

AUGUST 28

Job 28-30

At this point in Job the temptation is to go, "Whatever!" or "Oh, be quiet." But let's not be like his friends. There is still some fun to be had. As you go through these chapters, do some exercise. "You mean like do 25 pushups and 25 squats after each chapter?" Good thought. No, Bible study exercise. Underline words that are repeated and look for organization in the arguments. These chapters work out well for that.

Job 28

First, read the chapter through and see if you can figure out where Job is going. Look for key verses where Job takes his "search" one step further.

If you've done that, or just want a shortcut, then read these verses one after the next and you'll understand the organization. Verses 1, 12, 20, 23, 28. Wasn't that fun? That's what you begin to notice if you read your Bible year after year.

Vs. 1-11 Man can do all of this in finding wealth and commanding the earth's resources.

Vs. 12-13 But man can't find wisdom. Not only that, man (including you and me) doesn't realize how important wisdom is, and at this point, neither does Job.

Vs. 14-19 Wisdom isn't found in wealth.

Vs. 20-22 Not only is it hidden from the living, but also from death and those who are dead. Interestingly enough, man's great adversary in the Bible is not Satan, but death. In 1 Corinthians 15:26, Paul and the Spirit say the last enemy to be put to death is death. Death, in a sense, will also swallow Satan. But as big and powerful as death is, there is no wisdom to be found there.

Vs. 23-28 Job says that wisdom is found with God and it begins with *the fear of the Lord*. This is all very interesting, since God will say this to Job. God will not justify one inch of what happened to Job or tell him why He allowed it. All God will do is say that His wisdom, as Job says, is not to be questioned. Added to this, of course, is that Job knew of God's love and righteousness. Job will say later, in light of God's wisdom, he should have just kept quiet. Of course, too, if Job wrote Job, then God let him in on the conversations with Satan that began the adventures. That information would have helped Job broaden his understanding of God and of what is happening on earth.

Job 29

Job is not only mourning the good ol' days, but he is also recounting, honestly, that he was really a very cool guy and a helper of many. The word to guide you here is probably **I**. Follow it and you'll follow Job through his photo album.

Vs. 1-6 Who wouldn't miss those days? Job was only months removed, but he has suffered losses that none of us could imagine. Notice that the real focus here was Job's relationship with God. Even in Jesus' suffering, the hardest part was enduring His Father's wrath, becoming sin for us.

Vs. 7-17 Job was loved not just because the wisdom of God was in him, but because he was a man of action, protecting the poor, the widows, the blind, the lame and the needy. Job was a man of God.

Vs. 18-20 I guess we would all hope for this. This was Job's expectation of how the story would end.

Vs. 21-25 Since the wisdom and grace of God were on Job, he was sort of like Solomon, only utterly righteous before the Lord. His word was sought after and God made him like that.

In all of what we read here, it seems a little self-promoting. I think that Job was pushed to this by his enemies, just as Paul will be pushed, in 2 Corinthians, to blow his horn a little. On the other hand, Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to keep him humble. I think that this humbling process was also a part of what was happening to Job. Job hadn't sinned, but I think that God knew that without a lesson in humility, Job would have fallen. Tomorrow Elihu will begin talking and he will suggest this.

Job 30

Now look for *now*.

Vs. 1-8 Not everyone appreciated Job's godliness. Now that Job was suffering, the rabble roused themselves to howl at him. Of course, we can also see God's wisdom in this. We saw in Esther that for the short time, when the enemies of the Jews thought they could kill the defenseless Jews, they stepped out in their arrogance and showed the world who they were. That was a wise way for God to smoke them out and get them to voice their hate and pride. The same thing had happened here.

Vs. 9-15 Apparently these people were made bold to spit and do all sorts of stuff because God humbled Job.

Vs. 16-19 This is how Job felt. He felt poured out; because, in his mind, God had cast him in the mire.

Vs. 20-23 This change will be pretty obvious to you because Job starts saying *you*. Job is wrong here, but we know more about the behind-the-scenes story than Job does.

Vs. 24-31 Job now seems to be summing up the past three chapters, lamenting how life has totally crashed in on him. Here he is crying for help in the same way that those he had helped had cried for help, and wonder of wonders, no help came. There was no Job to help Job. God Himself allowed Job's mean friends to assault him. God Himself held Job's help back. Why? So we would have this book and have to struggle with God's use of our lives in light of the plan of redemption going on, on our planet.

If you were in a discipleship group, you'd be discussing what you found in these chapters.

I know it is hard to be patient with Job's entire lament, but there is something for us in this as disciples. There is deep suffering on this planet, and there is suffering as we follow Christ. We're reading of Paul's suffering, and in his responses to the Corinthians, we see that there was a reason for the season of darkness he experienced. What proves our spiritual maturity and understanding of God more clearly than when we follow Him through "pitch black" life and still embrace the love of Christ and the wisdom of God? Anyone can follow or sound spiritual when everything is great and you're on your way to Applebee's. For most people on this planet, life resembles Job more than it does Applebee's. How do you really tell someone to hang on in the storm, unless you've hung on in the storm? How do you learn how to hang on in the storm, unless you go through the storm and love and trust Christ, and make Him totally enough. And it really helps to read Job and Psalms.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

This is a very short reading today, but very important for a few reasons.

