

## Retaining Our Integrity - Lessons From Job

**Text:** Job

### Introduction:

1. One of the most tragic series of events in the Bible is the account of Job and his sufferings. Job was a man who was “was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” and was blessed in so many ways that he “was the greatest of all the men of the east” (1:1-4). In spite of all this he suffered unimaginable loss.
  - A. At the workings of Satan, he lost his oxen, his sheep, his camels.... and then learned of the death of all of his children (13-19)
  - B. Next, again at the workings of Satan, he was afflicted with “sore boils” from head to toe (2:7). (The Hebrew word indicates they were burning sores or eruptions. Note Job’s own graphic description of his condition in 7:4-5!)
  - C. As if that were not enough, his own wife (who should be a great help and encourager to him (Genesis 2:18) came and proclaimed: “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die” (2:9).
  - D. And then his “friends” came! Their so-called comfort was so erroneous and detrimental that Job would soon declare them to be “forgers of lies” and “physicians of no value” (13:4).
2. The amazing thing about Job though, is his overall and ultimate reaction to these seemingly overwhelming trials!
  - (1) When he lost his cattle and his children, we read:  
*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. (1:20-22)*
  - (2) When his own “help meet” urged him to curse God, he retained his integrity and proclaimed:  
*... Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips. (2:10)*
  - (3) And even in the face of his so-called friends, Job refused to ultimately give up (though Job did at times falter when faced with all of these trials and even desire to “contend with the almighty” (40:2)).
3. Job was indeed a marvelous man. Ezekiel even stands his exemplary righteous character beside the likes of Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14:14, 20).
4. What of us today? Do we need to contemplate such trials? Yes!
  - (1) God has warned us of (and we are all familiar with) the uncertainty of “things” (1 Timothy 6:17)!
  - (2) We know that each life, even those of loved ones, is fleeting and uncertain (James 4:14)!
  - (3) At times our own beloved family members can be our “foes” in our relationship with God (Matthew 10:36)
  - (4) And of course this world is filled with those (including “friends” ) who will falsely speak evil of those who live in Christ (1 Peter 3:16; 4:4)!
5. But here is the real question... “How can I retain my integrity in the face of all of this?!” To answer this we need to consider some lessons from Job!

### Discussion:

#### I. Realize My Personal Responsibility!

1. As is clear from Job (and in our own lives) that there are things which occur over which we have no control!
2. In response to the lies and rebukes Job faced from his friends, Job realized his personal responsibility to *choose integrity and righteousness!* (27:5-6)
3. How many of us fail in the face of peer pressure when mocked for our right decisions?! How many are swayed by the multitude of pressures from those who surround us? (1 Corinthians

15:33). We must determine to do that we know is right no matter the pressures around us!  
(Exodus 23:2)

4. It would do us good to realize the importance of such decisions not only on self, but those about us! (Proverbs 20:7)
5. When Job considered such things, instead of cursing God when he faced struggles and trials, he worshiped and glorified Him! We can do the same *if we choose to!*

## II. Trust In God and His Justice!

1. Job struggled to understand why these things should befall him, and even sought at times to challenge God allowing such to happen. As one reads of Job's challenges to God (cf. Chapter 10; 16:11-21), yet even in the midst of his suffering Job knew and trusted God and His justice: "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity" (31:6). (cf. 13:15-16)
2. David, another of God's exemplary servants likewise used such trust to overcome discouragement and despair in trials, in fact one could read such Psalms as 26 and picture the same sentiments from Job! (Cf. Psalm 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, etc.)
3. When we face the frustrations and discouragements of trial the easy thing is to simply give up our integrity – but the courageous and right thing is to trust in God and His justice! Paul is another excellent example who, when he was facing the trials that would soon end his physical life proclaims: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

## III. Look Beyond The Trial!

1. As he addressed the Corinthians, God had Paul pen the futility of assurance in this life only, saying that hope in this world makes us "of all men most pitiable" (15:19). Thankfully Job did not have only a fleeting hope as he faced the trials of his life!
2. As Job is responding to Bildad, he does rest his hope upon vindication in this life. It seems to be enough that Job knew himself of his righteous life and that the sufferings he was enduring were not a result of punishment for wrongdoing. But even beyond that Job looked toward vindication *after* this life, knowing that his "redeemer liveth" and that after this life he would see God (19:25-27)!
3. We know that bad things happen to all of us. Can you imagine a life of trust and hope only in the things of this life... things which are only fleeting? (Cf. Matthew 6:19-33; 1 Timothy 6:6-12).
4. When Jesus was to leave his disciples, He used this very hope to allow them to endure (John 14:1-3). What a tragedy if we do not focus on the things above, instead having hope in this life!

## IV. Humble Ourselves

1. As in our readings, Job (as he was instructed of God) learned much regarding the things of this world (including self) and of the God of heaven. When confronted with such, he did something that so many times people today fail to do – humble self before God. Read the first six verses of chapter 42, especially noting the final verse: "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." What a wonderful realization in these verses of the greatness of God and our unworthiness before Him!
2. So humbled before God was Job that those whom had attacked him in so many ways were now the recipients of his prayers! (42:10). What a lesson for each of us!! (Matthew 5:43-48)

## Conclusion:

1. Job is a difficult book in many respects to read, yet a reading of it fills one with awe of God, hope of heaven and humility of self!
2. James 5:10-11