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| **KINGDOM PATIENCE**  **PART ONE** |

Forty Daily Devotionals

From the Book of Job 1-21

(Based on the NKJV)

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| **Introduction** |

**“...*You have heard of the perseverance of Job...” James 5:11***

There are many opinions about the authorship of the Book of Job. Some have suggested that the book is titled after its author and that it is an auto-biographical account of the actual experiences of a man who truly loved God with all of his heart and lived with a great desire to please Him. While many cannot be sure as to who authored this book, some emphatically state that they are certain that it was *not* Job. I have heard it suggested that Elihu, Moses, Solomon, Hezekiah, or even Isaiah authored this powerful story of suffering and devotion. The strongest argument for Job as the author is the detail in which the events and lengthy conversations are recorded. This gives an impression that it must have been Job, or some other eyewitness to the events, who authored the book.

The most agreed upon author is Moses. Some say that the chronology works best for Moses than any other suggested author, and with his extensive training in Egypt, Moses would have a vast knowledge of other nations and significant personalities. An added argument presented in favor of Moses as author is that the land of Uz was a neighbor to Midian; Moses could have become familiar with this story during the forty years that he spent working for his father-in-law, Jethro.

However, the question of who wrote this book is settled in my mind. God is the author of the Book of Job! God inspired this book and had it written so that our lives could be enriched by all that is contained therein.

Even though poetic writings are found throughout the Old Testament, Job is the first of what is called the Poetic Books of the Bible. However, Hebrew poetry was not as concerned with rhyming words as it was with the rhyming of thoughts or ideas.

In this book, we will learn things that only God could know, and we will learn things that God wants all of us to know about Satan. But most importantly, we will learn a lot about suffering as we watch Job, the dominant character of the book, experience trial after trial while clinging desperately to his personal faith in God. We will walk with this man as he descends the mountain, down from the glowing description of his personal character and multiple assets, into the valley of suffering, shame, discouragement, and depression. We will then walk with him through the very valley of the shadow of death. Then, when we reach the end of the story, we will climb with him, by faith, out of the valley and to a level of joy and prosperity that is described as being “blessed” more at the latter end of his life than at the first.

As usual, these daily devotionals are not intended to be a complete and exhaustive study of this book. Our purpose is to familiarize ourselves with the contents and characters of Job’s story and grow in our own Kingdom Patience as we learn to trust God in all matters and situations.

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| **Daily Reading Schedule** |

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| **Day** | **Scripture Reading** | **Date** |  | **Day** | **Scripture Reading** | **Date** |
| 1 | Job 1:1-12 | 6/16/18 |  | 21 | Job 12:1-13 | 7/6/18 |
| 2 | Job 1:13-2:3 | 6/17/18 |  | 22 | Job 12:14-13:1 | 7/7/18 |
| 3 | Job 2:4-3:3 | 6/18/18 |  | 23 | Job 13:2-14 | 7/8/18 |
| 4 | Job 3:4-16 | 6/19/18 |  | 24 | Job 13:15-28 | 7/9/18 |
| 5 | Job 3:17-4:3 | 6/20/18 |  | 25 | Job 14:1-12 | 7/10/18 |
| 6 | Job 4:4-17 | 6/21/18 |  | 26 | Job 14:13-15:4 | 7/11/18 |
| 7 | Job 4:18-5:9 | 6/22/18 |  | 27 | Job 15:5-16 | 7/12/18 |
| 8 | Job 5:10-22 | 6/23/18 |  | 28 | Job 15:17-29 | 7/13/18 |
| 9 | Job 5:23-6:8 | 6/24/18 |  | 29 | Job 15:30-16:7 | 7/14/18 |
| 10 | Job 6:9-21 | 6/25/18 |  | 30 | Job 16:8-19 | 7/15/18 |
| 11 | Job 6:22-7:5 | 6/26/18 |  | 31 | Job 16:20-17:11 | 7/16/18 |
| 12 | Job 7:6-18 | 6/27/18 |  | 32 | Job 17:12-18:9 | 7/17/18 |
| 13 | Job 7:19-8:10 | 6/28/18 |  | 33 | Job 18:10-21 | 7/18/18 |
| 14 | Job 8:11-8:22 | 6/29/18 |  | 34 | Job 19:1-13 | 7/19/18 |
| 15 | Job 9:1-13 | 6/30/18 |  | 35 | Job 19:14-26 | 7/20/18 |
| 16 | Job 9:14-26 | 7/1/18 |  | 36 | Job 19:27-20:10 | 7/21/18 |
| 17 | Job 9:27-10:4 | 7/2/18 |  | 37 | Job 20:11-23 | 7/22/18 |
| 18 | Job 10:5-17 | 7/3/18 |  | 38 | Job 20:24-21:6 | 7/23/18 |
| 19 | Job 10:18-11:8 | 7/4/18 |  | 39 | Job 21:7-20 | 7/24/18 |
| 20 | Job 11:9-20 | 7/5/18 |  | 40 | Job 21:21-34 | 7/25/18 |

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| **Day 1: Job 1:1-12** |

*“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job…” (Job1:1)*

***The Man from Uz***

The opening verse of this book makes a statement that there was a historical person named Job who once lived in the land of Uz. However, it is the next statement that really gets our attention. We are told that this man was “blameless” and that he “feared God and shunned evil” (v. 1). He was obviously a very rich man, but his most precious assets, no doubt, were his ten children. Job was very careful about the spiritual lives of his children, offering burnt offerings for each of them on a “just-in-case” basis – as in, “just in case” any of them had sinned, even if only in their hearts. Job was such an important person that he made the agenda at one of God’s council meetings when the angels came to present themselves to the LORD. We are told that Satan was also in attendance at that meeting and argued to God that Job only loved Him because He was so good to him. He argued that Job would surely be like other men if only God would lower the hedge of protection around him and allow Satan to really test him. God agreed to allow Satan to test Job by allowing attacks on his possessions, but Satan was strictly prohibited from attacking Job’s personal health. This is a strong indication that Satan is under the authority of God and that God keeps him on a “short leash.” However, we will soon see that the devil’s power and reach is more than any man can deal with without the help of Almighty God.

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** especially for your children today. **Seek** to **live** a life before them that is a strong witness that the power and presence of God is at work in your life. **Pray** for someone who is suffering from trials or sickness today and **reach** out to them in comfort and love.

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| **Day 2: Job 1:13-2:3** |

*“In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” (Job 1:22)*

***The Battle Begins!***

On a certain day in history, a good, godly man had four messengers come to him to tell him that almost all that he owned and claimed as precious in this world was gone. One messenger came after another, with overlapping reports of tragedy and loss. Since the number four is so closely associated with the world as a creation in the Scriptures, we can see that it appears that Job’s whole world has been suddenly taken from him. He seemed to hold up under the first three messages, but the fourth and final message moved him to express extreme grief and sorrow. However, even in his sorrow, he fell to the ground in worship and praised God for what he had been given, even though it was now taken away. In all of this sorrow, Job did not sin and did not accuse God of wrongdoing. Job 2:1 indicates that there was another meeting in heaven and Job, once again, was on the agenda. God’s question to Satan in verse 3 seems to be saying, “What do you think of my servant Job now? Even though I have allowed you to “destroy” him, “he is holding fast to his integrity” and has remained blameless in the eyes of his fellow man.” The word “blameless” does not imply that Job was sinless. Job was as human as the rest of us! However, he was a man that trusted God in the bad times as much as he trusted God in the good times. No suffering in this world was going to cause separation between him and God!

**Prayer Emphasis: Commit** your life to God and serve Him because of Who He is and not because of what He has done. **Believe** that God is always working on your behalf, even when times seem difficult.

