

We Have An Anchor!

Lesson 1: Facing The Storms of Life



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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Learn some lessons from Job about the storms that people face during their earthly lives

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW148

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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We Have an Anchor!

Facing The Storms Of Life

The deaths of loved ones. Our own impending death. Disease. Cancer. Injuries. Surgeries. Paralysis. Disabilities. Alzheimer's. Tornadoes. Hurricanes. Floods. Layoffs. Firings. Relocations. More bills than money. House fires. Break ins. Losing relationships. Being hurt by people we love. Divorce. Separations. Abuse. Ridicule. Accidents. Wars. Temptations to live according to our own desires rather than do the will of God. Persecutions for living a faithful life to Jesus Christ.

The list could just go on and on and on and on. The fact is that there are many storms in this life. Most people find themselves being lost and wandering in the ocean of life, being driven by the waves and winds that are constantly pounding against them. Thus, many feel fearful, depressed, and worried. Others don't seem to recognize or care that they are lost and in very dangerous waters.

Yet, there is another option while facing the storms of life. The Scriptures speak of an anchor. Hebrews 6:19 says, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil." The hope of eternal salvation in Heaven through Jesus Christ is the only thing that is strong enough to endure every storm that

we encounter during this life. This anchor for the soul is "sure" and it is "steadfast." There is no breaking it.

Unfortunately, there are many people who are either unaware that such an anchor exists or they keep their anchors "aweigh" (not released) so that even though they know about this anchor, they are not using it to its full potential. So, there is a great need to learn about our anchor that God has provided us so that we can safely and effectively navigate the stormy waters of life. This series of lessons will be focused on accomplishing that goal.

In this first lesson, we need to look around us and recognize the storms that exist. We will all surely face them. Even if the waters of our lives are relatively calm right now, we can look around and see that some storms are brewing and headed in our directions. Or, perhaps we are in the middle of one of these storms right now. To help us think about facing these storms, I have chosen the text of Job chapters 1-3. By examining this text, we will be able to gain a better understanding of the storms that we face in this life.

Bad Things Happen To Good People

A basic observation about the storms of life is that they are not prejudice. They eventually hit everyone. They do not just target those who live extremely wicked lives. In fact, they often hit the most morally pure people living on this earth. And, sometimes, they are even the ones who are hit the hardest.

Job was a blameless and upright man

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

“And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did regularly” (Job 1:1-5).

Here was a very righteous man. He seemed to be doing everything right as far as living a morally pure life that God would be pleased with. And, not only do we see that Job was very conscientious about his own righteousness, but he was also concerned with his children being right with God. After their days of feasting, he would get up early and offer sacrifices for each one of them – in case they had sinned and cursed God. Then, notice that this was not just Job’s practice on occasion. The Scriptures say that this was Job’s regular practice.

Now, as the story of Job begins in these verses, you observe that Job is an extremely wealthy man with a rather large family (seven sons and three daughters). But, this man was about to experience some absolutely dreadful things. Job 1:13-2:8 goes on to describe how a series of events transpired that brought great suffering on this very righteous man.

First, a messenger came to Job and told him how the Sabeans attacked while Job’s oxen and donkeys were plowing and they were all taken away, and his servants were all killed with a sword (except the one who escaped, see Job 1:13-15). While that messenger was still speaking, another messenger came, saying that he was the lone survivor of a fire that fell from God in Heaven which burned up the sheep and servants (Job 1:16). Then, while that messenger was still speaking, another messenger came, saying that he was the lone survivor of a raid by three bands of the Chaldeans which took the camels away and killed more of his servants (Job 1:17). And, while that messenger was still speaking, yet another messenger came, bringing the worst news of all. This one said that he was the lone survivor from the place that his sons and daughters were eating and drinking. He said that a great wind

came and struck the house so that it fell on and killed all the young people (Job 1:18-19).

Surely, there could rarely be a day in life that was worse than this one! Job suddenly found himself in the middle of a fierce storm! If that was not enough, Job was then afflicted with “painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). And, he sat in the middle of ashes, using a broken piece of pottery to scrape himself (Job 2:8). Yet, this sad picture of a man caught in a devastating storm was a “blameless and upright” man who “feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1).

