

Job: Learning to Ride Out the Storm

A Six-Session Study for Small Groups

Discussion Guide by

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Written in conjunction with sermon series taught by
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Understanding this Guide

This study guide is based off of our Sunday morning sermon series, *Job: Learning to Ride out the Storm*, preached at Grace Community Church in Clarksville, Tenn. (<http://www.gcomchurch.com>) by Ron Edmondson and Chad Rowland.

If you're not currently in a small group, you can still go through this guide, but your experience will be incredibly bland. My first suggestion for you is to find a group of people to journey with you for these 6 weeks. Whether that's a co-worker, a neighbor, your cousin, or a friend from church...find somebody that's willing to meet with you, be open and honest, and encourage you to be all God's calling you to be.

If you're going through this guide as a small group, don't feel pressured to answer every question. The goal of your small group is to take steps of faith together...not to necessarily answer every question.

As you're working through this guide, you'll find a 6-week reading plan to make your way through the book of Job.

Be open as God's dealing with your heart. He's willing to write a new story on your heart...if you're willing to follow Him.

Ben Reed
Community Groups Pastor
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Daily Reading

Day 1 – Job 1

Day 22 – Job 22

Day 2 – Job 2

Day 23 – Job 23

Day 3 – Job 3

Day 24 – Job 24

Day 4 – Job 4

Day 25 – Job 25

Day 5 – Job 5

Day 26 – Job 26

Day 6 – Job 6

Day 27 – Job 27

Day 7 – Job 7

Day 28 – Job 28

Day 8 – Job 8

Day 29 – Job 29

Day 9 – Job 9

Day 30 – Job 30

Day 10 – Job 10

Day 31 – Job 31

Day 11 – Job 11

Day 32 – Job 32

Day 12 – Job 12

Day 33 – Job 33

Day 13 – Job 13

Day 34 – Job 34

Day 14 – Job 14

Day 35 – Job 35

Day 15 – Job 15

Day 36 – Job 36

Day 16 – Job 16

Day 37 – Job 37

Day 17 – Job 17

Day 38 – Job 38

Day 18 – Job 18

Day 39 – Job 39

Day 19 – Job 19

Day 40 – Job 40

Day 20 – Job 20

Day 41 – Job 41

Day 21 – Job 21

Day 42 – Job 42

Helpful Hints for Small Group Leaders

1. Don't do it all by yourself. You can look at this as delegating, but there's a bigger principle at work here: God has gifted others in your group. When you notice their unique gifts, and allow them to use them, you're helping to develop others. Not to mention that in the process, you're helping to keep yourself from being burned out!
2. Take off the mask. Don't try to be someone you're not. Being open and honest encourages openness and honesty among your group. But if you consistently come across as the "perfect" Christian, your group members will feel intimidated, and have a tendency to close themselves off to the group.
3. Pray for your group. And not just a blanket, "God bless my group," prayer. Pray for the group members by name. Ask God to work in their heart throughout the week.
4. Be okay with silence. Thirty seconds of silence may feel like an eternity, but giving that awkward pause allows others in the room time to think, process, and say what they need to say. If you are the first to always throw the "right" answer in, and then you quickly move to the next question, discussion will be stifled. If you want discussion to flourish, don't be the first to jump in the discussion. Allow times of silence.
5. Don't call people out to read the Bible or pray. You may feel comfortable with it, but it may be incredibly nerve-wracking for others. And reading/praying out loud isn't necessarily a mark of spiritual maturity. Putting people on the spot is a great way to encourage them to ***not*** come back next week.
6. Include food! At the very minimum, put out some snacks and drinks. You may want to coordinate with your group, and have a couple of people bring a meal each week. But whatever your group decides, having some sort of food and drink available is a must.

7. Consider a get-together immediately following this book. Maybe your group can get together for game night. Or go out to eat. Or have a potluck. Do something fun together to celebrate what God's done.
8. Look for ways to serve your community throughout this study and into the future. Offering creative ways to serve others can help your group grow in ways you can never imagine.

