

Understanding the Ways of the Lord - 1

What Is The Meaning of Trouble?

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Job and His Trouble

Do you realize that trouble occurs everywhere with everybody in this world? "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). How many, many times I find myself just letting those words go through my mind to help me understand and keep in mind the truth. Man is born unto trouble. He is going to have it. Trouble belongs to living in this world ever since the fall of man.

Those of us who have the Bible in our minds can remember how, following the sin of Adam, came the curse when God said unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." And truly women have suffered in all the history all over the world. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." And then to Adam He said, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it." This is also true. Living in this world is not easy. There is trouble, even death itself. "It is appointed unto man once to die." All men have trouble, good men and bad men.

The Gospel of Christ promises rest. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." When a person believes and is saved, he can be assured of one thing, God will give him rest in Christ Jesus. The Lord said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, (which is a big word for trouble) but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). A Christian can look forward to being delivered from trouble. In this world he will have trouble, because all men have it. But even while he is in trouble, he can have peace, because in Christ Jesus there is deliverance. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now peace, which is an inward quietness; is related to understanding. The better you understand, the more you can have peace. The less you understand, the less likely you are to have peace. This does not mean that the clever man, the smart man, is going to have peace. Peace does not depend upon cleverness or strength. Peace depends upon intelligent faith in the living God according to His Word. In this world everyone will have trouble. But this world is not intended to be man's final home. He is going to pass through it. As long as a person has only his own natural mind to live by he will have no peace. "There is no peace," saith the Lord, "unto the wicked." This refers to all men in themselves, because believe me, everybody has sinned. These words are found repeated in the prophecy of Isaiah.

A person is reconciled to God by believing in Christ and this is something I do not by myself. I do not earn it. It is a gift. By believing in Christ I am saved, born again; but my mind needs to be renewed. In my own case, I had lived to manhood in unbelief. When I became a Christian, I had a problem. I had a mind all geared to looking at this world from a natural point of view, and that needed to be renewed. The fact is the mind of a Christian passes through stages. When he is a child, growing up and living in his home he has a natural mind. When he becomes a believer in Christ, his mind continues to be the natural

mind he had developed in the course of his natural life. Thus as a Christian, he will still be in a carnal state. His heart may be given over to God, while his mind is still related to this world. When he has the mind of the natural man with a heart that belongs to God he is known as a carnal Christian. It is then the work of God through the Holy Spirit to renew his mind. When the mind is changed to where he thinks as he believes, it becomes a spiritual mind. Thus we read in Ephesians 4:23, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Reconciliation with God is immediate. It can happen any time. A man needs to turn to God where he is. He can be saved! "There's life for a look at the crucified One: There's life at this moment for thee." Renewal, i.e., the changing of his mind from the natural to the spiritual, wherein he will have peace, involves understanding. He needs to understand what God's promises actually mean in daily living and that takes time. He has to learn it.

It took time for you to learn your language. Even if you were a grown person when you came into this country, and had a different mother tongue, it would take you a while to learn English. Well, if it would take you a while to learn English, and take you a while to learn German, and take you a while to learn Spanish, it is not surprising that it will take you a while to learn the Bible. This is what you are doing when you are learning to understand God's ways according to the Scriptures. Understanding requires answers to certain basic questions. There are two questions that confront anyone trying to understand. *What is the meaning of trouble?* When a man is born into the world, he has trouble. About the first thing he did when he was born into this world was to cry. Why did he cry? Because it hurt him to breathe, and he never stops hurting as long as he lives. How can this be understood? What is the meaning of trouble? The other question that must be answered, *what is the greatest good?* There are two books in the Bible that deal with these two questions. Job deals with the meaning of trouble and Ecclesiastes deals with what is the greatest good.

Let us turn first to the book of Job. This book is written largely in the form of a debate. The debate is carried on between Job and several other men, who discuss the situation in which Job finds himself. That situation is dramatically presented in a simple story in chapters 1-2 and 42. As it is written, it can be seen from two points of view. From the point of view of the man that was in it, Job was a righteous man who worshipped God and prospered. This was to be expected because he was a good man. Suddenly he lost all that he had, his possessions, his family, his health. He could not understand why. Job believed in God, so he believed God would be fair. He believed God was a just God, and that God would be merciful. He would do the right thing. So the question loomed in Job's consciousness: Why would a just God afflict a good man? This from Job's point of view was an unanswerable question and Job was perplexed with it.