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| **Day 3: Job 2:4-3:3** |

*“…Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” (Job 2:7)*

***The Second Test***

Satan never gives up! Job’s relentless enemy did not cease to accuse Job before God. He began to argue that although Job had remained faithful after losing his wealth and children, he would certainly abandon his faith in God if he were exposed to personal, physical suffering. Little did Satan understand the heart that God had placed in his servant Job. What man would not have gladly chosen personal suffering over the loss of his children? Satan had a lot to learn – and God was going to use Job to help Him teach the evil one a few things! This time, God allowed Satan to attack Job’s health, but refused to allow him to take Job’s life. Satan was given permission to do anything to Job except kill him. Satan afflicted Job with painful sores from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. But, Job just took a piece of broken pottery and scraped away at the sores. His own wife was shocked to see Job hang on through all of this suffering and wished that this trial could end, even if it meant that Job would have to die. But Job was committed to accept trials from the same God who had previously given him so many blessings, so he refused to accuse God of doing anything wrongful or unjust. The news of all of this suffering must have spread far and wide. Three friends from distant lands visited Job and tried to comfort him. After seeing this poor man’s wretched condition, they sat down with him and were speechless for seven days. Finally, Job broke the silence. He still refused to curse God, but he did curse the day of his birth, stating that he wished that he had never been born.

**Prayer Emphasis: Learn** to appreciate the blessing of silence! Sometimes “just being there” is the best thing that we can do for anyone. **Offer** the *present* of your *presence* to someone who is sick or homebound today. **Send** a card**, make** a phone call, **do something** to let them know that they are not forgotten.

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| **Day 4: Job 3:4-16** |

*“‘Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?’” (Job 3:11)*

***The Ultimate Regret***

We read yesterday that “Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth” (3:1). It is difficult to imagine an existence so unbearable that you wished that you had never been born! But, that is exactly where we find Job in today’s Scripture reading, and he even confessed that fact to his three visiting friends. In verse 11, our focus verse, he asked, “Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?” In verses 13-15, he spoke about death and imagined it as being a time of peaceful sleep and a long rest. He believed that his death would allow him to join others who had lived before whose fortunes had been lost and whose accomplishments and riches had also come to ruins. In today’s closing verse, Job wished that he had been “a stillborn child” (3:16). As difficult as it is for us to imagine how Job felt during this awful time in his life, there are many people within the reach of our ministry who live in similar despair and despondency every day! When life becomes difficult, people sometimes begin to feel that they are meaningless and that their life does not matter to anyone.

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** how different our lives would be if we did not have our loving God to watch over us and protect us from the evil one. **Praise** God for all that He is and does for you and your family.

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| **Day 5: Job 3:17-4:3** |

*“‘I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.’”(Job 3:26)*

***Rest for the Weary***

Job’s heart’s desire was for relief from his sufferings. His thoughts were still fixed on death and dying because he obviously believed death to be his only hope of escape from his trials. Job began to discuss the benefits of dying as compared to living the life that had been forced upon him. He stated that in death, prisoners were finally free from the shouts “of the oppressor” (3:18). He then said that through dying, “the servant is free from his master” (3:19). To Job, life had become something that was filled with only “misery” and “bitter” things (3:20). He stated that he longed “for death” and likened his desire for it to men who searched for “hidden treasures” (3:21). He believed that he would “rejoice exceedingly” and be “glad” if he were to die (3:22). In verse 24, he spoke of “sighing” and “groanings” that poured “out like water.” He admitted that his life was now filled with fear. He confessed to having lost his sense of security in this world and mourned the fact that he had anticipated this time (old age) in his life would be time of “rest” only to find that his latter days were now only filled with “trouble” (3:26). Look back at this third chapter of Job and circle the word “why” each time that you find it here in Job’s speech. There is no doubt that this poor man had more questions than his spirit could possibly answer.

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God to reveal the needs of someone who is suffering to you and then **seek** to be a blessing and comfort to that person. **Remembe**r, Job’s friends simply sat silently with him for days before they ever offered one word of advice or counsel.

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| **Day 6: Job 4:4-17** |

*“…‘Who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?’” (Job 4:7)*

***Eliphaz***

As you read this book, be aware that there are many speakers who are quoted in Job. God speaks. Satan speaks. Both Job and his wife are quoted. Servants of Job are quoted. And, Job’s friends speak. In fact, much of what we read in the Book of Job is comprised of the speeches made by Job’s friends. As we read the responses of Job’s friends, we have to understand that they contain elements of truth, but they also contain the wisdom and opinions of men. However, God has recorded all of these words for our learning, so we read them carefully while cautiously reminding ourselves as to who is actually speaking. Eliphaz was from Teman, an Edomite town noted for wisdom. The advice that he offered Job in this first speech sounds so familiar to what people still believe and still say to the suffering today. He rebuked Job for being discouraged and troubled by his situation and condition. He suggested that Job trust in the good life that he has lived and that he hope for better days. Read the verses carefully and see if you don’t hear this well-meaning person say to Job, “Just snap out of it!” If you have ever been discouraged or depressed, you know that it is not a simple thing that can be overcome by the will or mind. Eliphaz spoke of hearing “secret” things from God and seeing things that gave him spiritual goose bumps! However well-intentioned this friend might have been, he did not offer Job very much comfort at all!

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** much about the words of advice that you offer to those who are suffering. **Ask** God for wisdom to know when to speak and when to just “be there.” **Avoid** the temptation to minimize their situation.

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| **Day 7: Job 4:18-5:9** |

*“‘Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.’” (Job 5:7)*

***The “Dream”***

Eliphaz mentioned several things to Job in his first speech, some of them being things that had come to him “secretly” and in “dreams.” Although God has been known to speak to people through dreams, we should understand that God now mostly speaks to us through His Word, the Bible! Notice that in yesterday’s reading, Eliphaz mentioned “a word” and “a whisper” that came to him (4:12). But, also notice that we are not told that this was “a word” or “whisper” from God! There is certainly no “Thus says the LORD” in this speech from Eliphaz! Then, in verse 17, Eliphaz suggested that a “mortal” could never understand the mind of God. The word translated “mortal” there is a word that means “weak.” It is used at least 30 times in Job and is an important word in understanding the message that God has for us in this book. Verse 19 mentions human beings as people that “dwell in houses of clay.” As such, Eliphaz was reminding Job that man was formed from the dust of the ground and that as such, he is as fragile as any other earthen vessel. Such items break every day, all day long, and no one really pays much attention to them. In the early verses of chapter 5, this well-meaning friend reminds Job that just as surely as “sparks fly upward” from a fire, “man is born to trouble” (5:7). He then suggested that Job do what he would do in that situation - to seek answers from God and commit his problems to the Lord. He reminds Job of God’s ability to do great things that man cannot even imagine! All that Eliphaz has really said to his friend so far is that he must not really be trusting God to help him in this situation.

**Prayer Emphasis: Speak** from the Scriptures as often as possible when offering counsel and comfort to others. **Remember** that God has the answers and that they are most often found in His Word!

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| **Day 8: Job 5:10-22** |

*“‘You shall laugh at destruction and famine…’” (Job 5:22a))*

***Darkness in the Daytime***

You may have to really search the words of Job’s friends to find those elements of truth that can be used to help and comfort others who are enduring hardship. Some of the things that this man, and Job’s other friends, have to say are in line with Scriptural thinking, and some are not. These bits of truth are hidden within a lot of human reasoning and wrong theology. Such “nuggets” of truth, like verses 21 and 22, leave us with a rousing call to believe that God is going to faithfully bring us through all of our trials and cause us to be unafraid, and even laughing at Satan’s attempts to destroy us. Verse 14 reminds us that trouble can come suddenly and without warning in even the best and brightest days of our lives. Furthermore, trouble can be so debilitating that it makes our “daytime” and “noontime” seem as though we are groping around in the darkest of nights. We have all experienced this or have known others who have walked through these types of situations. Every day someone learns of some shocking diagnosis or tragic event. No one is immune from trouble. Obviously, Job is well aware of this by now. He has to be thinking, “Tell me something that I don’t already know!”

