

Essential Tools for Leading a Group Bible Study

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

JOB, ECCLESIASTES MAKING SENSE OF LIFE

LEADER GUIDE
SUMMER 2013

LifeWay | Adults

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

ADULT LEADER GUIDE

A guide for teachers and leaders of adults
using the Explore the Bible Series

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LeBron and his wife, Pamela, have four children and five grandchildren. He states that he looks forward now to spending lots of time with those grandchildren!

RHONDA DELPH, an experienced writer and editor, wrote the teaching suggestions for this quarter. Rhonda and her husband David are active members of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee. She has served in the church orchestra, in various media roles, and as a Sunday School teacher.

The church has always been a vital part of Rhonda's life. She recalls one of her childhood memories: "Not only were we present every time the doors were open, we had keys!" Rhonda became a Christian at the age of 7. "God pricked my heart during the drive home from Sunday night church."

A graduate of Tennessee Technological University and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Rhonda says, "While the Lord may take each of us through random and unexpected 'Job moments' in life, He is always faithful. I pray I can maintain the strength and conviction of Job, no matter how difficult the test!"

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* *Evangelistic Lesson*

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The suggestions in this resource for pronouncing Bible names are from *That's Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names* by W. Murray Severance, © Copyright 1997 by Broadman & Holman Publishers. Used by permission.

Leader Tip:

Take some time to check out the insights and background for the Book of Job at www.MyStudyBible.com.

Week of June 2

Is This Really Happening to Me?

WHAT CAN I LEARN ABOUT GOD—AND ABOUT ME—IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISASTER?

Read These Bible Passages ➤

Background Passage: Job 1:1–2:13

Lesson Passages: Job 1:1-3,8-11,20-22; 2:7,9-10

Study These Lesson Passages ➤

1. **Acknowledge Your Limits** (Job 1:1-3), page 15
2. **Seek Heaven's Honor** (Job 1:8), page 16
3. **Expect Faith's Challenge** (Job 1:9-11), page 16
4. **Respond with Faith** (Job 1:20-22; 2:7,9-10), page 17

Focus on This Goal ➤

Lesson Goal: To challenge adults to respond to adversity with trust in the Lord

Create a Group-Time Plan ➤

Review the teaching suggestions on pages 20-22 and summarize how you plan to...

- Get Started:
- Get into the Word:
- Get to the Point:

Gather Your Resources ➤

- ☐ Personal Study Guides, one per adult (+ extras for guests)
- ☐ Markerboard or tear sheet with markers; pencils, paper
- ☐ **FOR Get Started:** Map: Modern States and the Ancient Near East (**Pack Item 1**); Poster: Unit 1 (**Pack Item 2**)
- ☐ **FOR Get into the Word:** Worksheet: Character Award (**Pack Item 3**); Worksheet: Revolving Around Christ (**Pack Item 4**); tube of toothpaste

Stay Connected ➤



Use e-mail, text, or social media to connect during the week. Send a reminder to the group: What does the word “JOB” bring to mind? Do you think of work or the man in the Bible? This week, we start a new study in the Book of Job.

For additional help, see *Preparing to Lead a Group Bible Study Experience: A Timeline*, pages 148-149.

B For more background information, read the following in the Summer 2013 issue of *Biblical Illustrator Plus* (CD-ROM): “Livestock as Wealth in the Old Testament Era” (Su ‘06), “Who Were the Sabeans?” (Su ‘06), “The ‘Sons of God’” (Fa ‘05). BI Plus is available for purchase at www.lifeway.com/biblical-illustrator.



Why Study This Lesson?

Now in her early thirties, “Janet” already has experienced tremendous suffering. She grew up in foster care, bouncing from home to home with little stability. Her life seemed to improve when she became an adult and married. She and her husband became the proud parents of two children. Then Janet’s life came crashing down when their two children were tragically killed in an automobile accident. Her husband, unable to cope with the loss, grew bitter and began to be violent toward her. She feared for her personal safety. Since she had no other family to turn to, “Janet” moved to a different state, hoping to start over. When I asked about her relationship with God, she replied, “Oh, I believe in God. I just don’t see how He relates to my life.” Meanwhile, she largely ignores God and seeks to alleviate her pain with inappropriate and unsatisfactory activities.

