



## IHL Devotionals 2024-25: Game 11

### **Bible story: Job**

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#### **Why do good people suffer?**

The book of Job begins by telling us how great of a guy Job is. Job is described as a man who is “blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.” We learn he has 10 children, 11,000 farm animals, and many servants – he is “the greatest of all the people in the east.”

Then, we move to a conversation between God and Satan. God remarks how wonderful Job is, and Satan retorts: “Does Job fear God for no reason? ... You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” In other words, Satan believes Job is only good because God has blessed Job with a good life, but speculates that Job would turn on God if his fortune was taken away. God rejects this idea but allows Satan to put Job to the test.

Then, Job has an all-time bad day. His animals and servants are all killed. His son’s house collapses and kills all of his children. In a moment, the blessings that have marked Job’s life are gone.

Job then falls to the ground and worships, saying “naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job then, understandably, laments this tragedy. His friends try to comfort him, then they try to figure out why this tragedy has happened to Job. They speculate: maybe Job doesn’t fear God enough. Maybe Job is wicked, and this is God’s punishment. All of their explanations are a karma-based sense of justice: Job must have been bad because bad things are happening to him.

Job denies any wrongdoing, and still struggles with the question of why this all happened to him. He points out that many wicked people prosper on Earth, and questions God’s sense of justice. How can wicked people do well, when he as a blameless man suffers?

Then, God appears to Job and challenges him. God demonstrates his all-powerful, all-knowing nature by describing all of the details he created in the Earth. God asks whether or not Job helped him create the cosmos or set the constellations in place. Has he ever awakened the sun or managed the Earth’s weather? Would he like to oversee the world for a day, according to his narrow idea of justice?

Job realizes how complex the world is, and how little he understands compared to God. God then says, "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it."

Job is humbled. He doesn't get a direct answer to why this suffering happened, but he knows that his understanding is far short of God's.

Job admits to God that his lack of understanding led him to judge God's character, and he repents. The story ends with God restoring Job's fortunes even more than he had prior: he gets his 10 children back, and 22,000 animals.

### **Takeaways**

- We won't always know why suffering occurs. But God's understanding is far greater than ours, and we must find comfort there. He is always good, even when we don't understand how.
- Seasons of suffering are opportunities to demonstrate faith and trust in the Lord.

### **Questions**

1. If we are blameless and follow the Lord fervently, are we promised a life free from suffering? Health? Prosperity?
2. Satan speculates that taking away all of Job's worldly fortunes would turn Job against God. What about you? How would you feel toward God if your family or job were suddenly stripped away?
3. Many Christians turn away from God after seasons of suffering. How can you prepare your heart now for suffering that may come your way?
4. Unlike Job, none of us are blameless. We all sin, and deserve Hell. Instead of receiving that justified punishment, the cost of our sins is borne by God's sinless son on the cross. What can Job's story teach us about Jesus?

### **Closing and prayer requests**

Lord, thank you for Job's example of faithfulness amid adversity. Your ways surpass our understanding. Please help those of us who are suffering now, and prepare our hearts for suffering that is to come. Help us trust in your goodness no matter what may come. Amen.