**Prayer Emphasis: Expect** trials and troubles in this life. **Refuse** to allow them to overshadow the many good things that God does for us on a daily basis. Times of trouble are a good time to count our blessings!

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| **Day 9: Job 5:23-6:8** |

*“‘Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the thing that I long for!’” (Job 6:8)*

***Did You Hear That?***

However well-intentioned Eliphaz might have been, we have to read some of his words and ask ourselves whether or not we just heard what we think we heard! He spoke to Job about visiting a “dwelling” and finding “nothing amiss” (5:24). Remember this was just after a “dwelling” collapsed and killed Job’s children! After that, he spoke of having many “descendants” and “offspring like the grass of the earth” (5:25) to a man who had no descendants left! Then, in verse 26, he spoke of people coming “to the grave at full age” just after Job’s family had been cut off in their youth! As you read these words of so-called comfort and counsel to Job, you almost have to ask, “Did you hear that?” As Eliphaz speaks to Job in this chapter, we see the first real insinuation from anyone that Job must have done something really bad in order for all of these negative things to be happening in his life. Thank God that chapter 6 takes the microphone out of the hands of Eliphaz and records Job’s response to his friend’s remarks. He suggests that Eliphaz really does not understand the magnitude of his suffering and again states that all he really wants to do right now is to die and end his suffering, anguish, and pain.

**Prayer Emphasis: Measure** your words when you visit those who are suffering. It is not our job to *condone* or *condemn* sin in the lives of others. **Remember** that there is only One who is fit to judge men, and that One is God.

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| **Day 10: Job 6:9-21** |

*“‘To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend…’” (Job 6:14a)*

***Far from “Normal”***

Job tries to make his friend understand that he is willing to accept whatever God brings into his life just like an animal accepts whatever his master chooses to feed it. He goes on to say that some things can be more readily accepted if they have a little seasoning. I think that Job is here saying that his complaints are not so much about all of the terrible things that have happened to him as they are about the fact that all of them have happened with no explanation from God. In these words, Job basically admits that he has lost hope of physically surviving his problems and that his strength is gone. He states that all he really wants from his friends is love and support and that he is not finding strength in all of the unsought advice that Eliphaz has offered to him. Job mentions that even the most experienced travelers often became lost and in peril in their search for water. He is suggesting that they should understand why he is not seeing the “silver lining” or the “bright side” of things right now. Sometimes, we need to remember that it is difficult for even the most committed Christian to see the cup “half full” when all normality has been taken away from their daily existence. In verse 21, Job basically tells his friend that he has been of no help to him and that he believes that Eliphaz is speaking from his own fear that such things could happen to anyone – even those who seek to live righteous lives that are fully committed to God.

**Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Patience** may require that we sometimes keep our opinions to ourselves! **Avoid** minimizing someone’s pain and suffering. **Realize** that a friend must really trust us if they are willing to pour their hearts out to us and share their sorrows with us. **Honor** that trust at all times and be a good listener.

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| **Day 11: Job 6:22-7:5** |

*“‘…Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.’” (Job 6:24b)*

***Disappointment***

Job will speak 8 times in response to the advice that he will receive from his friends. In all but two of those responses, Job will mention his disappointment in their advice and counsel. We need to be reminded that these are good friends who obviously loved Job enough to travel great distances to be with him and to attempt to comfort their friend in his times of sorrow. We should remember that these men wept when they first saw Job and they sat silently with him for seven days and seven nights before ever speaking to him. They had patiently waited for Job to speak first. In this second speech of Job’s, his response to the words of Eliphaz, Job speaks of how “forceful…right words” can be (6:25) but states that he finds no true answer in the advice of his friend, Eliphaz. Since Eliphaz seems so convinced that all of Job’s sufferings have come upon him because of some sin, Job asked him to help him to see the error in his life (v. 24). Notice that Job asked his friends to look at him. He has to be wondering if they are not seeing what he can so clearly see for himself. For the first time Job begins to allow us to see the disease that was consuming his body by beginning to describe some of the symptoms from which he suffered. Job’s physical appearance must have caused him much embarrassment and shame. Now he was being forced to listen to his well-intentioned friends offer him spiritual advice when what he really desired was support and comfort.

**Prayer Emphasis: Be** the kind of friend that can just “be there” and **practice** “the gift of presence” in silence. **Kingdom Patience** remembers to be silent where God is silent and to speak where God speaks.

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| **Day 12: Job 7:6-18** |

*“‘Oh, remember that my life is a breath! My eye will never again see good.’” (Job7:7)*

***Job Prays***

Beginning at verse 6, Job leaves off speaking to his friends and begins to talk to God. His prayer includes great insight on the brevity of life. He mentions his days passing swiftly. He states that he is without any hope of surviving his battle with disease and sickness. He believes that he will soon be gone and that he would never be healthy again. He does not ever see himself going home from this wretched place where he sits among the ashes of the burning garbage of his city. He speaks very frankly with God and expresses his physical anguish and spiritual bitterness to God. He seems to indicate that God is treating him less like a man - the apex of all of God’s creation – and more like an animal or creature of the sea. He complains of not being able to sleep and about the horrible nightmares and dreams that terrified his subconscious when he finally did fall asleep. He tells God that he would rather die than to have to continue living in perpetual pain and with no hope of ever recovering from his sickness. When he asked God to “let him alone,” he was basically asking again that he be allowed to die in order to escape from his pain and anguish. He felt that every moment of his life was filled with trials and suffering. He had come to the point where he saw no reason for his life to continue and was blinded to any good thing in his life. He was, once again, simply asking God to let him die.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that is it common for those who are extremely ill to believe that things may never get better. **Be patient** when people begin to use words like “always” and “never” to express their grief and sorrow. **Realize** that great darkness can penetrate even our very hearts if we are not careful.

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| **Day 13: Job 7:19-8:10** |

*“‘Have I sinned? What have I done to You…Why have You set me as your target?’” (Job 7:20)*

***A Good Question***

I find it interesting that Job was talking to God and asking Him questions when “Bildad the Shuhite answered” (8:1). Job had asked God to show him where he had sinned, and then Bildad began to try to tell him. If Job’s friends were correct in their assumption that he must have done something wrong to deserve such suffering, then Job wanted to know what it was that he had done. We must remember that even though the Bible describes Job as a righteous man that loved God and hated evil, he was still a human being with a sin nature who had, no doubt, had to seek forgiveness many times in his life. Job had come to the point that he did not expect to survive another night (v. 21), and he desired God’s forgiveness before he died. It appears that Job had prayed aloud and that his friends were able to hear his words. Before God could respond to Job’s prayer, Bildad steps up and speaks up for God. He argued that Job’s complaining against God meant that Job was accusing God of being unfair or unjust. He, like Eliphaz, concluded that God was not punishing Job without cause. This friend has two questions of his own, both dealing with the righteous way that God respects justice. If Job was being punished unjustly, then there was something wrong with God. Since Bildad knew that could not be true, then Job was certainly to blame and he just needed to get busy confessing and forsaking his sin. He then accused Job’s children of sinning against God and concluded that their deaths came as God’s punishment for their sins.