Suffering will happen that is unrelated to how we live

Like we see with Job, bad things happen to everyone who lives on this earth. It is an unavoidable reality of life. Now, it should be noted that *sometimes* people bring suffering on themselves. For instance, those who act wickedly so as to consume alcoholic beverages can become drunk and hurt other people or themselves. Those who do not listen to the wise counsel from God to refuse to keep company with people who are engaging in evil things can find themselves in jail. Those who mistreat their bodies by using tobacco products and/or drugs can poison their own bodies so as to experience devastating diseases.

But, this study is not so focused on the storms of life we bring on ourselves. Although, let me simply say this. If any of your storms are self-inflicted, you must first stop the action(s) that are causing these consequences. Now, if you have, you should consider the things we will be discussing throughout this study to help you endure even these storms.

Yet, even when you are not bringing trouble on yourself, we simply live in a world where trouble, sorrow, pain, and death will be experienced. And, this will be experienced by the righteous and the wicked alike. This is because we live in a world in which sin is present. Ever since the first sin that was committed in the Garden of Eden, this earth has not been a paradise.

Sometimes our suffering is a direct result of sin (our own or someone else’s). Sometimes our suffering accomplishes a righteous purpose from

God. And, sometimes our suffering is just the product of time and chance. For instance, Ecclesiastes 9:11 observes, “I returned and saw under the sun that – The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all.” Yes, in the fallen world that we all live in, sometimes bad things just happen. Sometimes people are in the wrong places at the wrong times. And, our suffering is not always connected to something evil that we have done – just like Job’s suffering was not connected with anything evil he had done.

God Is In Control

There is a point regarding the storms we face in life that is essential for us to recognize. God is in control! There may be many times that we begin to question whether this is so – since so many bad things are happening to and around us. Then, whenever we recognize that God is in control, we also must recognize that we must not blame God so as to disobey Him whenever we experience suffering.

God is over all

I want you to recognize how God was in control whenever Job suffered. The Scriptures provide a “behind the scenes” look into Job’s suffering (that not even Job was privy to). Although we do not have answers to all our questions regarding this “behind the scenes” part of the story, we must simply accept what is said by faith in the word of God. And, when we do, we will learn a powerful lesson that God is in control!

Job 1:6-12 says, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’ Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like

him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’

“So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’ And the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.”

After this, Satan used this permission and power to bring about suffering for Job through the loss of his livestock, servants, and children. Then, after Satan had caused Job to suffer in those ways, Satan wanted more and inflicted Job with the painful boils.

Job 2:1-6 gives us the “behind the scenes” look into that situation. “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’

“Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’ And the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.’”

Again, I don’t understand everything about what is going on in these passages. But, one thing that should jump off the pages in these passages is God’s control. I want you to recognize that Satan could not just do whatever he desired. Even as powerful and influential as the Bible teaches Satan to be, he is not more powerful than God! Satan could

only do these things to Job whenever God agreed to allow Job's faith to be put to the test in these ways. And, recognize that God put a limit on Satan that Satan could not ignore. No matter how much Satan could have wanted to push Job a little more, God was the one in ultimate control.

God is not to blame

So, as you endure the storms of life, you should recognize that God is in ultimate control. Yet, it is wrong to accuse God of some kind of evil because of the sufferings that you experience. But, this is exactly what Job's wife wanted Job to do. After all of this suffering had happened, she told Job, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9).

Job's initial response to all of this suffering is what should help us to refuse to blame God whenever we are caught in the storms of life. Job responded to his wife, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10). And, in it all, Job "did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10). Interestingly, prior to being afflicted with the painful boils, Job's response to the loss of his flocks, servants, and children was the following. "Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.' In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong" (Job 1:20-22).

Job simply recognized that God is in control. Every good thing that he had was given to him by God. So, just as giving the good things was in God's control, taking those things away was in God's control. And, rather than accusing God of wrongdoing, Job recognized that God must be worshiped and held in high esteem – even though Job was greatly sorrowful.

Then, there is another element that must be considered. That is the fact that God was not the one who was responsible for all of the suffering in this world. Instead, God created this world as a true paradise (whenever man was in the Garden of Eden).

