

Lessons from the life of Job

1- Objectives

- ❖ Contemplation in the life of job
- ❖ Lessons from his life

2- References

- ❖ <http://www.lcg.org/cgi-bin/lcg/studytopics/lcg-st.cgi?category=Christianity1&item=1122911276>

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1: 2-3)

4- Lesson Outline

Besides the Lord Jesus Christ’s example, most of the prophets of God suffered for their faithfulness. In addition to them, the Patriarch Job is pointed out as an outstanding example of steadfast faith in the way he handled severe trials. The book of Job is the story of a normal human being who is beset by misfortune and suffering. Look at the specific lessons we can learn about responding to trials as revealed in the book of Job (James 5: 10-11).

Lesson 1—God Knows

- ❖ One of the most overwhelming things about a severe trial can be the sense of isolation. We want to make sure that God knows because when He finds out, surely He’ll do something about it!
- ❖ God was very much aware of Job and of the wholehearted obedience he sought to render. In fact, He called Satan’s attention to Job. The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that the Father is aware of everything about us down to the smallest detail. Even the hairs of our head are numbered.
- ❖ When we are struck with personal tragedy or persecuted for obedience, we can be sure that God knows for we have a faithful High Priest who was tested in all ways like us and is therefore able to empathize and give us the needed help (Hebrews 4:15–16).
- ❖ Job did not understand why all of these things were happening to him, but he knew God was aware of it and he did not react as Satan had predicted, by cursing God, but said: “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” (Job 2:10)

Lesson 2—God Limits the Trial

- ❖ While God allowed Satan to afflict Job, He set limits beyond which the devil could not pass. God restricted Satan from harming Job’s health. Later, He allowed Job to be personally stricken, but insisted that his life be spared.

- ❖ Job knew nothing of the conversation between God and Satan. He knew nothing of any limits God had pre-imposed upon his trial.
- ❖ When we find ourselves in the midst of great adversity, we must always keep in mind that God has established the limits of our trial, but we just do not know what those limits are!
- ❖ God is involved in every test that we undergo and He has established preset limits beyond which Satan cannot go. Neither the duration nor the intensity of the trial is completely open-ended. Ultimately, God is in charge!

Lesson 3—Seek Growth, Not Vindication

- ❖ This is one of the hardest lessons to keep in mind. Job wanted God to vindicate him in the eyes of his friends. People ridiculed him (Job 30:1, 9) and that was hard to take. When Elihu began to answer Job on behalf of God in chapters 32 through 37, he pointed out that Job had been wrongly focused during much of his trial. In Job 33:12–22, Elihu explains that God instructs and chastens in various ways. God has His reasons for how He deals with us. And sometimes they are beyond our understanding.
- ❖ Job was so certain of his innocence and of the injustice of his afflictions that for a long time he was unable to see beyond that. He tried to defend himself from the false conclusions of his friends and in so doing was unable to see areas of needed growth in his life (righteous in his own eyes – Job 32:1).
- ❖ God has reasons for allowing whatever happens. In our trials and tests, James encourages us to ask God for wisdom (James 1:5). If we do so in faith, He will surely give it. Whatever the trial or test, there is always growth that can be achieved. God wants us to grow. Therefore, we must undergo periodic pruning to stimulate that growth (John 15:2).

Lesson 4 - The word “Why” Often Proves Elusive

- ❖ We want the world and the events in it to make sense. But in trying to give an explanation for everything we sometimes miss the point. This is the way it was for Job’s friends.
- ❖ Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, Job’s three friends, were all sure that Job must have had some sinful secret at the root of his newfound troubles. They “knew” there had to be a reason. So, they badgered poor Job to confess this suspected secret sin.
- ❖ Job knew there was no great hidden scandal in his life engendering his trials. He was defensive in the face of his accusers, but he also wondered—”Why?”
- ❖ Asking why is often elusive. Bad things do not only happen to bad people. Job recognized that many times the wicked live to reach old age and even appear to prosper (Job 21:7–13). There are many “whys” that we will never know in this life. Acceptance that the why may prove elusive sets the stage for a fifth vital lesson from the Book of Job.

