

2019 Through the Bible Reading: *Bible Study Support*

The Book of Job	
Background (Who, what, why, when)	<p>Job is the first book of the Wisdom Literature section of the Bible. Although the author is unknown, Job's lifestyle shows similarities to that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, indicating a timeframe of 2100 – 2000 B.C. Job is considered a righteous man of God, and a faithful servant, who has prospered abundantly. God allows Satan to test Job's faith through extreme suffering. Job is stripped of all he knows and loves - his wealth, his children and his health, without ever really knowing why this is happening to him. As Job experiences hardship and suffering, his friends come alongside him. They initially empathize and comfort him, but then attempt to rationalize their friend's suffering by believing Job brought this on himself as a result of his sin. Job remains faithful and steadfast in his trust in God. When everything he knows and loves is removed from his life, it's just him and God and Job recognizes that God is enough. Through the story of Job, God proves the character of believers to Satan, demons, angels and people. God establishes that a saving faith cannot be dismantled no matter how much a believer loses and suffers, even if it is seemingly undeserved.</p>
Interesting Facts in Job	<p>Even though Job is established as a righteous man of character, <i>"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil"</i> (1:1) – Job was not without sin as he himself admits, <i>"For you write down bitter things against me and make me reap the sins of my youth"</i> (13:26).</p> <p>Job's three friends are introduced in 2:11, <i>"... Job's three friends, Eliphaz, the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite..."</i> and shift from sympathizing with him to blaming Job for his own suffering. After Job defends himself and remains convinced of his own righteousness, a third man, Elihu, impassionedly condemns Job. Elihu's relationship to Job is not defined, but he was not originally named as one of Job's friends. The Lord's responds to the exchange between Job and these men as they attempt to rationalize Job's suffering, <i>"Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me."</i></p>
Reasonable Defense for Job	<p>Job never fully understands the reason for his suffering. He is not aware of the exchange between God and Satan, all he knows is that he has suffered and lost everything; everything but God. Job learns, as all believers should, that one may have no idea the reason for one's suffering, but one must keep steadfast in their faith and trust in our sovereign God. As part of the Wisdom Literature of the Bible, the Book of Job reminds us that suffering is one way by which God makes His people truly wise.</p>
Memory Verse	<p><i>"And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'" Job 28:28</i></p>
Practical Application to memory verse	<p>True wisdom comes from God. To fear, revere, trust and obey God is enough wisdom (also see Ecclesiastes 12:13). God gives us Himself, but not necessarily all the details of His plans. God's purpose in the midst of suffering may not always be revealed, but His purpose is directed by perfect divine wisdom. We are called to trust Him through the good times and the bad.</p>
Life Application from Biblical Themes in Job	<p>We cannot understand everything, and even the most diligent efforts to rationalize and explain things, including suffering, can be an effort in futility. The bottom-line is that people suffer, even believers, and it is not for us to judge and condemn others as if they deserve such suffering. Sometimes God can feel far away, but it is important to draw closer to Him and remember that we need to persevere in our faith and trust our lives</p>

	<p>in our Creator's hands. If we remain steadfast in our trust and obedience even while enduring intense suffering, God will bless us abundantly. Wisdom is not a measurement of intelligence, but is more about the formation of the Believer at the deepest levels. To have wisdom is to trust and obey God regardless of the circumstances.</p>
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