However, through Satan's temptation and the sin that Adam and Eve committed, suffering and death were brought into the world as consequences for rebelling against God. And, they continue to exist on this earth – as mankind continues to rebel against God (Romans 3:23).

Yet, in all of the storms of life that God allows to happen, He always uses them to accomplish a righteous purpose. You see, God is not trying to be cruel. Nor does He just want to see His creation experience hardships. Instead, God always has a perfectly righteous plan for the sufferings that He allows to happen. Sometimes they are the result of His righteous wrath to punish evil. Sometimes they are the result of His discipline to try to get people to turn from their wickedness. Sometimes they are tests to see if we will be faithful to Him and trust in Him. For instance, Paul said that he and his companions had experienced "trouble" in Asia to the point that they were "burdened beyond measure, above strength," so that they "despaired even of life." He said, "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:8-9). So, Paul's storm was about teaching trust in God.

There Is An Enemy

Although God is in control, we must also recognize that there is someone who does *not* want what is best for us. Unlike God, who allows us to be tested so as to pull us closer toward Him, there is one who is trying to tempt and lure us away from God. This one is Satan.

Satan walks to and fro on the earth

You should recall that Satan is the one who desired for Job to experience such a great storm in his life. Recall that Satan was among those who had to present themselves before the Lord (Job 1:6). And, recall that Satan answered the Lord's question about where he had come from by saying, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it" (Job 1:7).

Every picture in the Bible of Satan is such that he is not your friend. Instead, the reference to him as “Satan” means that he is an adversary. He is one who opposes us. He simply is not interested in our well-being (particularly on a spiritual level). Instead, his purpose is to lead us away from God. Thus, as he walks to and fro on this earth even today, he is looking to harm us. For instance, 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

All suffering can be traced back to Satan

It was Satan who wanted Job to suffer. When God asked Satan if he had considered His servant Job – a man God said was unlike any other on earth, “blameless and upright, one who fears God and shuns evil” (Job 1:8), Satan thought of how he could try to lure Job away from God. Satan asked whether Job feared God for nothing, since God had blessed Job so abundantly in all ways (Job 1:9-10). He concluded, “But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” (Job 1:11). And, God allowed Satan to put Job to the test, providing that Satan did not harm Job physically (and later, so long as Job would not be killed, see Job 1:12 and Job 2:6).

So, once again, we see two very different perspectives. God appears to have had such confidence in Job that He knew Job would not turn away from Him because of these tests. Instead, it would only make Job stronger. However, Satan wanted Job to fall. He brought all of this suffering on Job so that Job would curse God.

The Scriptures demonstrate that although God can use suffering to accomplish His righteous purposes, all suffering can be traced back to Satan – just as it was with Job. Sometimes, it can be directly traced back to Satan. For instance, sometimes the storms we experience in life are the direct result of listening to Satan’s temptations. As I demonstrated earlier, sometimes we are injured or suffer through terrible diseases because we choose to consume alcohol or smoke – contrary to the law of God. Or, sometimes we suffer through miserable relationships that are sources of great turmoil because we or others are not acting how God’s law tells us to act with

regard to those relationships. Regardless of how this is manifested, there are many times that people give in to the temptations of Satan and commit sin that directly produces suffering.

But, even if our suffering is not directly connected with Satan in the sense of a sin that has caused the suffering, it is still indirectly traced back to Satan. As I have mentioned already, God did not create this world to experience suffering and death. Instead, He placed the man and woman He created in the paradise of the Garden of Eden. And, because He had created them with free will, He gave them a law that said they must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In doing so, God warned them that there would be consequences for breaking the law, saying that they would “surely die” in the day they broke the law (Genesis 2:16-17).

Then, Satan enters the Bible’s story for the very first time. Using the serpent, he tempted Eve – luring her away from God by telling her things that appealed to her fleshly desires (see Genesis 3:1-5). And, she gave in to the temptation by eating of the forbidden fruit, and also gave it to her husband (Genesis 3:6). The rest of Genesis 3 goes on to describe the consequences of mankind listening to Satan rather than God. They experienced spiritual death (separation from God), there would be suffering in work and childbirth, they were cast out of the Garden of Eden, and they would experience physical death. Today, all of the physical sufferings and death can be traced back to this time when it first entered the world. And, we should recognize that Satan was behind it. Therefore, he is indirectly involved in all of the sufferings we continue to experience today.