How have adults in your Bible study group experienced personal tragedy or adversity? How have you experienced suffering? As you lead adults to engage God’s Word in these lessons from the Book of Job, look for ways to help them examine how they have responded to suffering. Be sensitive to those adults who might be struggling spiritually over how to deal with adversity. Be prepared to seek the assistance of your church’s ministry leaders for those who might need additional help.

What Is the Lesson’s Biblical Truth?

People can trust the Lord even when things go terribly wrong.

How Does the Lesson Fit in God’s Story?

GENERAL BACKGROUND

- The origin of human suffering and adversity is linked in Scripture to the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden (see Gen. 3:14-19).
- God made all creation subject to futility after the fall, but it was done for the purpose that one day the creation would be set free from corruption (see Rom. 8:20-21).

BACKGROUND OF JOB

- God revealed the events of the heavenly councils to the inspired writer of Job. During his suffering, not even Job was made aware of the events.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE (Job 1:1–2:13)

- *Wealth Test (Job 1:1-22)*—Job 1:1–2:13 serves as a prologue to the Book of Job. The narrative introduces Job as a godly man of perfect integrity. He possessed vast wealth and a “perfect” family. In a conversation with Satan, God pointed to Job as the epitome of a godly individual. Satan’s skepticism opened the door for a demonstration of God’s assertion that Job trusted God completely. In the test that followed, Job lost all of his wealth. At the same time all of his children died. Nevertheless, Job did not cease to praise God.
- *Health Test (Job 2:1-10)*—Satan charged that Job was faithful because he hadn’t suffered any personal physical harm. Satan then struck Job with an appalling disease, and Job was reduced to sitting in agony in the ash heap.
- *Effective Sympathy (Job 2:11-13)*—Job had three close friends in the region. When they learned of Job’s plight, they immediately journeyed to be at his side. Stunned by his haggard appearance, they sat silently with Job for seven days.

Acknowledge Your Limits (Job 1:1-3)

HCSB

1 There was a man in the country of ♦Uz named Job. He was a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil. **2** He had seven sons and three daughters. **3** His estate included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a very large number of servants. Job was the greatest man among all the people of the east.

KJV

1 There was a man in the land of ♦Uz, whose name was Job: and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. **2** And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. **3** His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Verse 1. Job probably lived around the time of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac. The meaning of Job's name is unknown. In addition, the name ♦Uz did not refer to a political state but rather to a tribal region located just east of the land of Canaan.

In the Hebrew text, the word *man* is in an emphatic position, and the specific Hebrew word used stresses the concept of an individual. Thus the narrative begins with an assertion that Job was an ordinary human being. Nothing about his circumstances gave him a particular advantage. His uniqueness lay in his righteous character, not in his humanity or place of residence.

Job is described as a man of **perfect** character. The description indicates that Job had no moral or ethical deficiency. He conformed completely to God's demands for his life at that precise moment. One reason for his conformity to God's standard was the fact he **feared God**. To fear God is to live with a keen awareness of the presence of God. **?** This consciousness of God's presence produces a godly lifestyle. Consequently, Job shunned every semblance of **evil**.

Verse 2. Job had 10 children. Seven of the children were sons. In Scripture, the number seven often symbolizes that which is perfect or complete. In a culture that placed high value on having male offspring, Job's preponderance of sons was perceived as yet another sign of his success. In the eyes of his contemporaries, Job had what we might call the "perfect" family. **?**

Verse 3. In Job's day as well as ours, material possessions frequently are a common standard by which humanity measures greatness. With respect to this category, Job's vast wealth placed him in an elite category. Very few people in the land where Job lived enjoyed the level of prosperity he did. Livestock was the foundation of the region's economy in that historical period. Therefore wealth frequently was measured in the number of animals one owned, not in currency. Job owned significant numbers and variety of species. The sizeable number of animals required a large labor force, since failure to care for the livestock would produce a catastrophic financial loss.

People who observed Job saw a man of exemplary behavior. They considered his family as ideal, what every man dreamed of having. No doubt many envied his vast wealth. Job's reputation was not limited just to the land of Uz. He was well-known throughout that region of **the east**.

Wherever a diamond (♦) appears before a word, see page 6 for pronunciation help and quick definitions.