Vs. 12-13 This is Paul completing the story of his inner conflict with this situation in Corinth. He has a father's heart for this church and is unable to find rest.

Two things are interesting here. First, God didn't give Paul rest. Paul couldn't settle his own heart even though he was a very spiritual guy. That's good to know and makes me feel better when I can't find rest. Second, there was a door for ministry opened to him, but Paul still couldn't rest.

What kind of minister was Paul to let his inner conflict ruin his chance to have an impact on these people? He was normal and his unrest was inspired by the Spirit.

Vs. 14-17 Now this is Paul explaining what he learned in all of that unrest and conflicting feelings. This is also how Paul dealt with walking away from an open door. We would not have these verses, if he had not followed the Lord through this storm in his life. Actually, this entire description of what Paul learned will continue from here to 7:5, where Paul will begin talking again about meeting Titus. To me this is amazing. Paul is telling us firsthand what he learned in the storm, making sense of the problem in Corinth, the unrest in Asia and the unrest in his own heart. This is not a rabbit trail, but a divinely planned explanation of what it means to have a servant's heart and mind in the harvest. This is what God engineered in Paul through his distress.

V. 14 There was turmoil and not knowing what to do, but what Paul learned was that even in this confusion of heart, God leads. That's pretty cool.

Vs. 14-16 And what about that open door that Paul had to leave? Even for that brief moment, he saw how Christ used him in the harvest. Although his mind was not at peace, in Christ, the presence of Paul & Co. and their sincerity still attracted some and repelled others. God still used them, but involuntarily. Paul was amazed. With few words and in deep personal unrest, God attracted some to them and caused others to react with repulsion. They were ready to be used, but God didn't need their sufficiency. The Father Himself was drawing and repelling. He was the sufficient one. Paul learned that it didn't all ride on him. He could allow himself to be weak and trust the Father for the harvest. (By the way, Paul came back to Troas later.)

V. 17 This confirmed the truth for Paul against all the accusations (*peddlers of God's Word*). Note that there is a connection of words here with those in 1:12. The power came from God and was proven by their sincerity and their simple message, as they followed Christ in the harvest. Fruit was borne. Their ministry and its fruit were not based on their cunning, their market research, wisdom or strength. They loved Christ, followed Him in the harvest, and God did the rest.

Can God really use us when we're confused and broken? Do we have an appearance to keep up? In a moment, God humbled Paul more than he was already humbled. Paul was already broken, but God made the crack bigger and more fragrance came out. So now Paul himself was amazed and praising God. That's pretty cool.

Psalm 42

So, this is the second time this year you've read Psalm 42. Does it have any different sense for you now, since we're reading Job and 2 Corinthians? In a way, it seems to me that all of the emotions of waiting, hope and suffering roll together through all these books. In a way, it intensifies the message of hope and deliverance.

Vs. 1-2 It is interesting to me that all those who love the Lord cry out for Him the same way. Job longed for God's presence. Moses prayed to see God's face, and David focused his life on wanting to dwell in the Lord's sanctuary.

V. 3 This is probably David writing this, but it was put to music by the sons of Korah. David had been anointed when he was about twelve. So in those years running from Saul, where was God? Later God made a promise to David, but then his own son sought to kill him. How solid was that promise? Where was God?

In Job's case, this wasn't just the mocking of those in the community who knew Job, but his friends stood there accusing him and pointing to God's silence and Job's suffering as proof of his wrong.

V. 4 It isn't that we live in the past; it is that we strengthen our hearts in the Word and stand on the testimony of God's faithfulness as revealed in the Word.

V. 5 Ultimately we need to have our stability in the Lord. Faith that is dependent on others, or a church or props, will wither in the presence of persecution and hard times. David, Job, and Paul all hoped in God.

Vs. 6-8 Something about that storm sweeping over the land struck David with God's power and wisdom. And then David connected it to God's *steadfast love* that had accompanied him during all the hard years. That same power that commanded the might of nature commanded the love that had protected David.

Vs. 9-10 Notice the mention of *bones*. Then check out Job 30:17 and 30. In my Bible they are all on opposite pages, so I can circle each one and connect them with a line. It is interesting that in suffering, God's silence seems like a wound, and adversaries (Job's friends) intensify the pain.

V. 11 As our spirit is alive because of the truth of God, knowing and loving Him, we command our souls to wait and hope. Even Job was certain that his Redeemer lived. We know so much more than Job did.

Proverbs 22:7

Is this saying to stay out of debt or not to get poor? Humanly speaking, I guess this is true, but it is good to know that the Lord is Lord of them all. To me, working in the harvest as disciples makes being rich on earth very irrelevant. And every disciple is a slave to the Lord of all.