Sometimes When It Rains, It Pours

Whenever we do suffer, sometimes we are fortunate enough to only have to deal with one thing at a time. But, there are other times in which it seems like everything is falling apart. Sometimes, it feels as if there is a superstorm that has engulfed us and we

are struggling to see through it. Sometimes, it feels as if the storm is pounding against us relentlessly and there seems to be no way out. Sometimes, when it rains, it pours.

Job's great sufferings

Think back to the story of Job. He experienced great sufferings in a very short amount of time. Just imagine: You are living the kind of righteous life that you know you should be living. You are so focused on being right with God and care so much about your children that you are even making sacrifices for them. And, up to this point, you have been greatly blessed by God.

Then, all of a sudden (without any warning whatsoever), a messenger comes to you and says that all your oxen and donkeys were stolen and your servants killed. Then, before he can finish telling you about what happened and before you can begin to fully react to that news, another messenger comes to you and says that fire came down from the sky and burned up all your sheep and more of your servants. Then, before he can finish telling you that news, another messenger says that a raid took away all your camels and killed even more of your servants. Then, when you may just begin thinking that you have heard the worst, before you finish hearing what he had to say, another one comes to you and says that all ten of your children were killed by a house collapsing in the wind.

Now that is a bad day (from a physical perspective). Out of “nowhere,” Job went from being an extremely wealthy man with ten children to a poor and childless man. Then, it was not even done. Later, Job is struck with painful boils all over his body. And, after all of this, Job loses whatever support he had from his wife – as she turns away from God and tells him to curse God and die!

Sometimes we will face tests that seem unbearable

Have you ever had a time in your life like Job? Whether you experienced as much loss and heartache as Job did on this occasion or not, you may have experienced a time in your life in which everything that could go wrong seemed to go wrong.

Maybe you had to deal with a couple of deaths at one time, several health difficulties, financial problems, family problems, etc. And, maybe there have been many of those things happening all at the same time for you (or, in a relatively short period of time).

During these times, it is often difficult to recognize that we can make it through. Sometimes, it seems as if the storms are howling so much that surely everything will just fall apart. Even Job did not find any pleasure in the things he was experiencing. Instead, he deplored his situation and thought that he would have been better off to have died at birth (Job 3:11-13). Job even longed for death and it would not come (Job 3:20-23). He said, “For my sighing comes before I eat, And my groanings pour out like water. For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.” (Job 3:24-26).

Yet, it was not more than Job was capable of handling. Remember that God was in control and only allowed Satan to do so much. In the same way, God knows what we are capable of handling – better than we know ourselves! After all, He is the one who has created us! So, even though we may think we have reached our breaking points, the fact that we are still alive and going through the storms means that God knows we can handle it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Dealing With Bad “Comforters”

It is a blessing to have the right people around us during the storms of our lives. These people can greatly help and encourage us to endure the storms. But, sometimes the people who are around us are actually hindering us. Sometimes, they are even being used by Satan to lure us away from God.

Job's five "comforters"

The Scriptures reveal that Job had five people who were around him when he was trying to deal with all of his sufferings. And, recognize that Job did not know what was behind his sufferings when he was going through them. Yet, these five people did not help Job during this time of grief.

First, we have already considered Job's wife. Although Job should have received support from his wife and she should have encouraged him through this time of shared difficulty, she was a tool of Satan to pull him away from God. During his anguish, she told Job, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9). So, Job not only had to overcome the trials of losing all his other family, servants, and possessions, but he lost his wife with regard to serving the Lord! He recognized that she was just like "one of the foolish women" in the way she spoke (Job 2:10).

Second, Job had three friends, plus one other who would be with him through the book of Job. At first, Job's friends acted in support by coming together to mourn with and comfort him. For seven days, they just sat together on the ground and did not say anything (see Job 2:11-13). Then, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar began to speak with Job. And, when they did (along with Elihu later), they kept trying to blame Job for all of his suffering. They reasoned with human reasoning and concluded that Job must have done something to make God angry and punish Him in this way.

