



Job's blessings turn to suffering as he loses his wealth, children, health, and status. He naturally asks, "Why?" If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why do the righteous suffer? His wife tells him to "Curse God and die." Instead of wisdom and consolation, his human counselors condemn Job and blame his problems on personal sin. It is only when he is left with no other alternatives that he hears God speak.

Job learns through his suffering that God is good and God is great. God is in control. He is sovereign over all creation, including the source of evil, Satan. "The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress. Therefore, men revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?" (Job 37:23-24). In the end, Job recognizes the good government of God. This "blameless" (1:1) man repents of his pride and self-righteousness to acknowledge that God can always be trusted, even if He cannot be understood.

Dr. Alfred Edersheim said, "We cannot understand the meaning of many trials; God does not explain them. To explain a trial would be to destroy its object, which is that of calling forth simple faith and implicit obedience. If we knew why the Lord sent us this or that trial, it would thereby cease to be a trial either of faith or of patience."

1. Recall a time when God seemed (a) especially close and/or (b) especially far off. What was the reason?
2. Read Job 1:1-5. How would you describe Job?
3. Read Job 1:6-12. What is the relationship between God and Satan, Good and Evil?
4. Read Job 1:20-22. What does Job's response to the destruction of his wealth and family tell you about his view of God? Read Job 2:7-10. It got worse. He suffered physical sickness and rebuke from his wife who told him to "Curse God and die!" Would you respond as Job did?
5. After Job's three "friends" came, he revealed his internal conflict. Read Job 3:1-2 and 7:11. How do you explain this in light of his earlier response? Is this okay?
6. In the midst of his suffering, when God was silent and seemed far away, Job remembered the truth: He still praised God for being good and loving (10:12), being all-powerful (42:2), knowing every detail of his life (23:10), being in control (34:13), having a plan for his life (23:14), and being His Redeemer (19:25). Job's faith is seen in the statement, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job 13:15).
7. Read Hebrews 13:5, James 1:12 and 5:11. When God seems distant, what should you do?

"The deepest level of worship is praising God in spite of pain, thanking God during a trial, trusting him when tempted, surrendering while suffering, and loving him when he seems distant." (p. 107)

Job's suffering

James 1: 12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

James 5: 11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

There is a benevolent divine purpose in our suffering. During his trials, Job was not aware of the initial purpose nor the final outcome of double blessing. There was an explanation, but Job wasn't supposed to know, for if he had, there would have been no room left for faith, and he would have

Satan is accountable to and limited by God who knows his evil mind.

Satan is behind the evils that curse the earth, but he is neither omnipresent nor omniscient.

Job 38-42 "The Lord answered Job out of the storm"