**Prayer Emphasis: Allow** God to speak for Himself! **Believe** in the power of prayer! **Kingdom Patience** knows how to wait on God to respond to our prayers and supplications.

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| **Day 14: Job 8:11-22** |

*“‘Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water?’” (Job 8:11)*

***Cause and Effect***

Bildad gives a couple of illustrations of God’s cause-and-effect approach to sin. He asks if the “papyrus” plant can “grow” where there is no “marsh” or if the “reeds” flourish where there is no water (v. 11). He is insinuating that Job’s troubles have come as a result of some action on his part and that God is simply reacting to Job’s sin. He suggests that Job has forgotten or forsaken God in some way and then drops the “H” word (hypocrite) on his suffering friend. Never forget that Jesus was the only person in the Bible that ever called anyone a hypocrite because He was the only person who ever lived without any personal hypocrisy in His life! When it came to labeling the hypocrites, Jesus was the only One who *did* because he was the only one who *could*! Bildad reminds Job that a man who trusts or leans on his own merit might as well lean on a spider’s web. He makes Job feel as if he is about as important to God as a plant that flourishes in its place for a season and then dies only to be replaced by another plant in due time. He tells Job that God would never “cast away the blameless” (v. 20). It seems that Bildad thinks that he knows Job better than God! God had earlier called Job “blameless,” and now Bildad is implying that Job must not be or he would not be suffering as he was.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that God has no perfect children! **Acknowledge** that trials and afflictions visit the lives of even the most devout believer. **Refuse** to assume that you know all that God knows. When it comes to ministering to people with problems – look less for the cause and more for the cure!

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| **Day 15: Job 9:1-13** |

*“Then Job answered and said:” (Job 9:1)*

***Job’s Reply to Bildad***

Job replies to Bildad and acknowledges that some of what Bildad has said is true. However, he asks a very important question of his friend. He desires to know how a mortal, depraved man can ever be just before God. Job obviously does not believe that he is sinless, but if his friends are correct in their assumption that his much suffering has come upon him because of sin, then everyone should be suffering just as much as he. Job knew that all men were mere mortals, and that as such, none could stand blameless before God. He states that no one can contend with God, and that if one does choose to do so, he stands no chance of winning his dispute. Job desires to know if there has ever been anyone who has been wise enough and strong enough to contend with God and prosper. It is clear that Job understood the power that had allowed him to have the kind of witness and reputation that is mentioned in the opening verses of this book! In verses 5-10, Job begins to brag on God and mention proof after proof that he believes God to be all powerful, all knowing, and far beyond anything that the human mind could comprehend or explain. He continues to explain that he cannot control God’s actions or comprehend God’s purposes. He understands that he cannot argue with God or even question God’s actions. He concludes that if God will not restrain His anger, then he is just going to have to accept the things that God is allowing to happen in his life.

**Prayer Emphasis: Trust** God to be all that He says that He is despite any current trial that you may be facing. **Believe** that God desires to grow us and make us strong, useful servants in His kingdom work.

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| **Day 16: Job 9:14-26** |

*“‘For He crushes me…and multiplies my wounds without cause.’” (Job 9:17)*

***Crushed Without Cause***

Perhaps we see that Job is beginning to learn from his trials and sufferings when he concludes that his trials and multiple wounds have come without cause (v. 17). These words remind us of the story of Christ and His sufferings on the cross. These, too, came without cause, at least none on His part. By that, we mean that they did not come because of any sin committed by the Savior. They came because they were included in God’s mighty plan for redemption. It seems that Job, if left alone to talk with God, would be in a much better frame of mind than he continues to find himself after speaking to his good friends. He knows that he cannot state that his life is without sin and therefore, beyond the reach of God’s chastisement, so he makes no attempt to justify himself. He goes on to say that his own mouth (testimony) would condemn him as a sinner before God (v. 20). Job refused to believe that the recent events that have transpired in his life have come from the hand of an angry God that was punishing him for some willful sin. He falls back on what seems to have become his only hope. He sees his life quickly ebbing away and sees no hope in things getting any better. He believes himself to be on the “fast track” to heaven and clearly welcomes the relief that would come with leaving this world of sorrow to immediately be in a place of rest. He feels that at any moment his prayer to die will be answered and that he will be taken from this earth as quickly as an eagle might swoop down and catch away his prey.

**Prayer Emphasis: Learn** to look beyond your present situation and seek to understand where things fall in perspective to God’s eternal purposes. **Live** for the world to come and not for this life only.

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| **Day 17: Job 9:27-10:4** |

*“‘I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face and wear a smile.’” (Job 9:27)*

***Grin and Bear It?***

Job is wise enough to know that the old “Just Grin and Bear It” mentality does not really help to resolve anything. I have heard many people advise folks to “Fake it till you Make it!” and suggest that pretending as though there is nothing wrong will actually improve our situations. It is all part of the new age “mind over matter” mentality that was around even in the times in which Job lived! There is nothing new about this kind of “name it and claim it” way of teaching and preaching. However, Job realized that his trials and tribulations were not imagined and therefore, they could not simply be imagined away! He knew that he could not stand before God and proclaim himself to be completely innocent of sin. He also realized that to argue against God was a hopeless strategy and would be a vain waste of time and energy. He knew that any attempts to clean up his own life would still leave him dirty before a holy God. He considered it useless to argue with God. After all, God was not a man. Therefore, he was not to come before God with human reason and logic as his argument. He also knew that there was no higher court to which he could appeal that would hold any sway or jurisdiction over God. Job again states that he is tired of life as he has come to know it and admits that he would welcome death. He repeats his request for God to show him if and when he has sinned so that he can understand why all of this pain and suffering has come into his life.

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God for the kind of faith that trusts Him no matter the circumstances you face in life. **Believe** that God is always acting in your best interest. **Thank** Him for that fact today!

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| **Day 18: Job 10:5-17** |

*“‘…I cannot lift up my head. I am full of disgrace…’” (Job 10:15)*

***Job’s Enduring Faith***

Job begins this section of Scripture stating that God knew that he was not a wicked man. He still refused to believe that his sufferings had come as a result of some sinful action on his part. He also acknowledged that there was no one who could deliver him out of his sufferings but God. He knew that God had allowed it to come into his life, and he knew that only God could return his life back to something bearable. No matter the circumstances, Job refused to believe that the God whose hands had shaped and formed him would act unjustly against him. He acknowledged that the God who created him also knew that he was not guilty of any willful sin or disobedience that would merit such unbearable sufferings at God’s hand. He reminded God that he, like Adam, was made from “clay” and that he, like Adam and every man before him, would someday return to the dust of the earth. He tells God that he realized that his every blessing had come from Him and that the only thing that has kept him going through all of his trials is his belief that God has continued to watch over him and preserve his spirit. In verse 15, Job admits that he is “full of disgrace.” He knows that things are still getting worse, and he senses that things are never going to get better. He closes this section of Scripture stating that he believes that God is allowing the pain and suffering in his life to intensify as the days continue.

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God to bring someone who is feeling hopeless to your mind so that you can go and comfort them or help them in any way possible. Be faithful to **act** on anything that God shows you.

