

TRUSTING GOD WHEN LIFE MAKES NO SENSE

The Book of Job

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Part 2: “WHEN THE ANSWERS DON’T FIT”

Main Idea: Faith does not require us to understand everything God is doing; it requires us to keep turning toward God when life makes no sense.

A. CENTRAL QUESTION

What would you do if everything you believed about how God rewards faithful people suddenly seemed contradicted by what was happening in your life?

Job believed God was just. Job's friends believed God was just. Yet they looked at Job's terrible suffering and reached very different conclusions.

The tension: If God is just, Job is righteous, and Job is **suffering** terribly—how can all three things be true at the same time? That is the struggle at the heart of Job 3–31.

B. READ JOB CHAPTERS 3—31

1. Job Pours Out His Anguish — Chapter 3

What does Job's response to his suffering teach us about genuine faith?

- A. Strong believers should never express despair.
- B. Questioning circumstances is the same as questioning God.
- C. Deep faith and deep anguish can exist at the same time.
- D. Faith requires us to understand why God allows suffering.

Answer: C. Deep faith and deep anguish can exist at the same time.

2. Eliphaz Offers a Simple Explanation — Chapters 4–5

What was the major problem with Eliphaz's explanation of Job's suffering?

- A. He did not believe that God was just.
- B. He believed suffering was never connected with sin.
- C. He turned a general truth about sin and consequences into an absolute rule.
- D. He believed Job had never sinned.

Answer: C. He turned a general truth about sin and consequences into an absolute rule.

3. Job Wants Compassion, Not Accusations — Chapters 6–7

What important lesson can we learn from Job’s response to his friends?

- A. Suffering people usually need advice more than sympathy.
- B. People who are hurting often need compassionate presence more than explanations.
- C. Christians should avoid talking about suffering.
- D. Friends should immediately identify the spiritual cause of suffering.

Answer: B. People who are hurting often need compassionate presence more than explanations.

4. Bildad Defends God’s Justice — Chapter 8

What was Bildad’s primary mistake when defending God’s justice?

- A. He denied that God was just.
- B. He concluded that because God is just, Job’s suffering must have been deserved.
- C. He encouraged Job to abandon his faith.
- D. He claimed that suffering never has a purpose.

Answer: B. He concluded that because God is just, Job’s suffering must have been deserved.

5. Job Longs for Someone Between Himself and God — Chapters 9–10

What does Job long for when he says, “If only there were someone to mediate between us” (Job 9:33)?

- A. Another friend to explain his suffering
- B. Someone who could stand between himself and God
- C. Someone who could restore his wealth
- D. A prophet who could predict his future

Answer: B. Someone who could stand between himself and God.

6. Zophar Assumes Job Deserves Worse — Chapter 11

What dangerous assumption does Zophar make about Job?

- A. Job’s suffering has nothing to do with God.
- B. Job should simply ignore his suffering.
- C. Job is actually receiving less punishment than he deserves.
- D. Job’s friends are responsible for his suffering.

Answer: C. Job is actually receiving less punishment than he deserves.

7. Job Refuses Their Simplistic Theology — Chapters 12–14

What reality does Job recognize that challenges his friends’ theology?

- A. Righteous people always prosper.
- B. Wicked people always suffer immediately.
- C. Righteous people sometimes suffer while wicked people sometimes prosper.
- D. God rewards everyone according to their behavior immediately.

Answer: C. Righteous people sometimes suffer while wicked people sometimes prosper.

8. The Debate Becomes Increasingly Hostile — Chapters 15–21

As the debate becomes more hostile, what gives Job a remarkable glimpse of hope?

- A. His friends finally apologize.
- B. His possessions begin to return.
- C. He declares, “I know that my redeemer lives.”
- D. God immediately explains his suffering.

Answer: C. He declares, “I know that my redeemer lives.”

9. The Friends Move from Suspicion to Accusation — Chapters 22–25

What is especially wrong with Eliphaz’s accusations against Job?

- A. He refuses to speak about sin.
- B. He accuses Job of specific sins without any evidence.
- C. He believes Job is innocent.
- D. He admits that he does not understand Job’s suffering.

Answer: B. He accuses Job of specific sins without any evidence.