This story can also be seen in the perspective of chapters 1-2 and 42, which Job did not know. But with these chapters in mind, it is possible to see the whole development in this story from God's point of view. Job's experience had more significance than he realized. There was more meaning to what happened to Job, than Job himself ever knew. This is important. Each individual believer is actually a case in point with Almighty God. As I live and move and have my being as a Christian, everything about me, the good, the bad, the indifferent, has more significance than I will ever know. It seems obvious that Job was a casualty in the war that is going on in Heaven between God and Satan. That war is going on right now, and it involves every Christian. As a believer in Christ, as you live and trust in God, you would be wise to be conscious of the fact that what is happening to you down here right now is far more important in time and eternity than you will ever know.

In the book of Luke, in chapter 22, when the Lord Jesus was talking to His disciples and Peter had just said that he would never forsake Him, it is written how the Lord told Peter: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." What that actually means is that Satan had asked God to give him a chance to shake Peter down to expose the truth about him. Satan was saying to God that Simon Peter was just a "phony," that he wouldn't stand up. And if he were allowed to shake Peter down, he could show him to be unreliable. Then the Lord went on to say, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy

faith fail not." Peter would have the trouble, and he would have the shaking and he would have the sifting, but the Lord was on his side. What a wonderful thing it is for the Christian to remember that right now in the presence of God he has the living Lord on his side. Are you having trouble? Is it in your home? Is it right in your kitchen? Is it in your office? Is it with the people you work with? Is it among your neighbors? Is it with your own relatives? Or probably your own loved ones? Are you having trouble right in your family? As surely as you are a believer in Christ I can tell you something right now; you have a Savior that is pleading in glory. He is pleading; He is pleading for you. "We have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

When I, as a believer in Christ, study Job, I can have in mind that just as Job was involved in what happened to him, just so I am involved in what happens to me. The story of Job begins in a conflict between Satan and God. As Satan appears in the presence of God, God calls Satan's attention to Job. Job is pictured as a godly, righteous man. Job was a good man, a righteous man, who worshipped God and whom God blessed. When Satan comes into the presence of God he seems to insinuate to God that God's purpose in creating the world has actually failed because He has no one trusting in Him. God said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Then Satan replies to God, "No wonder Job is believing in you, you bless him so much. His faith is not genuine. He is what would be called in the missionary circles "a rice Christian." "As long as you give him rice, he will come to you. As long as you bless him, he will worship you. Why not? You are paying him off. Your providence makes him rich." Then Satan insinuates saying, "Let me take away his prosperity and his real attitude will show up." God says to him he has permission to take all Job's possessions, even his family. This Satan does, but Job sins not with his lips. And then God says to Satan, "Now what do you say? Look at him." And Satan says "Well, you allowed me to take his things, but you didn't let me touch him. He is still untouched. He has his health." Then God says "You have permission to take his health but do not touch his life." It can be of some comfort to note that Satan is allowed to harm the believer only so far.

As you read this you may be conscious of trouble you have. Do you realize there is a limit placed on that trouble? Do you know that Almighty God will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able? Even so you may say to me, "Well, I don't see how I can stand it." Maybe you don't, but God does. And He is not going to let you get hurt more than you can take (I Corinthians 10:13).

In Job's case God said to Satan; "You can touch his body, you can take away his health, but save his life. Don't touch his soul." Then we read in Job 2:7-8 that Job was smitten with sore boils, most painful. In one place in this book, he said he was covered with these sores from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. There was not an inch of his body that was not blackened and cracked open because of this infection that was in him. Job became an outcast. It is possible his neighbors thought he had some communicable disease. They shunned him, they turned away from him. You will remember that by now this man had lost everything he had. He had been a rich man but now had lost all his possessions. He had been a man with a large family, but all his children had been wiped out. Now without any money and without any family to help him, he was smitten with a disease that made him loathsome to look upon, and a misery to have around. People feared they might be infected. In those times they had not so much government supervision of public health, but they had a certain practical procedure that when they found anyone with a communicable disease they would isolate that person. He had to go out from the country, to go out of the town. When anyone might come near him, he had to raise up his hands and cry out "Unclean, unclean. Stay away from me, I've got something. You might catch it."

Under these conditions, Job's wife, in her natural reaction, told Job to curse God and die. "You've had enough. Why don't you just turn your back on the whole thing and just give up?" And then Job spoke these remarkable words: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And so at the end of chapter 2 are recorded these words, "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

The story continues and tells about three friends who came to see Job. As you read the book, you

could wonder why they should be called friends since they accuse him of being responsible for this trouble. But they were friends; they came and talked. They didn't ignore him, they came to mourn and to comfort him. "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not." He was so changed in appearance. He must have been awful to look upon. They lifted up their voice and wept. They "rent everyone his mantle," which was in those days a procedure, a gesture, that indicated great sorrow. They sprinkled dust upon their heads and looked toward Heaven. "So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him" (Job 2:13). And I must confess when I read that, I say to myself those were wise men. What could they say? Not one of them knew what Job was suffering, not one of them could say an adequate word. They just sat there and grieved with him for they saw that his grief was very great.

