

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 30, 2011

Passage: Job 2:11-3:26

Memory Passage: Psalm 16 (We will memorize this Psalm together over the next several weeks.)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 2:11-13.** Why did Job's 3 friends come to see Job? What did they hope to accomplish? How did they accomplish their goals?

(b) We will need to remember Job's friend's intent as we proceed in future weeks to evaluate their counsel, but given the friend's initial actions, do you think they accomplished their goal of "show(ing) him sympathy and comfort(ing) him?" Why or why not? What about their actions either accomplished these goals or failed to accomplish them? What do we learn about giving comfort and showing sympathy from the actions of Job's friends?

(c) When you are suffering, what do you desire in order to be comforted? How would you expect others to show you sympathy? How do you accomplish these acts in the lives of others? Living out the "one anothers" of Scripture includes the ability to "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). How willing are you to live like this with others (please consider your ability & willingness to have others weep with you, and your ability & willingness to weep with others)?

(d) *Family:* **Read Job 2:11-13.** Help your family analyze these verses, observing all that actually happened. Then discuss together how Job's friend's actions either accomplished or did not accomplish their goals of showing him sympathy and giving him comfort. Then lead them in a discussion of how they might show sympathy and give comfort to others, helping them realize they must recognize when people are in these needs, and then be willing to sacrificially act.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 3.** Did you notice that the writer moves from prose to poetry in v. 3? We will continue with poetry as our form of literature until 42:7 (except for 32:1-5) when for the last 11 verses of the book we will return to prose. How does this knowledge help us interpret and apply the majority of Job? Do we interpret poetry in a different way than prose? How so?

(b) How does the first verse summarize Job's speech? What is your initial, gut-level response to Job cursing the day of his birth? Is this the way you would expect one to respond of whom God Himself said, "there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (1:8)? Is your expectation wrong or is Job wrong?

(c) Which of Job's phrases strike you as outrageous? Unspiritual? Absurd? Unnerving? What phrases do you/have you identified with during your life? Are you comfortable or uncomfortable with Job's words? Do you think he is still "turning away from evil"?

(d) *Family:* Explain that most of Job is in the literary form of poetry, and give your family a brief lesson on Hebrew poetry (yes, you can do this!). Take them to the following passages and show them: Prov. 16:18—Explain that sometimes poetry has two lines that present similar thoughts (FYI: Synonymous Parallelism). Prov. 10:1—Explain that sometimes poetry has two lines that state the opposite of each other (FYI: Antithetical Parallelism). Prov. 17:13—Explain that sometimes poetry has two lines in which the second line furthers the thought of the first (FYI: Synthetic Parallelism) Prov. 8:1 & 9:1—Explain that sometimes poetry uses phrases in a picturesque way and need to be understood as such (i.e. Wisdom does not actually call and can't really build a house) Explain that this is similar to saying someone is an "ox" (strong) or a "dove" (gentle).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Psalm 88.** What evidence of hope do you find in this Psalm? Is the psalmist just "gripping and complaining" or is there something godly about his lament?

(b) Oftentimes Psalms of lament still end up with a flourish of hope at the end (i.e. Psalm 13), but this one does not. What are we to learn from this? How does this Psalm (and Job 3) address our understanding of depression and sorrow? Do you think the writer of Psalm 88 could be joyful at the same time he was writing this lament?

(c) How would you address this statement: "Since the Bible says we are to 'rejoice in the Lord always' (Phil 4:4), a professing Christian who is depressed or sorrowful must be sinning"? How would you counsel someone (yourself?) who is suffering with depression, despondency, or excessive sorrow?

(d) *Family:* Have ready some Legos and some toy animals (horses would be great!). Put the horses in the middle of the table and ask: "If these horses were alive, where could they go?" (The answer you want is, "anywhere!" because there is no fence). Then say, if you wanted to control what happened to them and who could get to them, what could you build with these Legos?" Help them get started building a fence around them to form a corral. Now begin a discussion of how much they, the builders of the fence, control who gets in and who gets out, and show them that no one gets in or out unless they give

permission. Then **Read Job 1:10 & 3:23** and explain that a “hedge” is like a fence, and use their fences as an object lesson to show how God hedges us in during our life and is in control of all of our circumstances.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 3.** Oftentimes depression and excessive sorrow can lead to unhealthy thinking. What evidence of unhealthy thinking (what I affectionately call “stinkin’ thinkin’”) do you find spoken by Job in this chapter?

(b) Job’s friends are about to give him their counsel, but before we hear from them, what counsel would you give Job? How can you help him apply the gospel to his life (a gospel which we will see throughout our study of Job that he understands)?

(c) In verse 23 Job mentions being “hedged in” by God. What significance should we see in this choice of words (see 1:10 if you need some inspiration)? What is the difference between Satan’s view of God’s hedge and Job’s? How does this help us understand God’s sovereign actions with regard to our circumstances?

(d) *Family:* **Read 2 Cor. 11:23b-29** and remind your family of all that Job lost in chapters 1 & 2. Ask them what kinds of feelings they think they would have if they had to endure such suffering as Job & Paul. Then **Read 2 Cor. 1:8-11** and discuss how these verses would help Job, Paul or your family to endure suffering in a way that reflects trust in our sovereign God.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 3.** Job finally gets around to answering the “why” question in vs. 25-26. What reason does he give for cursing the day of his birth? Given what he has lost in chapters 1 & 2 does this surprise you? What has caused his lack of ease, quietness and rest?

(b) After reading Job 3 all week, can you now identify glimmers of hope in Job’s response? Can you see any hints that he is still being faithful and trusting in God even during this time of intense physical, emotional and spiritual suffering?

(c) Read 2 Cor. 1:8-11 & 4:7-18. In chapter 1 Paul said he suffered so much he “despaired of life itself.” By chapter 4 he was able to say his suffering was a “light momentary affliction.” What was the difference in his two views of his own suffering? What do we learn from these verses that can help us have a God-trusting response to our own suffering?

(d) *Family:* The language of Job 3 might be full of images that your children are not ready to receive, or that would bring up questions you are not ready to answer. If this is the case, summarize the chapter and explain that Job was so distraught by his circumstances that he thought he wanted to die (similar to Paul’s statement from 2 Cor. 1 that you looked at last night). Help your family understand that he was not saying that he would take his own life, but he was crying out in grief over his circumstances. Then read Job 1:21; 2:10b & 19:25-27 to show that Job did not start in this emotional/spiritual state and that he does not end there. If your family needs even more hope, read Job 42:10-17 to see that Job will ultimately be restored and commended for his faith. The purpose of this day is to a) not avoid the hard truths in chapter 3, but b) to make sure your family does not get overwhelmed with hopelessness because of Job’s lament in this chapter. Depending on the ages of your children, you will need to make the appropriate choice of how you handle this chapter.

DATE: January 30, 2011

PASSAGE: Job 2:11-3:26

Questions from the Darkness