For a copy of the biblical commentary that was put together for small group leaders at Grace Community Church, please email groups@gcomchurch.com.

Small Group Discussion Guide

***Week 1: Struggles are not always the result
of personal sin.***

Job 1-2

Small group discussion:

Take a few minutes to introduce yourself to the group, and to review the group guidelines.

What expectations do you have as you begin this group?

Bottom Line:

Struggles are not always the result of personal sin.

1. Job went through some pretty intense temptation. Have you ever experienced this kind of temptation in your life? Have you ever blamed God of doing wrong, or wanted to? What were the circumstances? Did you pass or fail the test?

2. Based on Job 2, why is Job subjected to the torment that comes on him? Is this a result of his sin?

3. Why has God singled him out to Satan? In light of this, is his torment a punishment or an honor?

4. When we go through bad times, we have a tendency to think, "This is all about me..." Should we fight against this tendency? How might we go about that?

5. Did Job ever know in his lifetime what caused all this to come upon him? Will we always understand why we suffer?

6. In 1st Peter 1:6-7, Peter writes:

In this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Do you believe that trials prove your faith to be real? How do they do that? Can faith be proved genuine without trials?

7. How did Paul prove his own faith was genuine? (hint: see 2 Corinthians 11:23-27)

8. If you have failed the test at some point in your life, is it an unforgivable sin?

9. What do you need to do about this? What can you be confident will happen?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.

***Week 2: Pain can be the greatest test
for a marriage***

Job 2:9

Small group discussion:

If you've got some new folks, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves again, and to review the group guidelines.

Are you married? Dating? How long have you been together? What's one thing you enjoy doing together as a couple?

If you're single, what hobbies do you have? Do you desire that your future spouse enjoy that hobby, too?

Bottom Line:

Pain can be the greatest test for a marriage.

As we saw in Job 1, Job's life has fallen apart. He's lost everything. In one fell swoop, all that he knows and loves has been taken away, and he's left with only his wife.

But at the end of chapter 1, we see Job's response to this catastrophe:
" The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
 may the name of the LORD be praised."

Read Job 2

At the beginning of chapter 2, we again see Satan afflicting Job, but this time, he's attacking Job's physical body. Job is left alone to scrape his wounds with broken pottery.

1. Has "life" ever happened, and you didn't think there was any way it could get worse...then it does get worse? Who was there to support you during that time?

2. Do you agree that we tend to take out our frustrations on those who are closest to us? Why do we do that when those are the people we love?

3. How does pain make us want to blame someone? Does blaming someone else (whether they deserve it or not) help the situation? What should we remember to tell ourselves if someone else has contributed to our pain?

4. Have you ever blamed God for something bad that happened? Is it ever right to blame God?

5. Instead of choosing to work through the pain, and grow through it, Job's wife simply wanted the pain to be over. When have you been in such pain that you just wanted it to be over...immediately...whatever it took?

6. According to Ephesians 5:33, what is a husband's greatest need? What is a wife's greatest need? Do you think this would be even truer during a time of stress, trial or pain?

7. Society's plan for marriage is based on a 50/50 performance relationship. Acceptance is based on performance—"You do your part, and I'll do mine." What does God want us to accept each other based on? How is that challenged during pain?

8. A failure to grasp God's perspective together in problems will result in isolation. When you move through periods of pain and trial, how can you do so without rejecting or withdrawing from your mate?

9. Opposites usually attract. If you respond to needs, stress, pain, and problems differently than your spouse, how does that add pressure to the situation? How can you show each other grace and accept his/her personality style as a gift from God instead of a project to change?

10. How has individual pain and struggle affected your marriage?

Your closest companion, the one you trust, can lead you astray. If you are not married, how should this truth affect your search for the right mate?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.

***Week 3: Choosing the right friends affects more
than your social life***

Job 2:11-12:11

Small group discussion:

Who was your best friend growing up? Are you still close with him or her?

What are some qualities of a “good” friend?