It would be helpful to read chapter 3 aloud to hear the way in which Job evaluates this. You might think in your own mind this lament is something maybe he ought not have uttered. But you should note there is no record that God held this against him. One could think that if a man were hurt and he said "Ouch!" that he would not be doing wrong. This chapter is one long prolonged "Ouch!" on Job's part. He is getting hurt. "After this, opened Job his mouth and cursed his day. And Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months" (Job 3:1-6).

This has a poetic way of saying out loud, "I wish I had never been born. I'm sorry that that day ever occurred when I was born." He went on to say "Lo, let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? Or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counselors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest" (Job 3:7-17). He hurt so badly. He was in such misery that he wished to Almighty God he had never been born and now he wished he were dead, because after all if he had been dead, "there the wicked cease from troubling and there the weary be at rest." "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures. . . . Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in" (Job 3:20-23). Job asked, "Why should I live when I have got all this trouble?" "For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came" (Job 3:24-26). Can you understand what Job is saying? "I wasn't careless. I wasn't neglectful. I really tried my very best to do the right thing. I tried to avoid everything that's wrong. I was afraid of trouble. I was afraid of distress and in spite of everything I did this thing came upon me." This is his great lament and it amounts very simply to one idea: "I wish I had never been born."

From a human point of view and in psychological terms this is the principle of withdrawal. The afflicted person says "it is just so bad I can't stand it." This is a common reaction. People have trouble, and don't want to think about it. They turn away from facing their trouble with that kind of an idea. This is the way Job felt. And by the way, we should remember this is never held against Job. In other words, if you should be in trouble so that you are in sorrow and grief until you feel real badly and even wish to God you

were dead, this would not necessarily hurt you in God's sight. This would just mean that you are a normal human being and you are hurting real badly. But it would leave you with a problem: "Why should I hurt like this?" This is what the book of Job is about, and this is what we shall be thinking about in the Lord as we proceed to study the book of Job.

Chapter 1 Job 1-3 **Questions for Study and Research**

1. What reputation did Job have in the sight of God?
2. What is revealed about the spiritual world in chapters 1 and 2?
3. In comparing the spiritual world with the natural world, which seems the more important? n.b. Matthew 16:26. How is this seen in Chapters 1 and 2?
4. What is revealed about Satan in Chapters 1 and 2?
5. Why is the walk of a believer so important?
6. Interpret Job 1:21.
7. Show the connection between what is said about Satan in Revelation 12:10 and what is recorded in Job 1-2.
8. Why is suffering such a problem to a believing person?
9. Do you think the Bible teaches that if a person really trusts God he will have no suffering?
10. Does the Bible teach that prosperity and peace in this world is a sure sign of the blessing of God?

Job and His Friends

Can you realize how natural it is to think that the reason anyone has trouble is that he has sinned and is being punished? The opening chapters of the book of Job describe the situation in which Job is suffering distress and raises the classic question for all men: What is the meaning of trouble, and why should a good man suffer such a great distress?

Understanding anything is by recognizing the way things happened leading up to that event. You ask why, what really brought that to pass and what's next? If any event is unpleasant or undesirable, it's natural to seek the cause in order to change it if possible. We find it easy to believe that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." We accept the idea that seed time and harvest shall prevail everywhere. Thus we are ready to think that whatever happens is the result of something else.

Job could not understand his calamity. He laments that he is alive, and just wishes he weren't here: "I wish I were dead." This is the natural withdrawal attitude, and it is found among all men. To have the feeling: "I just can't stand it; I just wish I weren't here; I wish I could get out of this thing; I wish I were dead. If I weren't living, I wouldn't have this trouble;" is normal, natural for any human being. The story as it is written shows that Almighty God never held this against Job. Job's expression of all this in chapter 3 is actually a poetic way of saying "Ouch! It hurts! I'm having trouble and I don't know why. I wish I weren't here."

The story goes on to tell that three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, came to share Job's misery, to share his perplexity, and try to offer an explanation for what was going on. After Job had lamented and expressed himself as being sorry he was alive, Eliphaz spoke up. Eliphaz pointed out that God is just: that means He is fair. God is going to do what is right. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and so it stands to reason that is the way it is happening. The second idea Eliphaz expressed was that wicked-

ness brings evil consequences. The man that sows his oats will reap his wild oats. The man who sows the wind, will reap the whirlwind. Wickedness brings evil consequences. Then Eliphaz went on to say "You are having trouble: you must have done something; and God's chastening in letting you have this trouble is actually God's goodness in correcting you. This is going to do you good. You must have sinned to bring this on you."

