

Lessons from Job

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Job was a righteous man, of perfect integrity. He feared God and turned away from evil.

Isn't that what we are all trying to do? Yet Job suffered greatly at Satan's discretion. What lessons can we learn from Job's example?

We are facing hard times now and in our future. Will anything make us turn from God or blame God?

Let's look at Job's example and gain some nuggets of wisdom from a righteous man. (The following examples are adapted from *Life Lessons From Job* by Criswell Freeman.)

■ **Even the righteous must endure adversity and pain.** How else can God truly know us? When things are easy, it is easy to love God. How do we build godly character? It grows best under pressure. (Hebrews 12:11; Deuteronomy 4:30-31; 2 Corinthians 4:8; 2 Samuel 22:7; Isaiah 43:2-3.)

■ **God is sovereign; we cannot understand His ways.** When we get to a place that *it* can't be done, God *will* do it! (Job 11:7-9). Mistakes and failures should lead us back to the throne of God. (Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 13:12; Psalm 77:14.)

■ **Satan is at work in the world** (Job 1:7). Here's a thought from Corrie ten Boom: "God is voting for us all the time. The devil is voting against us all the time. The way we vote carries the election." Recognize the subtle temptations that surround you. Satan is both industrious and creative; he's working 24-7. You as a Christian must be watchful and strong starting today and ending *never*. God's light can overpower any darkness. (James 4:7-8; Ephesians 6:11; Luke 9:1; Romans 12:21.)

■ **We must trust God, both in good times and hard times** (Job 19:25). Do we trust God completely and in every circumstance? Job refused to curse God and die. Instead, he continued to trust God even if he didn't understand why this calamity was happening to him. Guard your heart and turn it over to God. (Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Corinthians 5:7.)

■ **Even in difficult times we must remain faithful to God** (Job 27:6). Obedience leads to spiritual growth. We are blessed when we are obedient and faithful. You may not like the trials you go through, but the act of obedience still counts with God. (Psalm 119:10; Habakkuk 2:4; Matthew 19:16-17; 1 Peter 1:13-15.)

■ **God gives us comfort.** “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). Even during the darkest times, Job did not turn away from God. God never deserted Job. We live in a world that can be a frightening place. We need God’s comfort. For that, we must draw close to Him. God is the giver, and we are the receiver. Look to your spiritual blessings when trials assail you. (Psalm 94:19; 119:50; 2 Corinthians 7:6; John 14:18.)

■ **We must not give up.** “Though the righteous man falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin” (Proverbs 24:16). Look to Jesus Christ’s example of perfect perseverance. He finished what He began. (1 Corinthians 9:24; 2 Chronicles 15:7; 2 Timothy 4:7; Galatians 6:9.)

■ **We should praise God in every circumstance** (Job 1:21). God deserves praise on our good days as well as our dark days. Worship and praise should be woven into the fabric of everything we do. When you experience tough times, a positive attitude makes a big difference in the way you tackle your problems. One way to remain positive is to praise God. (Psalm 71:14; 106:1; 113:3; Philippians 2:10-11.)

■ **We should never lose faith in God** (Psalm 62:2). Job never lost faith in God’s ability to protect, heal and restore. Job trusted in God during the darkest time of his life. So did Jesus. What better examples to follow when we are in dark times? (Hebrews 11:1, 6; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Isaiah 7:9; John 20:29.)

■ **God’s wisdom is perfect.** “Wisdom, strength, counsel and understanding belong to God” (Job 12:13). Job understood that ultimate wisdom belongs to God—and nothing has changed since Job’s day in that regard. God’s wisdom is perfect and complete, unfathomable to mere mortals. We can’t know all the answers. Sometimes we can’t even know the questions. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. Don’t be satisfied with the acquiring of knowledge. Strive to acquire wisdom. (1 Corinthians 13:12; Matthew 7:24-25; Psalm 111:10.)

■ **It pays to pray.** “My prayer is pure” (Job 16:17). Notice that Job was a righteous man. Therefore he acquired the habit of prayer before he encountered his tragedies. Are you ready to face what is to come without prayer? No? Daily prayer and meditation are a matter of will and habit. (James 5:16; Psalm 19:14; Luke 5:16; Philippians 4:6; Romans 12:12.)

