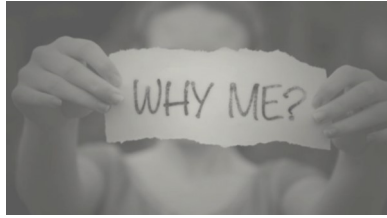


## Who's Causing this Suffering?

When we suffer, we typically wonder, “why?” Is God punishing us? Is Satan hurting us? Have we simply made a bad choice? The truth is, we may not always be able to fully know the source and specific reason for our suffering. Job didn't. Job and his friends had no idea why he was suffering. They had no idea God had been proud of Job, nor did they know Satan had slandered Job. They didn't know God allowed Satan to hurt Job, or that it was Satan's hand actually causing Job so much pain. But they didn't need to know. That might seem difficult, but faith in God isn't based on knowing everything—otherwise it wouldn't really be faith, would it? So why do we suffer? Is it God chastising us? Maybe. Is it Satan trying to trip us up? Perhaps. Are we simply a bystander suffering because of some other situation (like Job's wife)? Maybe so. The point is, we can't always know and we don't need to! Just remember to trust in God, and diligently obey Him no matter what you're going through. Trust that God is in control, trust His will is going to be accomplished, and trust His promise of eternal deliverance.



## Questions

Try to find the answers to these questions as you read through Job 1-14 this week. If you have children, go over these questions with them and have them try to answer the questions also!

- 1) Where did Job live? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Who mentioned Job first? God or Satan? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What are the names of Job's three friends?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) After Job's initial remarks, which of his friends spoke first? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What did Job want in order to speak with God? (9:33) \_\_\_\_\_

## The Proper Response to Suffering

How do you respond to suffering? When we undergo great pain or loss, it is understandable if we are upset and saddened. How we react while upset and saddened is very important though. Some people end up angry. Others end up feeling helpless or lost. Others simply give up. How did Job respond to severe tragedy? Chapter 1:20 says, “...Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. *Then he fell to the ground in worship...*” Suffering will bring about strong emotions—it's important we don't let those emotions control us. The key to overcoming pain and suffering is to remain focused (or refocus if needed) on God. Don't pull away from God because of pain; draw closer to Him! Worship God even then, and trust in Him for deliverance.



# “That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



## Job 1-14

### The Suffering of a Blameless Man

#### Overview

Job is a wonderful book, but it is also a challenging one. It is an ancient work, written in a poetic style that is quite foreign to us. The challenging nature of this work doesn't make it useless though. When we apply ourselves to it, we too can learn the great lessons contained within this masterpiece. The book of Job helps us answer one of the most difficult questions ever asked; if God is all loving, all good, and all powerful; then why is there pain and suffering? Job had to wrestle with this question, and by studying his struggle, we can gain a greater faith in God even in the midst of great pain or struggle ourselves.

Job was a great man, even said to be blameless and upright, but his life was turned upside down by tragedy. He lost his wealth, his health, and even his children. Unbeknownst to Job, all of the tragedy he suffered was because Satan was trying to prove Job was not as faithful as God claimed he was! The suffering left Job wondering why, and his quandary was compounded by his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They thought they were giving good advice, but there were nothing more than “miserable comforters.” In the end, Job and his friends would all learn important lessons about God and His sovereignty.

#### Outline

Reading Job can be difficult, because it does not read like a simple narrative. The introduction and conclusion read like a story, but these sections simply set the framework for the primary content contained in-between. That content is made up of several speeches given in poetic form. Following Job's suffering, he speaks and then enters into a debate with his friend. There are three rounds of discussion where Job's friends each speak, and each time Job responds (Zophar remains silent in the 3rd round). Job gives a final defense, and then a new, younger character named Elihu gives a lengthy discourse. Finally, God Himself speaks to Job, and Job realizes he has no answer for God, nor can he fully understand God's ways. His ultimate decision is to trust in the Lord.

#### I. Prologue (1-2)

#### II. Dialogue (3-27)

1. Job's opening remarks (3)
2. First cycle of speeches (4-14)
3. Second cycle of speeches (15-21)
4. Third cycle of speeches (22-27)

#### III. Job's Final Defense (28-31)

1. Job's hymn on wisdom (28)
2. Job's Final Defense (29-31)

#### IV. Elihu's Discourse (32-37)

1. First speech (32-33)
2. Second speech (34)
3. Third speech (35)
4. Fourth speech (36-37)

#### V. God's Discourse with Job (38-42:6)

1. God's first speech (38-40:2)
2. Job's response (40:3-5)
3. God's second speech (40:6-41:34)
4. Job's final response (42:1-6)

#### VI. Epilogue (42:7-16)

#### Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Job 1-2

Tuesday: Job 3-5

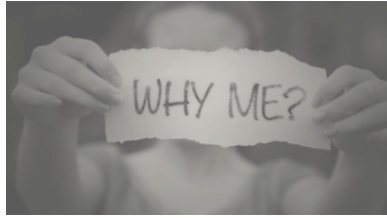
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