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| **Day 19: Job 10:18-11:8** |

*“Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:” (Job 11:1)*

***Begging to Die***

Again Job asked God to allow him to die. This is the fourth of five expressions of Job’s desire for his life to be over so that his sufferings could be ended. And again, we hear this good man wish that he had never even been born. He repeats his wish that his life had not continued outside his mother’s womb and that he had been taken directly from there to his grave. We see that he still believes himself to be very near death. He mentions that his remaining days are few and almost over. He asks God to “let him alone” so that he can have just a moment’s relief and comfort before dying. He knows that he is close to walking through the shadow of death. This statement clearly indicates that Job realized that God’s light still shines because there can be no shadow without the presence of light. In verse 22, Job’s comments about darkness are not an indication that he did not believe in life after death or that he did not believe in heaven. He was indicating here that he held no hope for his current situation to reverse or for his health to be restored. He fully expected to die at any time. Meet Zophar. His first speech to Job begins at the first verse of chapter 11. He seems to be one of those “tell it like it is” guys that gets quickly and directly to the point. He wonders how the others can listen to Job without taking issue with the things that he has been saying. He accused Job of mocking God and claiming himself to be above sin and the need for chastisement. He even tells Job that he is not even getting all that he really deserves (v. 6)!

**Prayer Emphasis: Avoid** Zophar’s counseling strategy at all costs! **Ask** God to help you know when to speak and when to remain silent. **Seek** God’s wisdom, and always **bathe** your words in prayer.

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| **Day 20: Job 11:9-20** |

*“‘For He knows deceitful men; He sees wickedness also. Will He not then consider it?’” (Job 11:11)*

***Zophar***

After listening to just the first portion of this man’s counsel, it is easy to see why his name literally means “rough!” In verses 11-12, he accuses Job of being vain, wicked, and shallow. Some translations employ the word “witless” in verse 12 and indicate that Zophar was saying that Job’s chances of understanding God were about as good as a donkey giving birth to a human being! Since the donkey was considered to be one of the dumbest and most stubborn animals in Bible times, you have to wonder where this man is going with this line of reasoning! Like Eliphaz and Bildad before him, Zophar recommends that Job repent of his sins, whatever they may be, and get right with God so that he can receive restoration. God could then remove Job’s shame and replace it with security and confidence. Job would then be able to put his troubles behind him, and things would be much better in no time at all! Like Job’s other friends before him, Zophar’s opinions about why all of these trials had befallen their friend were absolutely incorrect. So far, Zophar has said nothing new or helpful to Job. They had all failed to see that God’s great and divine plan might contain other reasons for allowing trials and suffering to be introduced into the lives of his followers. You can be assured that they would have been no more prepared for all of this than Job would have been. I don’t remember God mentioning either of their names when Satan came to accuse mankind before God!

**Prayer Emphasis: Be** both *careful* and *prayerful* about what you say to those who are experiencing trials. **Remember** that even Jesus suffered many great trials and much tribulation in His earthly life.

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| **Day 21: Job 12:1-13** |

*“‘With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding.’” (Job 12:13)*

***Job’s Reply to Zophar***

If these three counselors think that they are making any headway with Job, they had better think again. Job’s response here will be the longest of any so far. After Zophar stops speaking, Job replies to all three of his friends. He accuses them of believing that wisdom would die with them. In other words, Job was saying to them that they not only thought themselves to be the smartest people in the world, but they also believed that they were the *only* smart people in the world. Job stood his ground and stated that he was not inferior to them in understanding or wisdom. In verses 7-9, Job implies that all of God’s creatures could teach these three wise friends something about God. Job holds to his strong belief that not all suffering and pain comes as a result of sin in an individual’s life. Although God’s name, Jehovah, has been used 19 times previously in this book, this is the first time that it is used in anyone’s speeches (see LORD in v. 9). In this case, it is used by Job. Job actually referred to God by this name on more than this one occasion. This name for God is never once mentioned by either of Job’s friends. This makes a strong argument that these three advisors did not know as much about God as they thought they did!

**Prayer Emphasis: Avoid** efforts to sound “spiritual” or overly “wise” in your speech. Always speak respectfully of God. Never question His love for you. **Accept** the fact that the one suffering may not always be the one that God is trying to teach! **Listen** to and **learn** from God’s children who are experiencing grief, sorrow, or sickness.

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| **Day 22: Job 12:14-13:1** |

*“‘With Him are strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver are His.’” (Job 12:16)*

***Job’s Not Through!***

In the last part of today’s reading and the first part of tomorrow’s reading, we see Job begin to gain some confidence in his conversations with his friends. It is as if he is beginning to say to them, “I know more about God than you do! Keep your unsought advice to yourselves!” In verse 15, Job praises God for His authority over nature. In verses 16-17, he praises God for His authority over wise men such as counselors and judges. In verses 18-21, he praises God for His authority over kings, princes, the trusted and the wise men of their society. Job concludes that God’s wisdom makes the wisdom of men seem weak and powerless. In other words, Job is saying to these men that he has chosen to listen to God rather than man – even these men who have come from so far and are trying so hard to be good friends to him. There is no stopping Job now. He is on a roll and he is bragging on his God! Read verses 22-25 and imagine this broken, weak, sick man as his voice rises in praise to the God that he has loved and served for many years. Even though, in his own opinion, Job is just a day or so away from death, he raises his voice in praise and adoration to the One that he knows to be Jehovah God! He punctuates his declaration with the words of 13:1: “Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it.” Amen!

**Prayer Emphasis: Listen** to God in your times of trial and tribulation. **Recall** His mighty power and His wonderful works. **Learn** to judge God for who He is and not what is going on in your life at any particular time.

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| **Day 23: Job 13:2-14** |

*“‘What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.’” (Job13:2)*

***Standing Tall!***

Once again, Job refuses to allow his well-intentioned friends to make him feel inferior. This is the second of only two times that the word “inferior” is found in the English Bible! On both occasions, it is translated from an often used Hebrew word that is used several other times in Job. The first time that it is used in Job was back in Job 1:15 when the messenger came to tell Job that the Sabeans “raided” his livestock and servants and carried them away. The word means to have the power to overcome someone else or cause them to fall before you. Job was not admitting defeat in his discussions with his three friends. As a matter of fact, we can clearly see that this good man – the one for whom God held so much respect – was more in tune with God and the way God thinks at this darkest hour of his life than his friends were while enjoying good health and clear thinking! In verse 3, Job simply states that he would rather talk to God than to them! He refers to them as physicians of no value – meaning that he does not anticipate that they are going to be able to help him at all. Read verse 5 and try to put it into your own words. For me that would sound something like this: “The smartest thing that you guys could do is be quiet. The more you speak, the dumber you sound!” In verse 13, Job tells them that it is time for them to stop talking and start listening.

**Prayer Emphasis: Notice** that the more Job bragged on God, the stronger he became in his own spirit. **Learn** the value of praise! In every situation, find something for which God can be praised and you will find the strength to *live through* and *learn from* your trials.

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| **Day 24: Job 13:15-28** |

*“‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.’” (Job 13:15)*

***Job’s Signature Statement***

I am going to focus more on one verse than normal today. In the first verse of our text, we find, in my opinion, one of Job’s most memorable statements. In these words, we see into the soul of a man that God would trust to stand for him through any test or trial that Satan could possibly bring against him. These words help us to see exactly what it is that makes men like Job “tick.” The more Job has talked about God, the more his faith and spiritual strength has grown. Physically, he is still a man who is believed to be only a day or so away from the grave, but spiritually, he is ready to face and fight his “giant” without even a sling in his hand. He comes against his problems with *nothing* in his *hand* and yet *everything* in his *heart*. He has reminded himself of how good and powerful God is, and he has convinced himself that it really does not matter why his troubles have come. He has decided to take the focus off of Job and to put it where it belongs – on Jehovah God! Imagine the thoughts that must have been going through the minds of Job’s friends as they watch this broken, wounded, weakened vessel grow strong in voice and vision. Imagine the responses that must have coursed through their own hearts as they watched their friend rally through the strength that only God could have provided him at that time in his life. Imagine the broken, tearful “Amens!” that must have followed Job’s faith-filled declaration: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!”