? (Study Question 1 from *ETB Personal Study Guide*, pp. 13,19) How would you define what it means to fear God? (1:1)

? How do other people perceive you? How do you think their opinion compares with God's perception of your life? (1:2)

Seek Heaven's Honor (Job 1:8)

HCSB

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil."

KJV

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?



Read the article "The Message and Purpose of the Book of Job" in the Summer 2013 issue of *Biblical Illustrator* or *Biblical Illustrator Plus* (CD-ROM).

? (Study Question 2 from *ETB Personal Study Guide*, pp. 13,19) What does God's description of Job to Satan say about what God looks for in His people? (1:8)

? What actions can you take to improve the way your life honors God? (1:8)

Verse 8. The tragic turn in Job's life began as the result of an encounter between **the LORD** and **Satan** (see 1:6-12; also 2:1-7). The Bible does not reveal all the details we might like to know concerning Satan's appearance before God at the heavenly council meetings or concerning the reasons behind God's decisions. While we as readers enjoy some insights that were not available to Job, many of our questions about what occurred in the meetings remain unanswered. Undue speculation about these matters only distracts from grasping the primary biblical message. Our trust in God should never be dependent on God's providing answers to human curiosity. Much of our inquisitiveness is irrelevant to the issue at hand. God wants us as His people to trust Him even when we cannot understand the reasons for our adversity. We can trust God simply because He is God.

One fact we are able to nail down is that Satan's role in Job's suffering—although real—was limited. [See *Explore More of the Word*: "Satan," p. 19.] No further mention of Satan occurs after chapter two. Nevertheless his inferiority and subjection to God is dramatically demonstrated. The phrase *sons of God* (see 1:6; 2:1) emphasizes that Satan is a created angelic being. Whereas God is everywhere, Satan is restricted to roaming from place to place (compare 1 Pet. 5:8). Furthermore, while God's evaluation of Job remained intact, each of Satan's accusations proved to be wrong. **?**

God's assertion in Job 1:8 clearly eliminates the possibility that Job's later suffering was divine punishment for sin. Job was precisely who and what God wanted him to be. Indeed, God called attention to Job as the epitome of the way He expects His people to live. **?**

Expect Faith's Challenge (Job 1:9-11)

HCSB

9 Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? **10** Haven't You placed a hedge around him, his household, and everything he owns? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. **11** But stretch out Your hand and strike everything he owns, and he will surely curse You to Your face."

KJV

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? **10** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. **11** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Verse 9. Satan could not dispute Job's exemplary religious devotion to date. So he accused Job by questioning the man's motivation. **?** Whereas God's statement implied that Job's devotion was genuine, Satan assumed it was self-seeking. He claimed there was an obvious, more sinister reason for Job's piety.

Verse 10. In effect, Satan accused God of buying Job's loyalty. **?** That is, in return for devotion, God had put a protective **hedge** around Job. Ancient vineyard growers often planted a row of dense, thorny shrubs around their vineyards to serve as a barricade against prowlers or grazing animals. Satan accused God of building a similar barrier around Job.

The phrase **the work of his hands** points to everything Job attempted. The Hebrew verb translated **blessed** means to bestow power for success. It denotes something God does apart from human activity. Therefore Satan argued that God protected Job from all harm whether he deserved it or not. Furthermore, if Job attempted to do anything, God insured that Job succeeded regardless of how well Job actually performed. The implication was that without God's special favor, Job surely would be less godly in his behavior.

Verse 11. So Satan challenged God to see what would happen if He treated Job differently. Satan predicted that Job would curse God to His face. The challenge calls into question whether human beings are capable of being devoted to God solely on the basis of who He is rather than for what He does for them.

Satan's taunt revealed his limitations. In a way, Satan deviously attempted to persuade God to behave in a manner contrary to His nature. In this Satan failed miserably. God did not do what Satan suggested. Furthermore, the whole suggestion was an admission that Satan lacked authority to act on his own initiative. God was and is the Sovereign Creator.

However, God did grant limited permission for Satan to act against Job. At this point, Satan could not touch Job's body. Instead, Satan took away Job's wealth and children, and likely damaged Job's status in the community. Later, God also granted Satan permission to attack Job's health but not to take his life (see 2:6). In both cases, Satan could not cross the line established by God.