Satan works through people around us

Satan often tries to get us down and then pounce (like a lion on its prey) at these times. During our sufferings, Satan wants to work through the people in our lives to try and discourage us even further. Certainly, Job's "comforters" were not very comforting to him. And, sometimes our "comforters" (even though they may have good intentions) are not very helpful to us. In fact, they may often diagnose the problem incorrectly and identify the wrong solution (i.e. like Job's wife who told him to curse God and die).

One example of Satan working through people around us is found in Matthew 16:21-23. On this occasion, Jesus was showing His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and then be raised on the third day. But, Peter rebuked Jesus and said, "Far be it from you, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" Then, Jesus recognized that Satan was working through Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

We Don't Always Know "Why?"

Perhaps the thing that makes the storms of life most difficult is trying to understand *why* they happen to us. And, although the Bible does help us to understand some general facts about our suffering (as we have even considered in this lesson), the simple truth is we may never fully understand what is behind our suffering.

Job never knew why

Of all the enormous suffering that Job experienced, we are never told that Job learned what had went on "behind the scenes." In fact, through all the back and forth that happened between Job and the four people who spoke to him from chapters 3 through 37, it appears as if he did not know. Although we are given information concerning God and Satan and why Job experienced these things, Job did not have these answers. Even when the Lord spoke to Job in chapters 38-41, God did not tell Him what happened "behind the scenes." Instead, God just helped Job appreciate how great He really is and how little mankind really knows.

Like Job, there are many things that we will go through during the course of our lives that we will not fully understand. So, one of the things that we will have to learn is how we should not have to have all the answers in order to just have faith in God and patiently endure the storms of life. Yet, there are many times that people become discouraged and turn

away from God because they do not have the answers to satisfy them.

Choosing to maintain integrity

I want you to consider two responses to the same situation and not understanding the reason why. Remember, although the book of Job focuses on Job, he was not the only one who would have endured this storm. Consider the fact that his wife also experienced the loss of her husband's wealth, her ten children (supposing they were all her children), and watched her husband be inflicted with painful boils all over his body to the point that he became unrecognizable to those who knew him (Job 2:12). The implication is that she also did not know why any of this had happened.

In response to this situation, Job's wife did not demonstrate moral integrity. Rather than having faith in God and patiently enduring the sufferings, she criticized her husband for doing so and wanted him to curse God before he died (Job 2:9). She had allowed the storms of their lives to embitter her against God.

Yet, Job did not respond in this same way. In fact, Job held fast to his integrity. Through these early days of his suffering, he worshiped God, blessed the name of the Lord, and did not sin or charge God with wrong (Job 1:20-22; Job 2:10). However, by the end of the book, we do see Job repenting for uttering things he "did not understand," things that were too wonderful for him, which he did "not know" (Job 42:1-6).

How will you respond when you face the storms of life? Will you hold fast to your integrity and honor God in your life? Or, will you turn away from God, blame Him, or act like those who have no hope because they do not serve God? Please recognize that you can choose to maintain your integrity before God, even as you endure the fiercest of storms in life!

Conclusion

We will all experience storms during this life. Some will be fiercer than others. But, as we learn through Job, we can control how we respond to these storms. And, if we will hold fast to our anchor during these times, we will come out of the storm better than we were before (at least spiritually speaking)! But, if we do not hold fast to the one anchor that will hold us, we will surely become lost at sea and headed for destruction!

Study Questions

What are some of the storms of life? What is the anchor for the soul?

1. Bad Things Happen To Good People

Was Job a good man? What happened to him?

Will we experience suffering that is unrelated to how we live?

2. God Is In Control

How does the story of Job illustrate that God is in control?

Since God is in control, is He also to blame for the bad things that happen? Why or why not?

How was Job's response to his suffering different than his wife's response? What can you learn from this?

3. There Is An Enemy

Is Satan active on this earth?

How can all suffering be traced back to Satan?

4. Sometimes When It Rains, It Pours

How much suffering did Job experience all at the same time?

Will we ever face tests that seem unbearable?

5. Dealing With Bad "Comforters"

Who were Job's five "comforters"? How did they try to comfort him?

How does Satan work through the people around us?

6. We Don't Always Know "Why?"

Did Job ever know why he suffered?