

When the Righteous Suffer
An Overview of Job

Accountability: Let's hold ourselves accountable!

- Reflecting upon the discussion from last week, how did you do this week on implementing your personal commitments from last week's message? Let's take a moment to share...victories, defeats, or something in between.

Refresh: Let's take a fresh look at our focal scripture again!

- While we looked at selected passages throughout Job, most of our time was spent in chapters one and two. It might be a good job to at least re-read these chapters through Job 2:13.

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- One principle that we discussed this week was that the righteous and the wicked both experience days of celebration and suffering. Job's friends had a twisted theology that insisted that if a person were living a righteous life, they would not encounter hardship. In Job 42:8, God confronts them about misrepresenting God to Job. Can you think of contemporary examples of this twisted theology that looks at hardship as spiritual evidence that a person must not be living right before God? What did we learn about the connection between righteous living and suffering?
- Perhaps the biggest struggle in reading Job is accepting the idea that God allowed Satan to sift Job. There's no way to deny it...God allowed Satan to wreak havoc in Job's life. Often in times of suffering, we wonder why a God who loves us would allow us to suffer and experience hardship. We learned that from Job's perspective, he would have to determine whether he loved God because God is God, or if he merely loved the blessings that God had placed into his life. From God's perspective, God trusted Job and believed that there was real depth to Job's love for God. How can these two ideas help to explain at least these two sovereign purposes of God when He allows His children to suffer?
- One striking observation from Job is the transformation of Job's relationship with God through this season of suffering. Before suffering, Job believed in God, worshipped the Lord, lived a holy life, and trusted God with all of his heart. After his suffering though, we see something new emerge in Job's experience with God. At the end of his suffering, God is found speaking with Job, and they exchange dialogue. One purpose of suffering is that God sometimes takes us to deeper places in our relationship with God. Let's

spend a few minutes discussing this principle and sharing our thoughts about this. How has this principle occurred in your own life?

- We learned from Job that suffering is a season. Even if a believer suffers unto death, there is healing in the Kingdom. Rather than condemning others when they are suffering, it is important to encourage people through their suffering...to stand with them. Is there someone in your life right now who needs to be reminded that trouble doesn't last always, and who could use a reminder to keep praising God with our eyes fixed on Jesus? Maybe it is you!

Study: Additional scriptures for deeper Bible study. The Psalms provide wonderful companion passages for this study!

- Psalm 13
- Psalm 31:9-14
- Psalm 56
- Psalm 62
- Psalm 88

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- Do I need a shift in my theological thinking, to embrace the truth that even Christians will experience suffering in life? Have I been influenced by prosperity teaching to believe that if I follow God, he will spare me from trouble?
- Do I need a shift in the way that I view others who are suffering? Am I quick to judge, like Job's friends, that others are suffering because they must have sinned against God? What would God say to me through this study to change my heart?
- Do I need a new view on the suffering seasons that come into my life? If God allows a trial in my life, I can be assured that there is purpose in it. One great question to ask is, what is God trying to teach me, or develop in me, as a result of my suffering?