The Bible does not reveal God's reasons for granting Satan such power. God allowed the testing of Job for His own good reasons. The Lord's ways often are mysterious to us (see Isa. 55:9), but His nature is well-known. The Lord God is good, loving, just, and wise. He is not capricious or cruel. His actions always have a positive purpose. Therefore, we can trust Him even when we can't understand why He allows us to experience suffering.

Respond with Faith (Job 1:20-22; 2:7,9-10)

HCSB

20 Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, **21** saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh. **22** Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.

KJV

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, **21** 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. **22** In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

? What are your motivations for serving God? How do these need to change? (1:9)

? (Study Question 3 from *ETB Personal Study Guide*, pp. 13,19) How would you react if you knew that Satan was making the same charge against you that he made against Job? (1:9-10)

KEY DOCTRINE

MAN

Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. (See also Gen. 3:1-7; Luke 13:15-16; Rev. 12:9.)

.....
2:7 So Satan left the LORD's presence and infected Job with terrible boils from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.
.....

9 His wife said to him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die!" **10** "You speak as a foolish woman speaks," he told her. "Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?" Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said.

.....
2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.
.....

9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. **10** But he said unto her, 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.

? (Study Question 4 from ETB Personal Study Guide, pp. 13,19) What three responses did Job make to his disasters? (1:20-21)

? What are some ways we can show trust in the Lord during adversity? (1:21)

Chapter 1, verse 20. In a rapid and unrelenting sequence of horrendous blows, Satan shattered Job's "perfect" world. Panicked servants arrived one after another to announce that all of Job's herds and flocks were gone and the workers had been killed (see 1:13-17). Then a final messenger arrived with the most devastating news of all. A fierce desert windstorm had collapsed the house of Job's eldest son. All 10 of Job's children were inside and died in the tragedy.

The grief must have been unimaginable for Job and his wife. They had lost everything. Job stood up, a gesture that indicated his next action was deliberate and appropriate. His robe probably reflected his station in the community. Tearing the robe made it unusable and thus made a statement. Its loss signified the depth of his suffering. Shaving off one's hair was a sign of bereavement in Job's society. Up to this point, Job's behavior would have been as expected. However, what he did next revealed the true depth of his reverence for God. He prostrated himself on the ground and worshiped God. **?**

Verses 21-22. Job 1:21 is among the more familiar verses in the book. Job expressed both his sorrow for his loss and his unwavering commitment to God. Whereas **naked** is an accurate literal description at birth, it is a figurative reality at death. An infant emerges out of a mother's womb with nothing. When an individual enters eternity, all earthly possessions remain behind. The dead take nothing with them. Even the body of flesh that housed the individual is left to decay.

Job expressed his deep conviction about divine providence when he spoke of God's giving and taking away. God gives physical life at conception, and He terminates it at death. Between these two events, everything a person receives is from God. Likewise, in some mysterious way every loss is an act of God. At that moment Job found this neither unnatural nor a reason for rejecting God. Instead he praised the Lord's **name**. In the Old Testament, a name was far more than a mere label of identification. In regard to God, this was particularly true. The name of God represented the nature of God. Thus Job praised God for who He is and for what He is like. In the face of overwhelming adversity, Job uttered an incomparable expression of faith. **?** Moreover, he did not **sin** in his speech.

Chapter 2, verse 7. Having failed to elicit any bitterness towards God from Job, Satan sought another opportunity (see 2:1-6). He made the excuse that his first attempt fell short because Job himself had remained within God's protective hedge. So Satan was permitted to attack Job's health. The once prominent member of the community suddenly was afflicted head to toe with inflamed, ulcerous sores. Other symptoms described in the Book of Job were itching (2:8), a haggard appearance (2:12), running sores that bred maggots (7:5), a loss of sleep (7:14),

a sensation of choking (7:15), depression (7:16; 30:15-16), eye problems (16:16), putrid breath (19:17), emaciation (19:20), acute pain (30:17), darkened and peeling skin (30:28,30), and fever (30:30). The greatest man among all the peoples of the east was reduced to poverty. He sat alone in the community ash dump, scraping his sores with a broken pottery shard!

