

# Job And His Three Friends

Job 2:11-32:1

## **MEMORY VERSE**

JOB 19:25

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth. "

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Black construction paper cut into 2"x 8" strips, white or yellow construction paper cut into 1" x 6" strips, markers, several small pebbles (aquarium pebbles), small 2" twigs, and clear contact paper.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Memory Game**

Have the children sit in a circle. Allow them to tell their name and something special about themselves, such as their favorite animal.

As you go around the circle, each child must say what is special about each person who has already spoken as well as what is special about him or herself.

Keep going around the room until the last person can name all of the special things about everyone in the room. This game will help your class to get to know one another better and develop friendships.

## **LESSON TIME!**

We learned in our previous lesson week that Job was a righteous man who was being tested by Satan. Who said Satan could be so mean to Job? God did. Did Job know that? No. Do we? Yes, because God has recorded this story in the Bible for us. He has control over the events in our lives, whether good or bad, whether intended for evil by Satan or not.

Just like Job, most of the time we don't know the reason for a trial or circumstance in our life, but we can learn to be like Job while we're going through that trial. We can learn from Job to trust in God no matter what happens.

God has recorded for us 38 chapters full of the thoughts of four different men. It is the best that they can come up with to explain what is happening to Job. Job's three friends probably really wanted to help Job, but they were only causing him more pain. Job's three friends were on the outside of the trial looking in. They wanted to be good friends, but there were two things they didn't understand: 1) Job's heart and 2) the reason God was allowing Job this much suffering.

On the outside of this trial looking in, things looked very different from what was actually happening. So people, and especially us grown-ups at times, sometimes have a tendency to "put our 2 cents in." We try to explain something or give advice without knowing the whole story, or being able to see the big picture. That is what Job's friends do in the lesson today. We will also learn that **we can trust God even when our "friends" give us bad advice.**

Today we're going to look at just a few of the things Job's three friends said to him and how he answered them based on what he knew about God. The way this book is written is poetry. Poetry is often called the language of the heart. It creates word pictures for us as these men try to describe God and His ways. And the main point of all these conversations is that we can trust God even when we don't fully understand everything.

It is important to note a couple of things about these three friends of Job. These notes are from men who have studied the book of Job in a lot of detail for a long time.

## ELIPHAZ

Two possible meanings for his name: “God is dispenser,” or “God is fine gold.” He acts as the leading spokesman. He is the “scientist” of the group; his speeches show clearer reasoning and more considerate criticism than those of the other two friends do. He is seen to be noble, sincere and wise. His main arguments are that God is perfectly pure and righteous (Job 4:17) and that man brings trouble on himself (Job 5:7).

## BILDAD

His name means “son of contention.” He is more argumentative than Eliphaz (Job 8:8-10). He charges Job with godlessness (Job 8:13). One of his main contentions is that God never twists justice (Job 8:3).

## ZOPHAR

His name means “hairy or rough.” He speaks very bluntly and he sometimes displays a “holier-than-thou” attitude. He charges Job with boasting (Job 11:26). One of his main contentions is that God knows iniquity when He sees it (Job 11:11).

Eliphaz and Bildad each speak three times, Zophar only twice. Each time Job answers back to their statements, arguments, and accusations. His answers defend his relationship with God and show an understanding of God. These three men argue with Job from the same perspective; it goes something like this, “Suffering is punishment for sin. Job is suffering greatly. Therefore, Job must be a great sinner.” Let’s see what Job has to say about that. Through Job we will learn that we can trust God even though we cannot fully account for our circumstances. **We can trust God even when our “friends” give us bad advice.**

## JOB 18:1-12, 21

**Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:**

"How long till you put an end to words? Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.

Why are we counted as beasts, And regarded as f stupid in your sight?

You who tear yourself in anger, Shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

"The light of the wicked indeed goes out, And the flame of his fire does not shine.  
The light is dark in his tent, And his lamp beside him is put out.

The steps of his strength are shortened, And his own counsel casts him down.

For he is cast into a net by his own feet, And he walks into a snare.

The net takes him by the heel, And a snare lays hold of him.

A noose is hidden for him on the ground, And a trap for him in the road.

Terrors frighten him on every side, And drive him to his feet.

His strength is starved, And destruction is ready at his side.

Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, And this is the place of him who does not know God."

Do you see Bildad's attitude toward Job? Job's speeches before this were to say he was innocent. His friend does not think he is. Sometimes we need more information before we call someone guilty of sin, don't we? In this speech he is giving a lot of dark descriptions of the wicked man's fate. Why is he saying all of this to Job? Is he trying to warn Job of something that will happen to him? The problem with Bildad is not that he is wrong in his descriptions, but that he is warning the wrong man! Let's see what Job says.