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God for this kind of faith. **Seek** out faith-filled people and **spend time** with them. We have many of them in our church and I am so proud of each and every one of them!

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| **Day 25: Job 14:1-12** |

*“‘Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.’”(Job 14:1)*

***Another Valley***

Even though Job seemed to have a spiritual rally after mentioning the name Jehovah, he still has to live in a disease torn body and deal with an emotionally scarred mind. He has lost his health, wealth, and family in a matter of days and has now been sick for what might have been many months. His friends have come to visit him, and they have accused him of committing some terrible sin that has caused God to bring all of these things against him in judgment. So, he might have rallied, but it was a “valley rally,” and though it lifted him in spirit a bit, he remained physically in the valley of suffering, sorrow, and shame. That environment soon got the best of him, and he began to despair of life again. One thing that we must be careful to remember is that there has been no indication that Satan has finished with his tormenting of this poor man. Job begins to speak of the brevity of life, stating that man’s days are few and full of trouble. Like a flower, man comes and then dies away. Like a shadow, he can be seen at one moment and then gone the next. Job states that a tree has more hope than he at this time in his life. After all, a tree can be cut down and still sprout new life from what remains. He speaks of “man” in verse 10. The word used here is a word that means “strong man.” Job has come to the conclusion that even a strong man has no hope to live beyond the allotted time given by God. Job, like so many who are at the point of death, has strong concerns about eternity and where he will be after his spirit leaves its earthly home.

**Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Patience** allows our suffering brothers and sisters to express their fears and concerns. **Equip** yourself and be ready to **comfort** your friends and family from the Word of God.

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| **Day 26: Job 14:13-15:4** |

*“‘…All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes.’” (Job14:14b)*

***An Honorary Discharge***

We will focus on Job 14:14 for today’s devotional. Job has come to the point that he believes that his only hope for physical relief is to die. However, he expresses spiritual hope in the sense that he employs a military term in verse 14 that was used to describe the changing of the guard – when one person came to relieve another so that he could be relieved of his duty. Although Job had no Bible to read, no tabernacle or temple to visit, no priest to whom he could go, Job knew in his heart that life did not end when the body died. He fully expected that his spirit would live beyond his physical years on earth. He was anticipating this “change” and was looking forward to his new assignment. He expected God to call him home soon, and he was ready to answer that call! He goes from marking his time in “days” to “steps.” He has an assurance in his heart that God has forgiven his sins and that they are covered. However, his peaks and valleys are coming much closer together now, and he moves very quickly from hope to despair and then back to hope again. Eliphaz speaks up again and accuses Job of speaking useless words that are of no value. His comment, in today’s vernacular, might sound like this: “It doesn’t do any good to talk about it.” But *we* know that it does.

**Prayer Emphasis: Allow** those who are sick and suffering to talk about it – just as long and as much as they need to! **Avoid** long doctrinal lessons and **respond** to them with Words of comfort and peace. **Realize** that your loved one may be closer to heaven than you think! **Make** every day count!

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| **Day 27: Job 15:5-16** |

*“‘For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty.’” (Job 15:5)*

***Eliphaz’s “Two Cents”***

After basically calling Job a “wind bag,” a perturbed Eliphaz accused Job of speaking sinful words that were going to do nothing but hinder Job’s spiritual relationship with God. Look again at verses 4-13 and count the times that Eliphaz points the “you” finger at Job. If you are reading from a New King James Version of the Bible, you will see the word “you” fourteen times! You will find this word thirteen times if you are reading from the New International Version. What we see is Eliphaz doing some “finger pointing” right now – and the finger is pointing at Job. Now look again at the first 16 verses of chapter 15 and count the questions with which Job is now bombarded. I counted 16! Up to this point, Eliphaz has seemed to be the most patient of Job’s friends, but it seems that his patience is running thin and that his words are becoming quite severe. Eliphaz points out that Job is no wiser than any other man that has lived on earth – and that he is certainly not any wiser than any of them! Age, with all of the experience that it brings, was closely associated with wisdom in ancient times. However, Eliphaz is accusing Job of not having learned anything so far in life. How sad it is to see that these well-meaning friends, who have taken the time to come to Job in his time of trouble, have offered Job very few words of true comfort.

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** much about your visits with the sick and suffering before you go. **Limit** your time with them and **avoid** long conversations that may tax them even more. God has just the right words for every situation. So, if you are not sure as to what you should say, just **borrow** some of His!

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| **Day 28: Job 15:17-29** |

*“‘I will tell you, hear me; what I have seen I will declare.’” (Job 15:17)*

***Eliphaz Waxes Eloquent***

As we mentioned yesterday, Eliphaz has just bombarded Job with many questions. Now we see that he did not wait for Job to respond to his questions before he spoke again. Instead, he never hesitated long enough for Job to say anything. He says, “Hear me” (v. 17) and I will explain all of these things to you. If you compare what Eliphaz said in verses 14-16 of this chapter to what he said in 4:17-19, you will see that he is beginning to repeat himself. And now we find him continuing his argument that Job is suffering because of some wrong doing on his part. In verses 21-29, Eliphaz lists some of the many terrible troubles that may come as a result of one’s sinning against God. He is hoping to help Job see that he needs to repent and forsake his sin. Some of the calamities mentioned are followed by some form of an explanation of the reason for the punishment. The last of the calamities are in reverse order – with the reason for the punishment given before the description of the punishment itself. Although all of this “preaching” must have been difficult for Job to bear, the words of verse 29 must have cut deeply into his heart and spirit. Job has just lost everything – going from the greatest man in his part of the world to the most broken man who had ever lived – and Eliphaz wants Job to believe that all of this has happened because Job is not the person that everyone has always believed him to be.

**Prayer Emphasis: Expect** big things from God! **Believe** His every promise and **ask** Him to fill your life with **Kingdom Patience**! **Trust** God’s timing and **never doubt** that He is aware of your every need. **Remain** **faithful** in your walk with Him even when you are not sure of what your next step may bring.

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| **Day 29: Job 15:30-16:7** |

*“‘I have heard many such things; Miserable comforters are you all!’” (Job 16:2)*

***Miserable Comforters***

In the last part of chapter 15, Eliphaz continues to pound on Job with accusations that he has sinned and he is going to continue to suffer for his sins until he repents. In verses 30-31, he tells Job that there is no escaping God’s wrath so he need not try to deceive himself. He goes on to compare the sinner’s life to unproductive crops. He then refers to people in Job’s situation as “hypocrites” (v. 34) – people who conceive mischief and trouble and give birth to evil. One can only imagine how both God and Job must have winced at these words. Finally, Job gets to speak again, and when he does, he calls his friends “miserable comforters” (16:2)! These men who had first come to comfort Job were now only adding to Job’s misery. Job asked if there was no end to their long speeches and vain words. He tells them that he could say the same things about them if the roles were reversed. He does not say that he *would* say such things, only that he *could*. To shake one’s head at someone meant to mock them. But Job tells his friends that he would not do that. If their roles were reversed, Job would encourage and comfort them just as he had done for others in the past.

**Prayer Emphasis: Learn** the power of words and strive to use them for good and not evil. **Weigh** carefully what you say to others and try to always be encouraging and comforting in what you say. **Speak** a word of encouragement to someone who needs it today.