Bottom Line:

Choosing the right friends affects more than your social life.

1. Read Job 2:11-2:13

Have you ever just simply sat with someone while they were suffering? Did you see any benefit to that? Did they?

2. Have you ever felt speechless? Like you didn't know what to say to someone who was suffering? Did you try to muster up some wisdom anyway? How did that go?

3. Throughout these chapters, Job continues to assert his innocence. And his friends continue to assert his guilt. Were his friends correct? Have you ever had someone give you advice that you felt was completely off base? How did you respond?

4. David had a friend who called him to the carpet. After David's incident with Bathsheba, Nathan pointed out David's sin...and David was cut to the core. Have you ever had a friend point out a sin in your life? What was your response?

5. I wonder at what point Job realized that this tragedy wasn't going to be over very quickly. That he was going to have to settle in for a long period of suffering. Because it's one thing to experience a sudden, tragic loss...and another to realize that this suffering will be prolonged. Do you believe that there's a way to find joy in suffering? In light of your past difficulties, have you found that to be true? (reference: Job 5:17)

6. Do you have any friends who will stick with you through thick and thin? Good and bad? Who's *really* with you? Maybe not beside you right now...but with you?

7. If you had friends who truly had your best interest at heart, who encouraged you, and longed to see you grow closer to God...would that make life a little easier to navigate? What's stopping you from seeking those types of friendships out?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.

Week 4: God is in control

Job 13-14

Small group discussion:

Do you know somebody that's a "control freak?" Is that person *you*?

How does it make you feel when you "lose control" of a situation?

Bottom Line:

God is in control.

1. Read James 1:2-4 and 1:13. What's the difference between a trial and a temptation? How can a trial reveal what we have ignored in the past?

2. How can trials or problems be good for us?

3. Besides trials and temptations what are some other sources of problems or pain in people's lives?

4. We all (maybe) agree God is the source of our blessings; but is God in control even when something bad happens?

5. If God is in control, where does free will come into play? And why does God let evil people have free will? Why doesn't he stop hunger, child abuse, and other injustices?

6. Evil people get away with hurting others all the time. Certainly God can't consider that fair. Do you think God is in control of justice? Or is that something that we need to take into our own hands?

7. How can God use the evil that happens in the world for his purpose?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.

Week 5: It's okay to question God

Job 29

Small group discussion:

If you could ask God one question right now, what would it be?

Bottom Line:

It's okay to question God.

1. When Job looked at his life in Chapter 29:1-6, he wished things were like they were in the past, when he felt God's presence and when things were easy (his steps were "bathed in butter," v.6). When you are in a storm, how does looking back both help and hurt?
2. When we have a great loss, is it natural to question God? Do you think that's okay? Have you ever been told otherwise?
3. Read Matthew 11:1-11 and discuss how Jesus **responds** to his questioner. Does Jesus answer his questions?
4. Jesus gave a warning that people could be offended by Him in Matthew 11:6. The Greek word for offend means "to put a snare or stumbling block in the way." Jesus knew that his way of doing things (not freeing John; not doing whatever we expect; not preventing our pain) would be a stumbling block to us. How can the enemy snare us into being offended by God?

5. In Matthew 26:33-35, Peter is confident that he won't be offended by Jesus even when Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him. In the KJV it reads, "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." That's the same Greek word used here. Have you ever been offended by God?

6. Right before Peter denied Jesus, in Matthew 26:31 Jesus predicted that all of the disciples would be offended by him that night. It had to be unimaginable to them that their Savior would be dying on a cross at the hands of a corrupt government. This was definitely not turning out as they expected. They would need an eternal perspective to see the good in this. When did they get this eternal perspective? Did they stay offended?

7. The disciples returned to God and didn't stay offended, but sometimes Christians don't realize this is part of spiritual battle and they can be angry at God for years! Questioning God is not the problem, but stumbling, falling away, and staying away are. What happens to our faith when we remain offended at God? (Read Matthew 13:54-58 and John 6:60-66 and discuss these people who *remained* offended.