10. Job Desperately Searches for God — Chapters 23–24

What important expression of faith does Job make even though he cannot sense God’s presence?

- A. “God will immediately remove my suffering.”
- B. “My friends will eventually understand me.”
- C. “He knows the way that I take.”
- D. “I now understand why this happened.”

Answer: C. “He knows the way that I take.”

11. True Wisdom Belongs to God — Chapter 28

According to Job 28, where is true wisdom ultimately found?

- A. In human experience
- B. In intellectual knowledge
- C. In the advice of friends
- D. In God and the fear of the Lord

Answer: D. In God and the fear of the Lord.

12. Job Remembers What Life Used to Be — Chapter 29

Why do Job’s memories of his former life make his present suffering even more painful?

- A. He realizes that his friends were correct.
- B. He remembers the family, prosperity, respect, and sense of God’s presence he once enjoyed.
- C. He regrets becoming wealthy.
- D. He believes he can restore everything himself.

Answer: B. He remembers the family, prosperity, respect, and sense of God’s presence he once enjoyed.

13. Job Describes His Present Humiliation — Chapter 30

What makes Job's suffering especially difficult in Chapter 30?

- A. His friends have stopped speaking to him.
- B. He has forgotten what his former life was like.
- C. He is suffering while God appears to remain silent.
- D. He no longer believes that God exists.

Answer: C. He is suffering while God appears to remain silent.

14. Job Makes His Final Defense — Chapter 31

What is Job primarily claiming in his final defense?

- A. He has never committed any sin.
- B. His friends' accusations do not adequately explain his suffering.
- C. God has treated him unfairly because he is perfect.
- D. His friends are responsible for everything that happened to him.

Answer: B. His friends' accusations do not adequately explain his suffering.

C. GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was fundamentally wrong with the theology of Job's three friends?

Answer: Much of what they said about God's justice was true, but they wrongly assumed that suffering always proves personal sin. They turned a general principle into an absolute rule and judged Job without knowing what God was doing.

2. Why do you think people are sometimes quick to offer explanations when someone else is suffering?

Answer: Explanations make suffering seem controllable. If we can identify a cause, we may feel safer. But Job teaches us that we do not always know why God permits suffering. Sometimes compassionate presence is more helpful than theological explanations.

3. What can we learn from Job's willingness to speak honestly to God?

Answer: God can handle our questions, grief, disappointment, and confusion. Job continues speaking to God rather than abandoning Him. Honest lament can actually be an expression of faith because we are still bringing our pain to God.

4. What is especially significant about Job 23:10: "He knows the way that I take"?

Answer: Job cannot find or understand God, but he still believes God sees and knows him. Our confidence does not have to rest on our ability to understand God's plan; it can rest on God's complete knowledge of us.

5. Suppose a Christian friend said, “I've prayed and prayed, but God isn't answering. I don't understand what He's doing anymore.” Based on Job 3–31, what would you say—and what should you avoid saying?

Answer: We can listen, acknowledge the person's pain, pray with them, remind them of God's character, and encourage them to continue bringing their questions to God. We should avoid simplistic explanations such as “You must have sinned,” “Everything happens for a reason,” or pretending we know exactly what God is doing when Scripture has not revealed it.

D. APPLICATION

1. Bring your questions to God rather than running from God.

Job said some painfully honest things, but he kept talking to God. When life does not make sense, prayer does not have to sound polished. Tell God honestly what you are feeling, what you fear, and what you do not understand.

2. Be a comforter rather than an explainer.

When someone is suffering, resist the temptation to explain why it happened. Ask instead: “**How can I walk through this with you?**” Sometimes the most Christlike ministry is simply listening, caring, praying, and staying present.

3. Trust what you know about God when you don't understand what God is doing.

Job could not see the heavenly events of chapters 1–2. He had only a tiny piece of the picture. We do too. There will be times when we cannot answer “Why?” But we can still say with Job: “He knows the way that I take.” — Job 23:10

THE BOTTOM LINE

Job's friends thought they had God figured out. Job admitted that he didn't. And that may be one of the most important lessons of chapters 3–31: Faith is not having an explanation for everything.

Faith is continuing to trust God when life makes no sense!