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| **Day 30: Job 16:8-19** |

*“‘I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target.’” (Job 16:12)*

***“Shattered”***

Job continues to speak, and changes the direction of his comments. He is no longer speaking to his friends about how he would have treated them if they were the ones suffering and he had come to comfort them. He now begins by speaking directly *to* God and then goes on to speak *about* God. He also has some things to say about people, including those who have come to visit with him. He considers his physical condition and appearance to be a witness against him – a poor testimony for a man who had lived a life fearing God and hating evil. In verse 9, he likens God to a lion that has attacked him and torn him to shreds. (See also 10:16.) In verse 12, he states that he has been “shattered” and “shaken me to pieces.” He feels like an unarmed, unskilled man who has to face a trained, professional “warrior” (v. 14). He believes that God has broken him to the point that he is completely and utterly unfixable. However, Job refuses to confess to any sin that he has not committed. He does not believe that his suffering has come as a result of any injustice or act of violence that he has done, and he appeals to his witness in heaven and his record on high. He closes with the terrible admission that his friends have come only to scorn him and that the only person to whom he can now turn is God.

**Prayer Emphasis: Respect** those who are suffering and allow them the freedom to vent their frustrations. **Realize** that the spirit can never die but the flesh has been fighting against death from the time that it was created. At some point in time, we will all battle against a fleshly body that is resisting the inevitable. **Kingdom Patience** learns to **trust** God in the face of sickness, suffering, and death.

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| **Day 31: Job 16:20-17:11** |

*“‘Oh, that one might plead for a man with God…’” (Job 16:21a)*

***Job’s Advocate***

Early in today’s Scripture, Job expresses his desire for someone who might “plead…with God” for him (16:21). He was speaking of someone that he believed would speak to God on his behalf and plead his case before Him. Since Job’s friends had not spoken on his behalf, Job wanted someone who really knew him to speak up for him. Job was thinking of someone who could speak to God on God’s level – in a way in which God could relate - like a man speaking to his neighbor. In short, Job was praying for someone who knew him and who knew God. Since Job was convinced that his life would soon end, he needed the help of someone right away, and he was surely convinced that there was not one man among his friends and neighbors who could or would represent him fairly before God. In 17:3, Job asks God for something very important. He asks God to provide a “pledge” for him. In other words, Job was asking God to post a bond for him – to assure Job that God, and perhaps God alone, was convinced that Job had not come to this sad state in life as a result of some intentional wickedness on his part. To “shake hands” (v. 3) on an agreement was an indication that a deal had been accepted. Job had suffered much, but he continued to believe that God was ultimately for him.

**Prayer Emphasis: Speak** much about Jesus! If we find that we have to talk with our suffering friends, then we should **talk** about Jesus. He is our advocate with God the Father (1 John 2:1). Make an effort to **speak** to someone about Jesus today. **Look** for an opportunity to bring him up in a conversation.

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| **Day 32: Job 17:12-18:9** |

*“‘Where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see it?’” (Job 17:15)*

***“Hope”***

In the closing words of chapter 17 and Job’s current speech, he challenges his friends to try again to find some wrongdoing in him. It would take a bold man to make such a challenge to anyone, especially to good, long-standing friends who knew him well. Even though Job has not fulfilled all of his dreams and ambitions in life, he believes that he has run out of time to do so. He was now looking forward to the grave and the end of his physical suffering on earth. Job does not see the grave as his final resting place. He has a “hope” (v. 15) that he knows that these earthly friends and observers cannot see. As Job has said three times before (6:11; 7:7:6; 14:19), he has no hope of his life continuing on earth – but that did not mean that he did not have hope in a life after his departure from this world! His hope, though, was one that he believed that only he could see. Job’s challenge for someone to find some sin or wrongdoing in him was first taken up by Bildad. The first thing that Bildad wanted to know was when Job was going to stop talking! He, apparently, had something that he had been waiting to say, and he was ready for Job to be quiet and listen. He feels belittled and thinks that Job has considered them to be no wiser than “beasts” (18:3). His feelings have been hurt, and he has lost all sight of why he first came to see Job. His words move from comfort to conflict. As far as he is concerned, Job is being treated like any wicked person should be treated, and he is simply getting what he deserved!

**Prayer Emphasis: Be patient** with those who have suffered long. **Refuse** to allow your feelings to be hurt by any impatient remark that they may make. **Commit** to loving them on an unconditional basis.

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| **Day 33: Job 18:10-21** |

*“‘He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent, and they parade him before the king of terrors.’” (Job18:14)*

***“The King of Terrors”***

Notice the things that Bildad expected to come into the lives of those who have been wicked. He mentions terrors on every side – Job had experienced that. He speaks of calamity and disaster – Job had seen that, too! He mentions skin conditions – Job had that. Bildad went on to speak of loss of confidence – Job would have to say, “Check!” As a matter of fact, Job would have to say, “Check, check, check!” to everything that Bildad was saying. It was as if Bildad was drawing a picture of what a wicked sinner who had fallen into the hands of an angry God looked like, and then drew a perfect likeness of Job! Job had suffered much, but now he had managed to “hurt” his friends’ pride, and it was more than they could bear. Bildad struck what he might have meant to be a final blow in this fight when he told Job that he was going to soon be taken from his “tabernacle” (KJV) or “tent” and marched off to the “King of Terrors.” In other words, Job’s spirit was going to soon depart from his temporary, earthly tent and be marched off to hell! Then, as if that was not insult enough, he strikes again while Job is already reeling from that horrible punch. He speaks of having no son or descendants – and such was now the case with poor Job. He concludes by stating that Job’s situation is exactly like that of the wicked and those who do not truly know God.

**Prayer Emphasis: Minister** to those who are sick and dying just as Jesus would minister to them. When reviled, He reviled not in return. When struck on one cheek, He offered the other. **Kingdom Patience** will allow us to **be like Jesus** when someone we love may need it most.

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| **Day 34: Job 19:1-13** |

*“‘How long will you torment my soul, and break me in pieces with words?’” (Job 19:2)*

***Job Fights Back***

It is obvious that Bildad’s accusations hurt Job very much. He responds by asking how long they intend to torment him and accuse him of wrongdoing. He mentions “ten times” that they have attacked and accused him and seems shocked that they are not ashamed of the way that they have spoken to him and treated him. He tells them that if he has sinned against God, then that is a matter between him and God. By their demanding him to answer to them, they are elevating themselves over him. He tells them that he has repeatedly told them that they are wrong about him, but he continues to get the same responses from them. He says that he has asked them for help, but they have not helped him at all! Job admits to them that it appears that God has turned against him by blocking his path, bringing darkness into his life, stripping him of his glory, and removing his crown (honor) from his existence. He feels that God has destroyed him on every side, and that he is being uprooted and cast away like a tree being removed from a field. He feels that God has allowed his wrath to be poured out upon him and treated him as if he were an enemy. He sees his life as one that is attacked on every side by troops that have surrounded him and are holding him in siege until he finally dies. But, Job adds, one of the saddest things about all that has happened to me is that my brothers have distanced themselves from me and all that have known me for so very long have disassociated themselves from me.

**Prayer Emphasis: Learn** how to just “be there” for people in their times of suffering and need. **Remember** that sometimes a whispered “I know” can be of great comfort.

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| **Day 35: Job 19:14-26** |

*“‘My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me.” (Job 19:14)*

***Feeling Forgotten***

We have watched as Job has been through more than any human being could ever imagine. And, it has all happened suddenly and without any explanation at all from God. Job is completely unaware of God’s earlier conversations with Satan, and he has no idea of the high esteem in which God holds him. Now, above all that has happened to him, Job speaks of kinsmen who have gone away and friends that have forgotten him. Those who once served Job, and obviously still lived in his house, treat him like a stranger and an alien – as if they never even knew him. People that he could once command were now not responsive to him at all. He believes that his own wife finds his wretched physical condition to be horrid and that she does not even want to be around him. He believes that children find him deplorable to look at and make rude and critical comments about him. He thinks that even his best friends have come to the point that they detest him and that they have all turned against him. Feeling alone and forgotten, Job cries out for pity from his friends, begging them to have pity on him and to discontinue persecuting him. But, in spite of it all, Job knew that there was at least One who had not forgotten him. Job knew that his Redeemer lived and that because of that fact, he would one day stand before God in heaven!