Lesson 5—Trust in the Face of Anguish

- ❖ Job was in despair. His whole life had been turned upside down. He had lost his wealth and his loved ones in a series of sudden calamities. Now his health was gone too. Why?

- ❖ Job was deeply frustrated because he could not make sense out of his trials. Yet in the depths of perplexity and despair he made one of the most profound declarations of faith recorded in the Bible: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).
- ❖ In Job 19, we read the words of anguish that poured from Job’s lips. “Know that God has overthrown and put me in the wrong, and has closed His net about me... yet even at this low point of anguish and bewilderment, Job declares his heartfelt trust in God. “For I know that my Redeemer lives and He shall stand at last on the earth.... I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself (Job 19:25–27).
- ❖ Job understood the truth of the resurrection; he knew that God would call and that he would answer and come forth from the grave, because God would have a desire to the work of His hands (Job 14: 15).
- ❖ It is relatively easy to trust God when things are going the way we like them. It is in the midst of perplexity and anguish that faith in God is most needed.
- ❖ Satan never understood about Job what his motive was. Satan thought Job only served God because it was to his advantage here and now. He was convinced that if God removed blessings and protection, Job would curse and revile Him. But that was not true. Job loved God and served Him out of sincere devotion. He trusted God even when he was feeling abandoned. This lesson of steadfast trust is one of the most important aspects of character we can gain from any trial.

Lesson 6 - God will ultimately reward both “Good” and “Evil”

- ❖ Life can often seem unfair. There are those who make no pretense of serving God and yet they seem to be doing well. There are others who are genuinely trying, but they are experiencing many difficulties and setbacks.
- ❖ What we have to keep in mind is that this life is temporary. Even though it may seem that life is not fair, God is a God of justice. Job noticed that there were wicked men whose houses are safe Yet he realized that was not the end of the story. In verse 30 of the chapter 21, he said: “For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; they shall be brought out on the day of wrath.”
- ❖ Ultimately, it is in the resurrection that God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. However, there are many times when even in this life events can make a sudden shift. The conclusion of the book of Job reveals, “Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning” (Job 42:12). In the long run, there are blessings for obedience—entrance into the Kingdom of God is the greatest of all blessings—and curses for disobedience.

Lesson - We emerge when we learn what God is teaching

- ❖ Many schools graduate students regardless of what they’ve actually learned, but God, the great teacher, is preparing us for a role in His Kingdom and He insists that we learn our lessons properly. It was only when Job began coming to grips with the lessons that God wanted Him to learn that he began emerging from his period of great trial.
- ❖ God focuses on the bottom line. He wants us to become like Him. Job was an exemplary man but he had a flaw. The Scriptures say Job’s problem was that “he was righteous in his own eyes...he justified himself rather than God” (Job 32:1–2).

- ❖ Job emerged with a far deeper understanding of the Almighty as well as a deeper understanding of himself and his own human nature. “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,” Job told God (Job 42:6).
- ❖ A vital lesson that all of us must learn in order to please God and to begin emerging from a trial is that of mercy and forgiveness. Job’s friends were miserable comforters. Regardless of their motives, they were a great part of Job’s trial. Yet notice the turning point when Job began to emerge from his great adversity. “And the Lord restored his losses when he prayed for his friends” (Job 42: 10).
- ❖ Job came to really know God deeply, not simply to know about Him. He became a far more humble and compassionate man as a result of what he went through. Learning these lessons was the key to his emerging out of the dark shadows of life and into the sunlight once again.
- ❖ Our trials can make us bitter or they can make us better.

5- Conclusion

- ❖ Tribulations come to all for purification and spiritual growth. Be confident that God knows and controls everything, Try to search how to grow and benefit from the temptation rather than searching why this happened to you. Trust in God who will reward your patience with the good reward and will emerge you from all tribulations and may grant you an earthly reward beside the guaranteed heavenly reward.

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ St. Paul the apostle suffered many tribulations. Discuss together some of his sufferings and let the group try to find how God rewarded him on this earth beside his reward in heavens (Peace, happiness, miracles, the rulers feared him...).