JOB 19:1-8, 14-21, 25-27

Then Job answered and said:

"How long will you torment my soul, And break me in pieces with words?

These ten times you have reproached me; You are not ashamed that you have wronged me.

And if indeed I have erred, My error remains with me.

If indeed you exalt yourselves against me, And plead my disgrace against me,

Know then that God has wronged me, And has surrounded me with His net.

"If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard. If I cry aloud, there is no justice.

He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass; And He has set darkness in my paths.  
My relatives have failed, And my close friends have forgotten me.

Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants,  
Count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight.

I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him  
with my mouth.

My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am  
repulsive to the children of my own body.

Even young children despise me; I arise, and they  
speak against me.

All my close friends abhor me, And those whom I  
love have turned against me.

My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, And I  
have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

"Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my  
friends, For the hand of God has struck me!

For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall  
stand at last on the earth;

And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in  
my flesh I shall see God,

Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall  
behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within  
me!

Job appeals to his friends for mercy. He is asking them to see that God is behind this trial, this pain. This poetry is very vivid isn't it? This is as bad as life can get! No one wants to be around him. There is nothing in his life to be happy about. He complains God is wronging him, but doesn't curse God the way Satan wants him to.

He does not understand what is happening, but even not knowing fully, look at his attitude in verses 25-27.

He understands there is a Redeemer that in the end will stand on the earth. He understands that he himself will live again after his death. He goes from the valley of despair to the peak of hope because of his faith in a God that he can't see. His heart yearns for God and trusts God even though he can't fully account for his circumstances.

JOB 20:1-11, 21

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

"Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,  
Because of the turmoil within me.

I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me, And the  
spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.

"Do you not know this of old, Since man was placed  
on earth,

That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the  
joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment?

Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens,  
And his head reaches to the clouds,

Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse; Those  
who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'

He will fly away like a dream, and not be found; Yes,  
he will be chased away like a vision of the night.

The eye that saw him will see him no more, Nor will  
his place behold him anymore.



His children will seek the favor of the poor, And his hands will restore his wealth.

His bones are full of his youthful vigor, But it will lie down with him in the dust.

Nothing is left for him to eat; Therefore his well-being will not last.

This is Zophar's second speech to Job. In his first speech in chapter 11, this friend calls Job a "witless man" and gives him a hard time for "idle talk." Now he does not like Job's words again. He too, talks about the fate of evildoers, as if Job had better repent for his evil doing. How does Job answer?

JOB 21:1-3, 7-15, 17-21

Then Job answered and said:

"Listen carefully to my speech, And let this be your consolation.

Bear with me that I may speak, And after I have spoken, keep mocking.

Why do the wicked live and become old, Yes, become mighty in power?

Their descendants are established with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes.

Their houses are safe from fear, Neither is the rod of God upon them.

Their bull breeds without failure; Their cow calves without miscarriage.

They send forth their little ones like a flock, And their children dance.

They sing to the tambourine and harp, And rejoice to the sound of the flute.

They spend their days in wealth, And in a moment go down to the grave.

Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us, For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.'

Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'

"How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? How often does their destruction come upon them, The sorrows God distributes in His anger?

They are like straw before the wind, And like chaff that a storm carries away.

They say, 'God lays up one's iniquity for his children'; Let Him recompense him, that he may know it.

Let his eyes see his destruction, And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

For what does he care about his household after him, When the number of his months is cut in half?

This is a really famous part of the book of Job. Job uses logic to show that their major argument (all suffering is the punishment of sin) does not hold up. Look at verses 17-21. Job asks, "How often are the wicked judged?" He looks around and sees a lot of people being wicked and not very many of them being judged. This destroys his friend's arguments. He knows from his own circumstances that there must be a deeper meaning for his

suffering. He just doesn't know what that meaning is for a while longer. So Job continues to trust God even though he cannot fully account for his circumstances. Next we see what Eliphaz has to say.

JOB 22:4-5, 21-27

"Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you, And enters into judgment with you?

Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquity without end?

"Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.

Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, And lay up His words in your heart.

If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; You will remove iniquity far from your tents.

Then you will lay your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.

Yes, the Almighty will be your gold And your precious silver;

For then you will have your delight in the Almighty, And lift up your face to God.