Verse 9. We as readers are told almost nothing about Job's marriage. Based on God's evaluation of Job, we can assume he was a good husband and father. At this moment, his wife provided Job little comfort. Yet we need to be cautious in evaluating her behavior. During the first series of calamities, she experienced the same losses as her husband. She too was under tremendous emotional strain. In some ways, Job's illness may have been more worrisome to her than to him. A childless widow in that time was the epitome of helplessness. Without her husband and sons, she had no one to provide for her. The family's material goods were all gone. If Job died, her future was equally bleak.

Throughout the ordeal, Job's wife had been amazed at his persistent integrity. He simply refused to abandon his faith in God. So for the only time recorded in the book, she spoke to her suffering husband. She suggested that he curse God. Her suggestion presumed the consequences of cursing God would be divine judgment in the form of physical death. Her advice, in effect, was to commit suicide. Yet God did not condemn her. Her sorrow-filled plea served to demonstrate the validity of God's assessment of Job—he had no peer.

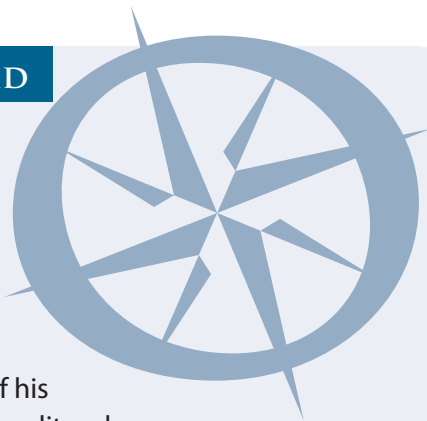
Verse 10. Job rebuked his wife for her counsel. The term **foolish** literally means an empty wineskin. Here it describes an individual with a closed mind. Insensitivity to God and moral insensibility close a person's mind to reason. Job quizzed his wife as to the appropriateness of only accepting God's blessings. The obvious conclusion was that one must fear God in both good and bad circumstances. Job did so. He had behaved just as God knew that he would.

EXPLORE MORE OF THE WORD

Satan (Job 1:8)

The name *Satan* is an English transliteration of a Hebrew term that means "adversary." Some occurrences of the term in the Old Testament have this literal meaning. For example, 2 Samuel 19:22 describes King David chiding one of his loyal army officers for wanting to kill an Israelite who previously had uttered a curse against the king. David wanted no more revenge killings, and stated that for the officer to carry out such vengeance would make him an adversary of the king.

On the other hand, in several Old Testament passages the term *Satan* clearly refers to the Devil. In these passages the term is rendered as a proper name in English Bibles (see 1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Zech. 3:2). While Satan remains a powerful adversary to humanity, the passages in Job reveal Satan's clear inferiority to the Sovereign God. The New Testament reveals Satan's ultimate defeat, judgment, and everlasting consignment to the lake of fire in the end time (see Rev. 20:10).



WHAT NOW? MY MISSION

How can you lead your class to put into action this week what you've learned in God's Word about trusting the Lord in adversity?

1. Acknowledge where you might be judging yourself or others superficially.
2. Above all else, seek and value God's evaluation of your character.
3. Be ready to admit when terrible adversity puts your faith in the Lord to the test.
4. Ask the Lord to help you trust Him moment by moment as you walk through adversity.

Your goal this week is to help adults trust in the Lord during times of adversity.

GROUP TIME



TEACHING SUGGESTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL GROUP TIME

1. Get Started

- Introduce this unit by posting *Map: Modern States and the Ancient Near East* (**Pack Item 1**) and indicate the probable location of Uz as described on page 15. (If you do not have the Leader Pack, see p. 83.) Display *Poster: Unit 1* (**Pack Item 2**).

- **Q: Who has the answers to life's most difficult questions?** Say: *Only God and His Word can provide those answers and make sense of life.*

- Instruct learners to form pairs and share with each other their most challenging life experience. **Q: Did you grow through your experience? What word defines who you are because of that experience?**

2. Get into the Word

Acknowledge Your Limits —(Job 1:1-3)

- Call on a volunteer to read aloud Job 1:1-3 from the Bible. Say: *The story of Job is one of an actual person—an ordinary man with extraordinary success. The best description of Job is that he had perfect integrity, feared God, and shunned evil.*

- **Q: What is perfect integrity? How can you be an example of perfect integrity?**

- Distribute pencils and copies of *Worksheet: Character Award* (**Pack Item 3**).