■ **We must learn the art of patience.** “The LORD is good to those who wait for Him and seek Him” (Lamentations 3:25-26). It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. God’s timing is perfect. (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.)

■ **When we grieve, we need not grieve alone** (Job 30:31). It's okay to express grief as Job expressed it; cry bitter tears; give a voice to suffering. Job did not grieve alone, even when his family and friends failed him. He knew he still had God's presence. (Psalm 30:5; 2 Samuel 22:7; 2 Kings 20:5; Luke 6:21; Micah 7:8.)

■ **It's important to serve.** Before Job was stricken, he was a dutiful servant to his God. He was doing good for those around him. Do you think his assurance might have helped him prepare for trials? As a humble servant, you will not glorify yourself before men, but before God. (Matthew 4:10; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Job 36:11; John 9:4; Psalm 100:2.)

■ **Not all advice is good advice** (Job 2:9). Job's wife advised him: "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" Fortunately, Job did not take this advice, and neither did he pay rapt attention to his friends. He refused to accept their accusations. Seek wise counsel from thoughtful, positive, Christian people. Some advice should be ignored! (Hebrews 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Proverbs 9:7-8; 19:20; Ecclesiastes 7:5.)

■ **God is always present, even when He seems far away** (Psalm 145:18-19). Never stop talking to God. When He seems far away, the apparent separation has nothing to do with God; it has everything to do with you. (Jeremiah 29:13; Psalm 23:6; 139:7-10; 145:18-19; John 16:32.)

■ **We must have a healthy fear of God.** The fear of the Lord is wisdom. To turn from evil is understanding. The fear of God is the death of every other fear.

■ **God's plans are perfect.** "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

■ **Humbly trust God's plan.** "I know that You can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2). Pride goes before a fall. Humility can often prevent the fall.

■ **We must never lose hope.** "I will hope in Him. I will still defend my ways before Him. Yes, this will result in my deliverance, for no godless person can appear before Him" (Job 13:15-16). When you experience hard times, it is wise to spend more time with God. If you do your part, God will do His part. (Hebrews 10:23; Jeremiah 29:11-12; Romans 12:12.)

■ **The security of wealth is fleeting.** "If I placed my confidence in gold or called fine gold my trust . . . this would also be a crime deserving punishment, for I would have denied God above" (Job 31:24, 28). The world believes money and stuff make happiness. Don't believe it! (Luke 12:15; Mark 8:36-37; Matthew 6:19-21; Proverbs 11:28; Romans 8:6.)

■ **We should be honest with ourselves and with God.** "I will maintain my integrity until I die" (Job 27:5). "Nothing speaks louder or more powerfully than a life of integrity," noted Charles Swindoll. Billy Graham said, "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost." (Proverbs 10:9; 20:7; 11:3; 1 Corinthians 15:33.)

- **It's important to find encouraging friends.** A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. (Proverbs 15:11; Colossians 2:2; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 1:3; 1 John 4:11; Proverbs 17:17.)
- **We should comfort and pray for our friends.** "My servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves" (Job 42:8). Prayer changes things. It changes you, and it changes other people. So *pray!* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.)
- **God's timetable is best.** "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Our task is to wait patiently and never lose hope. Build trust in God. (Acts 1:7; Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 30:18; 40:31; 55:8-9.)
- **Never stop believing in a brighter future.** "There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:18). (Romans 8:25; Psalm 31:24; Proverbs 27:1; Jeremiah 29:11-12.)
- **God comes first.** "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). For you to be considered righteous before God, He has to come first. (Matthew 4:10; Deuteronomy 10:17; Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:12.)
- **God renews and redeems.** "The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12). (1 Peter 5:10; Job 19:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 13:11; Isaiah 40:31.)
- **Don't be afraid of hard work.** Job didn't get to where he was without a lot of hard work and planning. (Colossians 3:23; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Ephesians 6:6-7; John 9:4; Proverbs 21:25-26; 2 Chronicles 31:21.)
- **Always be thankful to God.** It's not an option; it's a must. You must be thankful to God. (2 Chronicles 9:15; Colossians 2:6-7; 3:17; Psalm 100:4-5; 92:1.)

These are just a few lessons from Job we can learn and apply to our own lives now.