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** the face of Job as he comes to the sad conclusion that even his family and friends have forgotten him. Then **envision** the look of confidence that comes to his face as he is reminded that God loves him and will soon call him home to heaven! **Mention** heaven to someone today!

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| **Day 36: Job 19:27-20:10** |

*“‘And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God…how my heart yearns within me!’” (Job 19:26-27)*

***“I Shall See God”***

Earlier, Job spoke of the moment that he would stand, in his flesh, before God. Despite his circumstances, Job could imagine standing before God in a new body that was neither diseased nor broken. Now, he speaks of seeing God through eyes that he has earlier described as being darkened. Job has spoken often of the grave, but now he is looking past the grave to the God that he will soon be meeting. His heart now yearns for the moment that he will meet God face-to-face. He turns his attention back to his friends and speaks to them as if they could not possibly have this same kind of hope. He wants them to know that all who have been so quick to judge him would one day have to stand before God in judgment! Zophar felt like he needed to respond to Job’s comments because he found them rather disturbing. He had been so insulted that he simply could not remain silent! He states that since Job claims to know so much, then he should know that the joy that is experienced by sinners is always brief. Hadn’t that been the case with Job? Job, like such sinners, was *broken* *physically* and *broke* *fiscally*! And, like one might make a final thrust with the sword, Zophar mentions children once more to a man who has just lost every child that had ever been born to him.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Never lose sight of why we minister to people. We are there for *them* and not for *us*. **Avoid** ever letting the spotlight be on us or what *we* think. **Remember** to keep Christ central in every conversation.

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| **Day 37: Job 20:11-23** |

*“‘…God will cast on him the fury of His wrath…’” (Job 20:23)*

***Look Who’s Talking!***

Though we are never told the ages of Job’s friends, Zophar’s attitude and speech begins to resemble that of an angry child. You can almost imagine his beginning this verbal assault against Job with an, “Oh, yeah?” He continues to beat upon his weakened friend with hurtful words and accusations. He speaks of sinners who enjoy the spoils of sin for a season and then have to face the consequences of their ways. He speaks of those to whom wickedness at first seems sweet and then turns to a bitter taste that they cannot get out of their mouth. Zophar states that riches gained by godless means cannot be retained. He, again, alludes to sickness and associates it with punishment for sin. He says that the wicked always lose everything that they have gained and that they soon have to give up everything that they possess before they ever have time to enjoy all of the profits from their labors. He claims that Job only had his wealth because he oppressed the poor, even to the point of taking their homes from them so that his personal wealth could be increased. (Job would later deny these accusations.) Zophar goes on to say that men like Job never have enough – that they are never full or satisfied. And then, another painful thrust of the dagger comes when Zophar speaks of the sudden loss of wealth that comes when the wrath of God comes against sinners such as Job.

**Prayer Emphasis: Never** risk losing a friend for the sake of winning an argument. **Hold** your tongue rather than speak in such a way that it would be dishonoring to Christ. **Kingdom Patience** waits to speak.

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| **Day 38: Job 20:24-21:6** |

*“‘Look at me and be astonished; put your hand over your mouth.’” (Job 21:5)*

***Round Two***

You have to imagine that Job barely made it back to his corner after the horrible verbal assault that Zophar just brought against him. But Zophar is not finished yet! He continues to speak against Job and to accuse him of awful things. In verse 24, he basically tells Job that he can run but he cannot hide. He says that Job may flee from an iron weapon (sword or spear), but the arrow will soon catch up to him. When the arrow is pulled from his body, the terror of death will be upon him. This “friend” then predicts that total darkness and fire will come upon Job’s house and devour everything that might be left. He predicts that heaven itself will expose Job’s guilt and iniquity and that the earth will rise up against him. In verse 29, Zophar basically says, “This is the fate that God allots the wicked. This is what you get when you sin against God!” Job then speaks again and begs to differ with his latest accuser. He asks them all to allow him to speak and to listen carefully to what he has to say. After that, they can once again mock him. He asks if he has accused any man of causing his woeful condition and situation. He asks his three friends to look at him. If they did, what they saw would be enough to cause them to put their hands over their mouths and be silent. When Job thought about all that had happened to him, he was terrified to the point of trembling. What could these men say to add to his suffering or fears?

**Prayer Emphasis: Strive** to be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. Loss of self-confidence is a constant companion to sickness and suffering. **Speak** genuine words of consolation and comfort to the suffering. If no words come to mind, then **read** something to them from the Word of God. **Allow** God to do your talking for you.

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| **Day 39: Job 21:7-20** |

*“‘Why do the wicked live and become old, yes, become mighty in power?’” (Job 21:7)*

***Some Good Questions***

Job seems to go from being on defense to offense in the next few lines of his current speech. He does so by asking a very good question: “If all that you guys are saying about all of this happening to me because I am some wicked person is true, then why is it that *other* wicked people continue to live as normal, growing older and wealthier by the moment?” He then went on to speak of the many wicked people who have not lost their children and still have them around them. He speaks of their homes being safe and free from fear. It certainly did not appear to Job that God was punishing any of them for their sinful ways. Their herds continued to grow and their cows did not lose their calves at birth. Job reasons on by saying that other wicked men have flocks of children and little ones dancing all about them. Their homes are filled with joy, music, and dancing. They live long lives that are filled with prosperity and their deaths come naturally and peacefully – and not in such an agonizing way as he was now facing. Job argued that these are men who have nothing to do with God, telling God to leave them alone and not to bother them about walking in His ways. Job says that these men ask such questions as, “Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him?” and “What profit would it be to us to pray to Him?” Job concludes his remarks by saying, “If God’s wrath is being poured out upon me because I have sinned, that same wrath should be poured out against *all* who have sinned against God.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Allow** those who suffer to ask questions and **believe** that “I don’t know” can sometimes be a very good answer. Remember to **assure** suffering friends that God loves them!

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| **Day 40: Job 21:21-34** |

*“‘One dies in full strength…another man dies in bitterness of soul…’” (Job21:23 & 2)*

***Some Poor Theology!***

Job continues to tell his friends that God’s actions do not fit their theology! They say that blessings are always a sign of God’s approval and that trials are always a sign of God’s disapproval. Job believes that God, in his sovereignty, may allow one man to live in prosperity and health and another to live through painful trials – and not because of anything in particular that they have done to deserve either good or bad. In verse 26, Job concludes that there is one thing that all men, both good and evil, have in common. Job believes that all men must one day face death and eternity. Job knew that he was never going to win this argument. He said that he fully expected them to ask him about the identities of these so-called wicked people who had sinned without punishment and where they lived. He fully expected them to say, “Prove it!” Job asked that they simply look around them. He spoke of many people who, though evil, were not facing the kind of calamity that he was facing. He speaks of them being honored at the time of their deaths. He felt that he was being treated in just the opposite way – and that by former servants, kinsmen, and his very best friends! He closes this speech by saying that their efforts to comfort him have been in vain and that he sees a lot of false teaching in their theology!

**Prayer Emphasis: Make** God’s Word the standard for all that you say, do and believe. **Do** something to show love and support to someone who is sick or suffering at your next opportunity. If we can minister to you, please **contact** me at [gary@seminolebc.com](mailto:gary@seminolebc.com) or call Seminole Baptist Church at 850-562-8069.