

## How to Prepare for and Endure Suffering and Pain

### The Book of Job

“You are lying in a hospital bed, kept alive artificially by tubes of plastic spilling from your arm and nose. A killer tornado has destroyed everything you own. All you’ve worked for—your house, car, savings account—has disappeared forever. Your family decimated, you have no visitors except some rather cranky neighbors. You are barely hanging on to life.” Philip Yancey, *Where is God When It Hurts? A Comforting, Healing Guide For Coping With Hard Times* (Zondervan), 96.

**1. Let’s identify the problem: Is God Reliable? Can I trust Him?**

(Psalm 1, 73; Job 21:7; Jeremiah 12:1-4)

**2. Seek to grow in your “Fear of the Lord.”**

(Job 1:1-5, 8; 2:3; Job 28; Psalm 1, 73; Proverbs 1:1-7)

**3. Recognize the \_\_\_\_\_.**

(Job 1:6-2:10; Ephesians 6:10-12; Revelation 12:10)

Satan: People are righteous because they believe God will make them prosperous. Job is a pretender—He worships God because God gives him stuff.

**4. Listen with discernment to the comfort/advice of friends.**

(Job 3-37; See Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-5)

Friends: Suffering is due to personal sin. NOTE: This can be true, but isn’t necessarily true.

Job: He insists on his innocence, and demands an immediate explanation from God.

Elihu: Job was sinning (in an attitude of pride) because he was suffering. Elihu put his finger on Job’s wrong attitude of complaining against God (33:13; 34:17) and suggested that Job humble himself before God (33:27; 36:21; 37:24), who is sovereign and just.

**5. \_\_\_\_\_ yourself \_\_\_\_\_.**

(Job 38-42)

**Principle**: The way to deal with suffering is \_\_\_\_\_.

## **The Problem of Evil:** If God is all-powerful and all-loving, how can there be evil in the world?

1. **Evidence for the Existence of God:** We find “the cosmological, teleological, and axiological arguments for the existence of God; that the God described by those arguments is the God of the Bible; that the Bible is a trustworthy document both in terms of its manuscript authority, authorship, and content; that God reveals Himself to humans through prophecies which are verified by miracles; that the resurrection of Jesus was an actual historical event which authenticated Jesus’ claim of divinity, His message of salvation, and His ability to reveal the will of God.” Powell, *Christian Apologetics*, 345.
2. **Role of Human Freedom:** Humans were created by an all-knowing, all-powering, and all-benevolent God as free moral agents. Each human has the ability to choose evil as well as good, with genuine punishment for disobedience. God may have created the “potential” for evil, but humans made it “actual.” I understand this as “compatibilistic freedom” which understands freedom in a sense not inconsistent with God having rendered certain what is to happen.
3. **Definition of Good and Evil:** Good is to be defined in relationship to the will and being of God, that is, good glorifies Him, fulfills His will, and conforms to His nature. See Romans 8:28-29. We are not the best judges of good and evil, God is. He has superior knowledge and wisdom. Further, we need to include the dimension of time and recognize that some experience evil for a short term, but in the long run a much greater good will be experienced. See Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:6-7.

### **Day by Day in the Word**

“Day by Day in the Word” is a tool we use to help us in the process of becoming more and more like Jesus and ultimately to bring glory to God. The biblical principle is: The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring about Christlikeness.

#### **Monday-Tuesday**

- Read the first of God’s two speeches in Job 38:1-40:2 and Job’s response in Job 40:3-5.
- As background, identify what Job wanted in relationship to God: Job 9:33; 13:22; 16:19-20; 31:55. Why is it important that God’s name, LORD, was used here?
- What characteristics of God do you discover? How would you describe Job’s response? What is Job learning about God and how does this change his thinking?
- What have you learned from this and how does the Lord want you to respond to His truth? Share this with one other person.

#### **Wednesday-Thursday**

- Read the second of God’s two speeches in Job 40:6-41:34 and Job’s response in Job 42:1-6.
- What characteristics of God do you discover? How would you describe Job’s response? What is Job learning about God and how does this change his thinking?
- What have you learned from this and how does the Lord want you to respond to His truth? Share this with one other person.

#### **Friday-Saturday**

- What do you learn from the following verses that will help you deal with present suffering? See Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:6-7.
- What do you find out about Christ and suffering from the following verses? Hebrews 12:2; 11:26; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Peter 5:1, 10. What principles can you apply to your life today?