

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, February 20, 2011

Passage: Job 11-14

Memory Passage: Psalm 16 (Our 4th week of memorizing this Psalm.)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) Think back on Eliphaz and Bildad's first responses to Job that we studied over the last two weeks. Try to summarize the content of each speech in one word (i.e. if I were to summarize the content of Zophar's response in one word I might say, "Zophar's response centers mainly around wisdom.").

(b) **Read Job 11.** What are your first thoughts about Zophar and his speech? How would you characterize his tone? How would you compare his speech to those of Eliphaz & Bildad?

(c) Has Zophar in v. 4 accurately summarized what Job has said? If not, how is his summary different from what Job said? What was Zophar's mistake, and what can you learn about listening well to others from his mistake?

(d) Is Zophar's theology right or wrong? Is his application right or wrong in Job's case? What is it that Zophar asks Job to "do" as a result of his theology?

(e) *Family:* **Read Job 11:4-6.** Zophar is saying that even though Job is suffering greatly, if he knew the secrets of God's wisdom he would know that he is not suffering as much as he could. Ask your family if Zophar is correct when he says, "Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves." Lead your family in a discussion of what every man & woman deserves (you can use Rom. 3:23 & 6:23a to teach this concept), and what every Christian receives (you can use Rom. 6:23b & Eph. 2:1-10 to teach the Gospel). Explain the concepts of mercy (*not* receiving what we *do* deserve) and grace (*receiving* what we *do not* deserve; God's Riches At Christ's Expense) to your family. Explain that Job is receiving mercy and will eventually receive grace in chapter 42, just as we receive mercy and grace through Christ when we are saved.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 12.** Summarize Job's argument found in 12:1-12. Now state it in one sentence. How do these verses relate to Zophar and his speech?

(b) What is Job's point in v. 6? To which of the Friends' statements might Job be responding (consider words & content)?

(c) In 12:13-25 Job proves a point by making many observations about God's actions with men. What is that point? (Hint: don't skip over v. 13!) In what ways should this point affect you as you live your life every day (be specific!)?

(d) *Family:* Tell your family that one of Job's responses to his friends in chapter 12 is that they do not possess the wisdom that they claim to possess (see vs. 2-3; 7-12) so he rejects their counsel. Ask your family, "How should we test/evaluate the counsel given to us by others?" Then teach them about the source, the value, the blessings, and the teachers of wisdom by working through the following passages: Prov. 2:1-15, 3:13-27 & 4:1-27. I realize this is much Scripture to cover, so if you must choose one passage, chapter 4 would serve you well.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 13.** As Job begins to state with the most clarity so far his intentions to address God, what accusation does he make of his friends in 13:4-8? What point is Job trying to make in these verses? What does Job say God will think (vs. 9-11)?

(b) Verses 15-16 represent what one commentator calls, "a *tour do force* of faith—in the dark." Why do you think he describes Job's words in this way? Do you agree? Disagree? Why/why not? What encouragement do you gain from Job's words in these verses? What practical application can you derive?

(c) Beginning in 13:18 Job turns his words directly to God. What 2 things (vs. 20-21) does Job ask of God? Why do you think these 2 things were important to Job as he contemplates taking God to court?

(d) *Family:* **Read Job 13:5** and ask your family, "Why do you think Job says this?" Explain that Job is saying that the only way his friends would actually display wisdom is to keep silent. **Read Prov. 17:27-28** and explain to your family their meaning (an expansion of Job 13:5) and teach the devastating power of our tongues using **James 3:3ff**. Help your family apply these concepts to their own speech, and connect these ideas to the wisdom about which you learned yesterday (see James 3:13-18).

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Job 14.** After returning to familiar themes (14:1-6) Job begins to think of the possibility of resurrection after death. Explain the picture from nature (14:7-9) that Job uses to begin his wonderings about life after death. How does he compare the tree to human death in vs. 10-12?

- (b) At this juncture of the book, what do you think Job actually believes about a future resurrection from the dead? From where/what/whom has he received these beliefs?
- (c) Job continues his thinking (v. 13) by praying that God would hide him in Sheol, the abode of the dead. Why does he pray for this? Is this a prayer of hope or despair? Why?
- (d) What would be the result of being hidden in Sheol until God called him out (vs. 16-17)? On what do you think he is basing this hope? What would his response be to God's call (v. 15)?
- (e) *Family*: **Read Job 14:7-9**. Explain that Job is contemplating a tree that is cut down, but can still bloom if even a scent of water is around, and he will wonder if a human being has the same hope of life after death. Explain that having water is the key to this tree's future life (budding), and ask if this need for water brings to mind any other stories that picture the need for water in order to have a future life. Then **Read John 4:1-15** and emphasize Jesus as the Living Water that leads to eternal life.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Job 14**. What happens to Job's hope in vs. 18-22? What has caused this change in his thinking/praying? How would you describe Job's emotional condition by the time he ends his speech in v. 22? His spiritual condition?
- (b) What would you say to Job if you were Eliphaz (the next friend to speak)? Keeping in mind and learning from the mistakes Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar have already made, how would you encourage this friend who just embarked upon a rollercoaster ride of despair-leading-to-hope-ending-in-despair (chapter 14)?
- (c) Try, for a moment, to put yourself in Job's shoes after this speech. What would you want to hear from friends? How receptive do you think you would be to advice from others? What can you do now, prior to a season of severe despair, to ready yourself to receive counsel from friends and discern the wisdom of their counsel?
- (d) Do the activity listed in (e) below for families!
- (e) *Family*: Provide each member of your family with a notebook (or sheets of paper you will later put into folders). Use tonight as a time of assessment and review for chapters 4-14. Lead your family through a review of what they remember about each of the friends' first speeches. Be ready to supplement their memories about each speech, and write down on your white board the main points of the content of each speech. Have your family write down these main points, using a separate sheet of paper for each friend with the heading "Speech 1". Then recap each of Job's 3 speeches in the same way, having them write down the main points on one piece of paper with the headings "Response 1 to Eliphaz," "Response 1 to Bildad," and "Response 1 to Zophar" (all on one sheet of paper for Job). If you continue this process throughout the 3 cycles of speeches, each person will have a one page summary of each of the friends' thoughts (lumping all three, two in Zophar's case, of their speeches together to see how their thoughts develop) and Job's speeches all in a running tally to see how his thoughts develop.

DATE: February 20, 2011

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The Speeches: Zophar vs. Job Round 1