- **Q: How would you (or others) describe your character?** Instruct learners to write those character traits as a Character Award. **What trial did you experience to earn that award? What situation did God allow to impact your life?**

- Explain that of Job's ten children, seven were sons and three were daughters. Even though numbers have significance in the Bible, no importance to Job is implied, except that in his culture the abundance of offspring was equated with a sign of blessing. Say: *In addition, Job was blessed with material wealth and possessions. People envied Job and his seemingly perfect life.* **Q: Are the outward perceptions of character the same as God's view? Why or why not?**

Seek Heaven's Honor—(Job 1:8)

- Read aloud Job 1:8 from the Bible. **Q: Why did Satan target Job?**

- Say: *Verse 7 reports that Satan, the same New Testament figure who tempted Christ and His followers, came uninvited to the heavenly council.* Call on a volunteer to read aloud the paragraphs for verse 8 in their *Personal Study Guide* (PSG) (pp. 15-16).

- Explain that while we do not know how or why Satan appeared in Job's life, we do know Job did nothing to cause this encounter. Lead learners to understand how Job intentionally revolved life around God and His moral principles. **Q: What qualities of Job can you adopt? How can Christ help you live focused on God?**

- Distribute copies of *Worksheet: Revolving Around Christ* (**Pack Item 4**). Instruct learners to write in the spaces around the word "Christ" their actions that are Christ-honoring. On the lines below, write ideas for living centered around Christ.

Expect Faith's Challenge—(Job 1:9-11)

- Call on a volunteer to read aloud Job 1:9-11 from the Bible.

- **Q: Why do you think Satan questioned Job's allegiance to God? Why did Satan disagree with God's opinion of Job's character?** Allow discussion.

- State: *Satan clearly recognized that God appreciated Job's moral and honest character and placed a hedge of protection around Job and his possessions.* Explain

that in Job's culture protective hedges of thorn-bearing plants acted as barriers to important crops. They helped to keep out unwanted pests—people or animals.

Q: Are you in the habit of praying for a hedge of protection? Why or why not?

• Say: While Satan recognized that God had blessed Job, he suggested that if those blessings were taken away, Job would turn his back on God. He maintained that Job only acted righteously because God had blessed him with material goods. **Q: When have you had your character challenged? How did you feel?**

• **Q: What initial limitation did God place on Satan's treatment of Job? How was that restriction changed?** Say: No matter what Satan did to affect Job's life, God remained in control. He is sovereign!

Respond with Faith —(Job 1:20-22; 2:7,9-10)

• Call on several volunteers to read aloud Job 1:20-22; 2:7,9-10.

• State: Job's world drastically changed. He lost his livestock, his servants, and all of his children. **Q: What might have been Job's state of mind? How might you have reacted to similar news? What might be the difference between the responses of a godly person and that of a nonbeliever?**

• **Q: What kind of life-changing events have you experienced? How did you respond? How did the experience affect your relationship with God?** Explain that Job responded with a gesture normal for his culture but one that demonstrated intense grief—he tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he showed respect, reverence, and worship to the Lord. Say: We can best honor God by acknowledging that He is sovereign and in total control of our life events.

• State: Verse 21 is a short poem that contains words that may be familiar. Job compared his situation to that of being a newborn child with nothing. He then praised God and gave Him the glory. **Q: How might someone misinterpret verse 21 as blaming God in a difficult situation? What is the hope in this verse?**

• Display a tube of toothpaste and squeeze out a small amount. Explain that when you place pressure on the tube, toothpaste comes out. **Q: When a catastrophe places pressure on your life, what comes out?** Say: Like toothpaste oozing from its tube, what we are inside shows itself when we're pressed by life. **If you've been squeezed, were you happy with what came out?**

• Lead learners to consider Job's wife. Call for a volunteer to read aloud the paragraphs for verses 9 and 10 in the PSG (p. 19). **Q: What might have been some of Job's wife's concerns?** Say: Job lost everything and his wife challenged him to curse God and die. Yet Job maintained his faith in God, trusted Him for His hand on his life, and worshipped Him. **What might be a worst-case scenario for your life? Would you reach out to God for help? Why or why not?**

3. Get to the Point

• Call for learners to review the facts of Job's life from the first two chapters. State: Job was an honest man who was faithful to his wife. He treated his servants fairly, was generous to the poor, and avoided worshiping idols. Despite Satan's many attempts to destroy Job, Job still praised God and trusted Him.