8. How can we strengthen our faith during times of pain, hardship or questioning?

9. Reading Romans 10:17, what does this verse say faith comes from? How would it change your thinking to know the word 'hearing' in this verse doesn't just mean 'listening' but has the connotation of a courtroom 'hearing'?

When a judge sits for a hearing, he is listening with the intent to make a decision. Every time there is a hearing, a decision is made. That's the way the word is used here in Romans. For faith to come from 'hearing' it must include an active decision to believe the Word.

How can you believe the Word over your feelings, questions, pain, and offense?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.

***Week 6: God's answer to the struggles of
the world is...God***

Job 38-42

Small group discussion:

If you could go back in time, what would you tell your younger self? Is there something you'd tell him/her *not* to do? Something they *need* to do?

Bottom Line:

God's answer to the struggles of the world is...God.

1. After Job is afflicted with boils, he speaks about his grief in despair in Chapter 3. In verse 25 he says, "What I feared has come upon me. What I dreaded has happened to me." What is the thing that you dread most?

How would the struggles and perseverance of Job help you if this thing were to actually happen to you?

2. Nowhere does God rebuke Job for being angry with Him or saying the truth about his anger, confusion, and bitterness towards God. The Lord instructed him and taught him his error in thinking that God was being unjust. But He does not rebuke him for his highly emotional response towards Him.

Have you ever been angry at God, but concealed it from everyone around you, including God? Are you encouraged that God does not condemn Job for speaking honestly about how he feels?

Why is it important to be frank and honest with God when you go through periods of doubt or anger?

3. In Chapter 38, the Lord asks Job a series of questions that illustrate His care in creating and maintaining the universe. David writes in Psalm 8:3-4:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

How does Psalm 8 reinforce Job 38? How would you answer David's question, "what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Looking at Job 38, how do you see God's eternal power and divine nature being expressed in creation?

When was the last time you considered the heavens, laying on your back to look at and consider the moon and the stars and God's intricate creation?

4. In Job 38:41, God speaks to Job about His care for the ravens. "Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?" Jesus also speaks about this in Luke 12:24: "Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!"

How does Jesus' message here compare to God's message to Job? Are you encouraged by these verses, or do you have trouble believing them? Do you find it difficult to trust that God actually cares for you?

5. God talks to Job about how He purposefully channels the rain to get to deserts not inhabited by man in order to satisfy the animals and plants there. This is a kind of reckless creation of beauty; beauty that was not designed just to be seen by man.

Have you seen other displays of God's love for beauty in His creation? What examples of His love for beauty exist in parts of the world that that have not been seen by man until recent times?

6. In Chapter 40:8, God speaks and says, "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" How was Job justifying himself by condemning God?

You have heard people say things like, "I won't believe in a God who lets innocent children suffer." In light of the Book of Job, how would you respond to this?

7. In Chapter 42:7, the Lord speaks to Eliphaz and says, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

What did Eliphaz and his friends say about God that was wrong? What did Job say that was right?

8. In Chapter 42:8, the Lord tells Eliphaz and his friends to sacrifice a burnt offering for themselves. He goes on to say, "My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly."

Do you think Job had a hard time offering this prayer? Do you have someone who has hurt you so badly that you are having trouble forgiving them?

Do you think it is significant that the Lord made Job prosperous again *after* he prayed for his friends? (see Job 42:10)

9. The account of the destruction of all of Job's property and children begins with the words, "One day...." Ephesians 6 speaks of a "day of evil" that can come upon you with no more warning than Job had of his sudden trials. The passage in Ephesians 6:10-13 says:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Does this passage encourage us to put on the full armor of God so that IF the day of evil comes, or WHEN the day of evil comes?

How did Job manage to stand when he struggled with "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"?

10. In what way has your study of the Book of Job made your faith stronger?

Prayer

How can the group partner with you, and help share your burdens? Write down others requests so you can keep up with them, and be reminded to pray for them throughout the week.