

Comfort in Suffering

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Lesson #2

Preparation to Study God's Word

Personal faith in Christ secures a permanent place in Heaven for you (John 14:1-3, 3:36, 10:28). But faith in Christ does not guarantee consistent fellowship with God.

Personal faith in Christ establishes a relationship with God which creates an opportunity for fellowship with Him. How long we stay in fellowship with God is a matter of choice.

Any moment we commit sin, no matter how little the sin is, we lose our fellowship with a holy God. However, we can regain fellowship with God by confessing or naming our sins to God the Father and the Holy Spirit will take control of our lives again (1 John 1:9; Revelation 3:20).

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sins, known or forgotten] (1 John 1:9).

You may want to pause and acknowledge, directly to God, any sin that may hinder you from being fully blessed through the Word of God.

God's Commendation of Job - continued from Lesson #1

Can God say about you what he said about Job?

“There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil” (Job 1:8)?

Let us explain three things from this verse.

- “Blameless” here means that Job possessed God’s perfect righteousness. This was given to him at the point when he put his faith in the Lord.

This is always the basis for one’s justification (made righteous by God) (Romans 3:28, Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:1-3, 3:19-28). When the resurrection of the Old Testament

believers takes place, Job will stand before God blameless, not because of what he did (Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8-9), but because of what the grace of God did.

- “Upright” means integrity. Job, through the daily intake of Bible doctrine, as God revealed it to him, developed a foundation on which his *modus vivendi* [way of thinking] and *modus operandi* [way of doing things] was built.
- “Fears God and shuns evil.” This phrase speaks for itself. It does not need much explanation. Job “fears [reveres with awe] God and shuns [keeps away from] evil;” it is that simple.

One day, without warning, without Job’s anticipation, but with God’s permission (Job 1:12), Satan, the accuser, and his officers emptied their ammunition on Job. You see, the righteous suffer, too. There is no need to ask, “why me?” in your difficult situation(s). Everyone suffers.

Job on the Witness Stand

Satan accused Job by telling God that Job’s faithfulness to God was based on Job’s prosperity, not on his love for God. Satan’s chief objective was to prove to God that no man would worship Him apart from His blessings.

In essence, Satan is saying, “God, You are bribing people to worship You by blessing them.”

In the book of Job, chapter one, we are told that Satan went to God in Heaven (Job 1:6). Why did he go before the Supreme Court of Heaven? To ask God to lengthen Job’s life? Of course not. He was there in court to present a false case against Job (Job 1:9-12).

Satan did not know that his case was destined to fail, but God knew. God knew because He is an omniscient (all-knowing) God. He knows the past just as He knows the present and the future. This brings us to these important principles.

Principle 1: Since God knows the past, the present, and the future, that means in His perfect knowledge He already knows the outcome of whatever He allows to happen.

Principle 2: Since God is perfect, the outcome of whatever He allows to happen must always be splendid, reflecting His perfect character.

Principle 3: Therefore, whatever God allows to happen to His child, He already knows that the result will bring blessing to the individual and glory to Himself.

Principle 4: Therefore, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who is growing in grace should not question God about the things He does; rather, the child of God should join the apostle Paul in accepting this fact:

And we know that God causes all things [including physical and mental suffering] to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

“Those who love God” refers to believers who, through their daily intake of Bible doctrine, have developed gratitude in their soul from which personal love for God becomes a reality.

Obviously, we are in God’s plan not because of our own efforts but because of His grace. That is comforting if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who is growing in grace through daily intake and application of Bible truth.

You are on target if this is your motto: “God knows what He is doing.” If you are sick right now, He knows why. If your loved one has left you, God also knows why. “All things work together for good” (Romans 8:28). “All things” include “ALL THINGS.”

In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

We know that everything is not always pleasant. There is nothing pleasant about being sick, about loss of employment, loss of loved ones or losing everything you have.

God wants you to say, “Thank you, God.” Can you truly say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:12)?

That’s another way of saying, “Thank you, God” when you have been hit hard with suffering.

Satan Obtains Testing Permission From God

Then Satan answered the Lord, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:9-11).

Here’s the permission:

Then the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not put forth your hand on him [literally do not take his life].” So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:12).

Can you imagine that Satan has the audacity to be sarcastic in the courtroom of a holy and a mighty God? Listen again to what he said:

“Does Job fear God for nothing? But put forth Your hand [God] now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:9, 11).

What an insult to God! You see, Satan is not omniscient, therefore he doesn't know what Job will do if he is tested; however, God does know. That is the difference! Did you see what Satan actually said to God?

He will surely curse You to Your face (Job 1:11b).

The question is, would Job do that? Or better, would you do that? Would you curse God to His face if you were tested with the things Job was?

In these three verses above, there are important lessons to be learned.

Lesson 1: Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is under maximum protection from God Himself. Satan knows that, too. Do you? Satan declares:

“Have You [God] not made a hedge [impassible wall] about him?” (Job 1:10a).

Lesson 2: Whatever you have as a believer is under God's constant care -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. That means as long as you are in God's plan, in God's will, your possessions are under the most security that Heaven can offer. Satan acknowledged that too.

Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side (Job 1:10a)?

Lesson 3: Your prosperity, which could be in the area of finances, marriage, friendship, or any other area of life, is a matter of God's provision and His grace. The great apostle Paul recognized this grace principle:

What did you have that you did not receive (1 Corinthians 4:7)? [Satan also said:] You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land (Job 1:10b).

Lesson 4: Therefore our comfort should be based on the solid fact that God is in control of not only our daily lives, but of the things around us.

Lesson 5: God permits testing. His permission is based on His sovereign knowledge.

Lesson 6: Therefore Satan does not have what it takes to remove us from this life apart from God's sovereign will and purpose (Job 1:12).

We will continue with Job's testing in lesson #3. Until then may the Lord bless you and keep you.