• Reread aloud Job 1:22-22. **Q: How easy is it for people to blame God for their troubles? Why do people often look outside themselves, blaming others or God?**

• Instruct learners to consider ways to help people deal with life's trials and how to turn to God in faith—even during life's toughest times. Challenge learners to commit to praise God and trust Him in everything this week. Close in prayer.

for further discussion

• From the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **Have you ever felt as though the Devil had put a big target on your back? If so, how was your relationship with God impacted? How did you pray differently? (Job 1:8)**

• From the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **How can God's protection and blessings become a temptation for believers? (Job 1:10)**

• From the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **Why is it often more difficult to praise the Lord in bad times than in good times? (Job 1:22)**

• For more insight on Job's adversity, call for volunteers to research his maladies. Read Job 1:8,12; 7:5,14,15,16; 16:16; 19:17,20; 30:17,28,30.

notes:

TEACHING OPTIONS

◆ GET STARTED or DEPARTMENT Idea

Display disaster photos from a newspaper or an online news source. Poll learners to determine what survivors of disasters may first think about.

Hymn—

"In All Things Give Him Thanks" (Hymn

580, Baptist Hymnal, 2008).

Available for purchase at lifewayworship.com/ETB.

Q: How many people are genuinely thankful to God and praise Him, despite losing loved ones and material goods? How might you respond in the same situation? Believers

can demonstrate worshipful responses even when confronted with life-changing events.

◆ GET INTO THE WORD Idea

Call for learners to identify symbols of success in today's culture as you discuss Job 1:1-3. (Consider printing or creating a slideshow of images.) **Q: How are today's success symbols different from those in Job's time?** Discuss which successes are important to God. Challenge learners to reconsider their life goals in light of Job's character and God's desire for us.

◆ GET INTO THE WORD Idea

Materials needed: small slips of paper, pencils

As you discuss Job 1:8, help learners to consider the meaning of turning from evil. Distribute slips of paper and pencils. Instruct learners to anonymously write an evil with which they struggle. Collect the slips of papers and randomly choose a few to read aloud. Lead learners to suggest ways to turn from that evil. Discuss the difficulty in resisting sin and how God waits for us to seek Him for strength.

◆ GET INTO THE WORD Idea

Lead a discussion of God's control in our lives as you identify God's control in Job's life in Job 1:9-11.

Q: How difficult is it for you to turn your life over to God? What does God do to get your attention to relinquish control and allow Him to take the reins of your life? Share from your own experience. Allow volunteers to share their own struggles as well as productive ways to yield control to God.

◆ GET INTO THE WORD Idea

Enlist a church member to share a testimony of living through a devastating occurrence. Encourage the guest to address issues related to faith in regard to their response to the situation. **Q: How does faith prepare you for the curves life throws? When you face losing everything, do you ask "Why me?" or "Why not me, Lord?" How would you face adversity without a foundation of faith? How can experience with adversity prepare you to minister to others?**

◆ STAY ON TRACK

"So Satan left the LORD's presence and infected Job" (2:7)

Satan is a real, spiritual enemy. God allowed Job to be tested by Satan, even allowing him to rob Job of his physical health, all under the divine boundaries of God's sovereignty. The *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (vol. 10, p. 24) states, "Satan, the evil emperor, is working behind the scenes, unleashing his diabolical power with fury and hatred...determined to attack every person's life, assaulting their faith, and conquering their souls." **Q: How does the story of Job give believers hope in our battle against Satan?**

REFLECT & Evaluate

Our response to life-changing events may reflect a need to trust God for His provision. Why do we struggle to trust God in these types of situations?

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Job's life reflected a trust and belief in God that directed his life. What is your motivation to live a moral, upright, righteous life?

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Who are some specific class members (or friends) to whom our class can minister during a tough situation they are experiencing?