

***For Better or For Worse - Lessons From Old Testament Couples***  
***The Jobs: Living with Losses***

Lesson #9 for September 1, 2007

Scriptures: Job 1:1-2:10.

1. The book of Job is full of challenges. Traditionally, the book of Job has been considered to be about why tragedy occurs. Certainly, that is a major theme. But there may be a core message—a very important message in the great controversy—which is behind and beneath that surface message. What do you think the core message of Job is?
2. When was Job written? Do we have any idea when Job lived?

The long years spent amid desert solitudes were not lost. Not only was Moses gaining a preparation for the great work before him, but during this time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis and also the book of Job, which would be read with the deepest interest by the people of God until the close of time. {ST, February 19, 1880 par. 14}

The book of Job contains a series of dialogues. Job spoke and then his friends tried to counter his arguments. This particular lesson focuses on couples and talks somewhat about Job's wife. Job's wife spoke or was directly involved in only a few verses in the entire book!

3. Before the end of this earth's history, will any of us in the final days have Job-like experiences? When we suffer adversity or tragedy, is there any way to know who is behind that tragedy, i.e., who actually caused it? Ourselves? God? Satan?
4. Read Job 4:12-21 (*GNB*) focusing particularly on verse 17. Based on this information, can we tell who was behind the advice given by Job's friends? Was it Satan?
5. Focusing on Job's wife, what was she like? Think of all that she went through! How many of Job's problems affected her just as much? Didn't she lose all of her earthly wealth? Didn't she lose her 10 children? Didn't she have to try to help her husband during his illness? Wasn't she nauseated by the smell of him? Why was Job sitting on a dung heap?
6. Did Job and his wife ever have the privilege of knowing the contents of Job 1, 2, and 42? When were the events of those chapters revealed to humans? When were those chapters written?
7. Job seems to have had a remarkable relationship with God. Remember that Job and his wife lived at a time when there was no Bible, no organized church, no pastors, and no one to really guide and help a person with his spiritual growth. Yet, during those times, remarkable individuals like Enoch, Abraham, and Job seemed to have had closer relationships with God than many do in our day even though we have so much help!
8. Where did Moses learn about Job? Did Moses meet Job? Had the story of Job become famous among the people of the desert? Did the people who repeated the story in the time of Moses, or earlier, have the information we have in Job 1, 2, and 42? How did they deal with the basic, very challenging question, "If the God of heaven is so loving and so powerful, why is there so much pain and suffering on earth?" Do you think that you have a good answer to that question? Do you find that the story of Job has helped you to answer that question for yourself?
9. Look at the one verse we have quoting Job's wife. His wife said to him, "You are still as faithful as ever, aren't you? Why don't you curse God and die?" (Job 2:9, *GNB*) The very interesting part about this verse is that it literally says, "Why don't you *bless* God and die!" Is that a sarcastic remark on the part of Job's wife? Or was she saying to Job, "Commit your life to God and give up the ghost"? Does Job's response in Job 2:10 help us? Did both Job and his wife believe that his troubles came from God? Why did they have that opinion? Did they have a clear

understanding about Satan?

10. Try to put yourself in the place of Job and/or his wife. What would you have done if you lost everything including your children in one hour? Would there be anything left to live for? With that much stress and disappointment, is it any surprise that Job became sick? Is it possible that Job's sickness was a natural consequence of his depression, or was his illness miraculously sent by the devil? Or both?
11. The ancient Hebrew people were monotheistic. They believed that everything that happened, came from God. Is that an error?
12. Clearly, Job's friends believed that Job had committed some terrible sin. (Job 4:7; 8:20; 11:5,6,13,14; 15:5,6; 22:5-9; 34:34-37; 36:17) They were sure he deserved what he was getting! (Job 8:6; 11:6; 34:11; 36:17; contrast 42:7,8) That idea was repeated again and again in their discussions with him. Did Job's wife believe he was a bad sinner? Did she think that God sent calamity upon them for no reason at all?
13. Remember that the ancient Hebrew idea was that if you were good, God would bless you; and the usual form of blessing was wealth. So, if you were wealthy, that was proof that you were a good person. Was Job considered "blameless" because he was so wealthy? How could all of those tragedies happen to one "blameless" person? How could all those tragedies happen at the same time? Could there be any explanation other than his having committed some terrible sin?
14. Take an honest look at yourself and the world in which you live. What are the real reasons for calamities and tragedies? 1) Many accidents, even tragedies, happen to us because we do something stupid. We cause them ourselves. 2) Many tragedies happen simply because we live in a sinful world. For example, Christians have been killed by drunk drivers. 3) Sometimes, bad things happen just because of the consequences of some accidental behavior. No one is specifically responsible. 4) Occasionally, God allows bad things to happen to good people to say something very important in the great controversy and in His struggle to refute the accusations and misrepresentations of the devil. Such was the case of Job. 5) Occasionally, God allows trials and tribulations to come upon us to polish us and to make us more faithful and better children, more Christ-like in the future. In this context we are told that:

And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29. {MH 478.2; DA 224.5; CC 278.5}

15. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. Paul suffered repeatedly because of his efforts to carry the gospel into new territories. Who caused his suffering? Were there multiple causes of Paul's suffering?
16. There are some interesting parallels between the experiences of Adam and the experiences of Job. 1) Both men were considered to be perfect and blameless in the early part of their histories. 2) Each of them became involved in a "battle" in the great controversy. 3) Satan attempted to use the wives of each of them to reach their husbands. 4) The wives, themselves, became victims in the process.
17. Job lost virtually everything except his wife. Why wasn't she destroyed as well? Did Satan think that she was a good enough agent of his to be left behind? Adam, living in the perfect bliss of the Garden of Eden, succumbed to his temptation. Job, living in terrible pain and suffering, did not! That should say something very important to us about Job and his relationship with God!
18. We have now considered briefly the lives of two men whose minds became battlefields in the great controversy. **What "weapons" does God have available to Him in His "battles" in the great controversy? What weapons does Satan use to fight for his side?**
19. What do you think Satan hoped to accomplish by torturing Job? Why did God allow it?

20. Maybe the most important question we should ask ourselves in the midst of this is, **“How did Job develop such a relationship with God that he was able to withstand all that pressure and tragedy?”**
21. How long do you think Job and his wife suffered? Do we have any idea how old he was at the time? Who suffered more physically, Jesus or Job? What parallels can you see between their experiences?
22. Was Job able to survive all of that trouble just because God was his Friend and he trusted Him?
23. During their discussions, Job had some potent things to say to his friends. See Job 6, 7, and 16. At the end of those long discussions, Elihu spoke for six chapters; (Job 32-37) and then God spoke out of the whirlwind. (Job 38-41) It looked like Job was wrong in his statements. So, Job began to confess and at that point God said, “Hold it! I have something more to say!” He then turned to Job’s friends and said those immortal words found in Job 42:7,8 (GNB):
 

<sup>7</sup> After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, as my servant Job did. <sup>8</sup>Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you as you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did.”
24. How do you supposed Job’s friends felt about that reproof from God? At that point, Job’s fate completely changed! Was it because he began praying for his friends?
25. Do we have evidence that Job’s wife was faithful to him through all of this? Apparently she was young enough to give birth to 10 more children! And God blessed the two of them enormously.
26. If you are faithful to God and represent Him correctly every day of your life, how does Satan feel about you? Many, many people just go through life doing whatever comes naturally, and Satan does not have to put forth any significant effort to control them. But when someone lives a life as faithful as Job did, that is a real problem for the devil! “If you trust God, the trials will always prove a blessing, and your faith will come forth the brighter, the stronger, the purer.” Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 1, 1891.
27. So, what is the book of Job all about? Satan had claimed that God unfairly judged him in heaven. He accused God of being arbitrary, exacting, unforgiving, vengeful, and severe. Satan absolutely asserted that no human being would serve God just because he loved Him. When the case of Job came up, Satan had a dilemma. Job seemed to disprove Satan’s major premise. God, on the other hand, had stated that He was a faithful and accurate judge of human character. At the beginning of this whole experience, God stated that Job was blameless and righteous. Satan responded in Job 4:12-21, through Eliphaz, that such a thing is completely impossible for any human being. Right through the book, Satan repeatedly used Job’s “friends” to present his own views. But when it was all over, Job and God stuck together and proved the rightness and truthfulness of God’s cause. God had demonstrated that He was a correct Judge of human nature and human character. Satan was defeated. Job had said what was right about God.
28. Could we live lives that would speak the truth about God, as Job did?

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Last modified: June 21, 2007

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