You will make your prayer to Him, He will hear you, And you will pay your vows. "

Here is Eliphaz with his third speech. He is accusing Job of evil, even though he doesn't know of any. Then for the second time, urges Job to turn back to God, to repent, to submit to God and be at peace with God. This is hard for Job to hear, because he was living an upright life when this trouble came upon him. He doesn't

understand God through this time, but he knows he doesn't need to repent. Sometimes our friends say things to us we don't agree with, don't they? That is why God wants us to know Him by knowing His word, and by trusting Him even though we can't fully understand our circumstances.

## Helping Friends

Have the children find a partner and pair up. Then have the pairs line up near a wall. Next have all of the children find a spot in front of the wall. Have them face the wall and stand arms-length from it. Their feet should be close together. Next the children should carefully lean forward against the wall so that only their forehead is touching the wall. They must keep their body stiff and straight with their arms crossed. Next, say, "On the count of three, try to stand upright. Remember to keep your body stiff, arms crossed and no bending of the knees." Count to three.

Children will struggle to stand upright without bending at the waist or using their arms. Allow a few seconds for children to attempt this, and then have the pairs choose who would like to try. The partner will help their friend to stand upright. Give them another couple of seconds to try this. Ask the children if it was easier with a friend's help. Next trade spots and have one child lean forward, but this time the partner will only tell their friend, "You will have to do better," "Can't you do it right?" or "If you would only do it this way!" They can be creative. As an alternative activity you can have them try scratching the center of their back and tying their shoe with only one hand.

Have the children sit down and ask them which was the most help; telling about how someone should do better, or actually helping them. In today's lesson we will see Job's friends who are coming to give him "comfort." Unfortunately it really didn't provide much comfort. They really only caused Job misery. Let's look at how Job handled this situation, what it means to really be a friend and how

we can trust God even when our “friends” give us bad advice.

JOB 23:1-12; 24:22-25

Then Job answered and said:

"Even today my complaint is bitter; My hand is listless because of my groaning.

Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat!

I would present my case before Him, And fill my mouth with arguments.

I would know the words which He would answer me, And understand what He would say to me.

Would He contend with me in His great power? No! But He would take note of me.

There the upright could reason with Him, And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

"Look, I go forward, but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him.

But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.

I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

"But God draws the mighty away with His power; He rises up, but no man is sure of life.

He gives them security, and they rely on it; Yet His eyes are on their ways.

They are exalted for a little while, Then they are gone. They are brought low; They are taken out of the way like all others; They dry out like the heads of grain.

"Now if it is not so, who will prove me a liar, And make my speech worth nothing?"

Job wants to find God. He wants to present himself before the Almighty Judge and ask Him questions, present his case of innocence before Him. He says he looks for God without success. Sometimes it can seem as if God isn't hearing our prayers, like He isn't paying attention to our pain. But verse 10 reaffirms Job's trust in the unseen Lord, "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold."

He recognizes that God is overseeing his trial; that He knows what Job is going through. And at the end of chapter 24 Job also reminds himself and his three friends that God knows what He's doing and there is such a thing as divine justice. He knows God means business with His creation and so Job continues to trust God even though he cannot fully account for his circumstances.

Sometimes our friends don't say all the right things. They don't always know the truth of God. Sometimes they don't know the whole story or don't know what God wants them to say.

Sometimes there is no comfort from our friends at all. But we can know where to turn for comfort by remembering Job. He kept looking for God and His answers. **We can trust God even when our “friends” give us bad advice.**

Sometimes we are the “friend” watching someone else go through really hard times. Circumstances that are painful or stressful the Bible calls a trial. We can be the kind of friend that Job was, pointing our friend to a Redeemer, a righteous Judge, the One who knows all and sees all. We can remind our friends and ourselves too to trust God even when we can’t fully account for our circumstances.

## **Sticks and Stones Bookmark**

To be a good friend we need to be careful about what we say. Job’s friends accused him of things that weren’t really true. By doing that it really didn’t help him very much. This bookmark will help us to remember that we need to watch what we say to others. You will need black construction paper cut into 2” x 8” strips, white or yellow construction paper cut into 1”x 6” strips, markers, several small pebbles (aquarium pebbles), small 2” twigs, and clear contact paper.

Use a marker to write Psalm 141:3 on the smaller of the two strips. (Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. –Psalm 141:3).

Using glue stick paste the smaller strip centered in the larger strip. Next glue the twigs and the pebbles to the bookmark. Then cover the bookmark with clear contact paper over the front and the back. Trim with scissors if necessary.

## PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord even in difficult times. And to continue to trust in Him no matter what our “friends” say. We just need to keep focused on Jesus all of the time! If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.