sum up Job 7 in a sentence?

Read Job 7:17–18 and Hebrews 2:5–10. How does the passage in Hebrews answer Job's question?

Think of your most significant suffering or some other hardship that tends to rattle and distress you. And fill in the blanks in these sentences:

Because it is true that _____

I am not afraid that _____

I am not dismayed by _____

because _____

Can you say this and mean it? What gets in the way? Wrestle it out with God, asking that he would write what is true on your heart.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Here's a paraphrase of Psalm 102:1–2 which brings out the intensity and honesty of prayer:

“LORD, hear what I am asking,
Let my cry for help get through to you
Don't hide your face from me in a time I find very distressing
Lean in close, and really hear me.
At the time I'm calling, quickly answer me!”

What keeps us from praying like this?

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



The Renauds (AFES, preparing for future mission)

Pray for Leigh, Celia and Yona as they work with international students for AFES, and as they prepare for a future serving God overseas.

WEEK 5

WHY DOESN'T GOD ANSWER
MY QUESTIONS?

Job 28

“

Where then does
wisdom come from,
and where is
understanding located?
It is hidden from the eyes
of every living thing
and concealed from
the birds of the sky.

STUDY QUESTIONS

If you could ask God one question right now, what would it be?

How would Job 28 answer that question?

Where can you find wisdom, according to Proverbs 9:10?

Where can you find wisdom, according to Job 28:20–28?

What is the wisdom that we can know? What is the wisdom that only God can know?

We generally like things to happen fast. We like clear answers.

What does it mean that your significant suffering plays an intrinsic role in how you will know the love of God poured into your heart? (Romans 5:3–5)

What does it mean that your significant suffering plays an intrinsic role in how you will know joy inexpressible and full of glory? (1 Peter 1:3–9)

What does it mean that your significant suffering plays an intrinsic role in how you will know the peace of Jesus? (John 16:33)

STUDY QUESTIONS

What does it mean that your significant suffering plays an intrinsic role in how you become deep and wise? (James 1:2–5)

What does it mean that your significant suffering plays an intrinsic role in how you will learn to truly help other people who suffer? (2 Corinthians 1:4)

Love, joy, peace, wisdom—and the ability to make a difference. That’s what it means to grow up into a fine human being. That’s what it means for your dross to be consumed and your gold to be refined. The way you go “through fiery trials” along your pathway makes all the difference.

Have you seen God at work in any of these ways in your life?

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



The Woolletts (Power to Change)

Pray for James and Brittani and their work for Power to Change.

WEEK 6
THE GOD WHO HEARS
Job 38-41

“

Where were you
when I established
the earth? Tell
me, if you have
understanding.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Take a while to write out your stories. This could be your testimony of how you came to faith in Christ. It could be a story of great loss you have walked through, or are walking through now.

Where do you turn for refuge when sorrow overwhelms you?

How do you speak to God when you're feeling like this?

In 38:1–7, which aspect of his character does God seem to be emphasizing through his questions?

What is the primary message about God in 41:11?

Put 42:1–2 into your own words—the way you might say it to God if you were Job.

Why do you think God answers Job like he does, with more questions, and without any clear answers?

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Job 40:12–14. Imagine these words were aimed at Jesus. How do you think he'd respond to them?

Do you find the idea of submitting to God's sovereign control of your life demanding, or scary, or life-giving, or calming? Why?

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



Nick Gauci (AFES)

Pray for Nick and his ministry with QUT Christians.

WEEK 7
THE GOD WHO HEALS
Job 42

“

All his brothers,
sisters, and former
acquaintances came
to him and dined
with him in his house.
They sympathized
with him and
comforted him.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Job 42.

What do you think about this as an ending after all that Job's been through?

What do you think Job means by his statement in verse 5?

In 42:7, God says that Job's friends were wrong about him, and Job was right. Do you think everything Job's friends said about God was wrong? Do you think everything Job said about God was right?

Nowhere does God rebuke Job for being angry with Him or saying the truth about his anger, confusion, and bitterness towards God. The Lord instructed him and taught him his error in thinking that God was being unjust. But He does not rebuke him for his highly emotional response towards Him. Have you ever been angry at God, but concealed it from everyone around you, including God?

Are you encouraged that God does not condemn Job for speaking honestly about how he feels? Why is it important to be frank and honest with God when you go through periods of doubt or anger?

Read Job 42:10–17. What are the ways that Job experiences restoration?

Why do you think Job receives double of everything he lost?

STUDY QUESTIONS

Why do you think he doesn't receive double the number of children that he had before?

"I think the answer is found in resurrection. Perhaps the ten children who died were not replaced because they were not ultimately lost to him. A resurrection day is coming when they will be restored to him." Nancy Guthrie.

What do you think of this explanation?

Read Job 19:23–27. What's Job's hope of resurrection?

As we sit at the Lord's Table and remember the price he paid, how should we express the joy and wonder of having the right to be there and to eat and drink with the rest of his people?

How has studying the book of Job challenged and changed you?

PRAYER FOR GOSPEL PARTNERS



Pria Wahyudi (Mark Drama)

Pray for Pria and for the coming Mark Drama productions.



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