This whole line of thought is based on the principle of the law of the harvest: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Linked with it is another idea that sounds so right, and yet is not true. The favor of God means that you will have material benefits: "If God is blessing a man, he will be rich and healthy, and he will be prominent. This has just one fault, it is not true! The trouble that came upon Job had nothing to do with anything Job had done. Job knew the integrity of his own heart, and when Eliphaz told him he must have done something wrong to cause this trouble, Job's answer was "No, I didn't." Job goes on to say to Eliphaz. "When you were talking to me, and wanting to help me, you should have pitied me not blamed me. All I have gotten from you is forcible words. You talk strong but you prove nothing."

Job shows more insight into the grace of God than did Eliphaz. In chapter 7:20-21 Job says, "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." Job knew enough about God to know that God forgives sin. Eliphaz has approached the problem on the basis of the law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But Job knows something in his own soul about the Grace of God: God forgives a man who confesses his sin.

After this Bildad speaks: "How long are you going to evade the truth? Why don't you admit it? You know that God is just and you know the hypocrite's hope shall perish. Why don't you get wise to yourself and confess?" He takes the view that is expressed by Eliphaz and assumes that Job is stubborn. He implies, if Job were not so stubborn he would break down and admit his sin and confess. Job answers Bildad in chapters 9 and 10. "I know what you are saying is true. God is just and God is fair." Then he asks how any man could be just before God: "Who can stand before God and clear himself? God is so far above me I wouldn't dare even if I were doing the right thing. I wouldn't talk back to God. And all of this is so depressing. I don't have any chance at all." Job knows that no man in the flesh can stand before God on the basis of his virtue. No man is that good. Telling Job to do right in his own strength because of his own virtue is actually foolish; it is beside the point because no man could be that good.

When Job has finished answering Bildad, Zophar speaks rather sarcastically: "You are just full of talk. You are arrogant. You know quite well that God will do righteously. Now Job, you know that whatever happens to you, you probably deserve it." In all of Zophar's talk there was really nothing new. He simply stubbornly insinuated Job must be at fault. God cannot do wrong. The fact that God allowed trouble to come to Job would indicate Job deserved it.

In chapters 12-14 Job gives an extended answer. He says in effect: "You seem to know it all. But you're no help to me. I am the one that's hurting and when you're all through talking, I'm still hurting. If you would just hush, you'd be smart. I am trusting God but I wish He would tell me what He has against me." He goes on to say: "God is so great and man is so small, this is an uneven contest. I just wish God would end it." Job realizes that nothing has been added to his understanding by these three friends. They have made a false accusation. They said it was his fault, but it wasn't. The reader of the book of Job knows that Job is right because of the first two chapters. But Job did not know what is recorded in the first two chapters. He had no such assurance that he was right. He had only the integrity of his own heart and his own faith before God, but he knew that what they were saying was not true.

In his second speech, Eliphaz dwells on the deceitfulness of a wicked heart: Man is not to be trusted. When Job speaks again he recalls how suddenly calamity had come apart from anything he did, and

admits he cannot understand and is not strong enough to endure.

When Bildad speaks in chapter 18 he makes no attempt to answer Job. In all his discussion, Job has presented arguments; Bildad just repeats his one idea: "God punishes the wicked. You are suffering punishment, you must be wicked." Ultimately, in eternity this will be true: God will punish the wicked, but not now. So Job says in chapter 19, "Why do you judge me? God has done this to me. I am in His hands and I trust Him." Then he utters those remarkable words: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him." This is the way Job emphasized that in spite of everything he still trusted in God. Zophar answers: "The triumph of the wicked is short. You got along well; you were rich and everything was going along fine but you weren't any good and you were wicked and the triumph of the wicked is short." This is no rebuttal to Job's argument; it is only a sinister insinuation. He is saying that Job has done wrong, the prosperity that he had earlier in his life was just for awhile; but now the truth is coming out and it is obvious Job is at fault.

In reply, Job argues "But the wicked do prosper at times. You're saying that because I am suffering, I must have been wicked. That's not true. Of course sometimes the wicked suffer, but sometimes the good people prosper and sometimes the good people suffer. What is happening to me is not the result of what I have been doing. This is what God would have happen to me. This is the way I am to understand it."

After this is reported the last exchange of ideas. Eliphaz speaks out in chapter 22, "Why not break down and admit you are a sinner?" Still he insists Job must have sinned. Job answers him in chapters 23 and 24. "I just don't understand. I know that God is just. I know that He is fair, but I declare I can't figure out why it is that a man that can be wicked can get away with it and I have tried to do everything right the best I knew how and am having this trouble. I just can't figure it out." This is difficult to answer. However Job is at a disadvantage because the real issue was not his fault. Job speaks out his heart in chapters 26 and 31: "I cannot concede that you are right. I know you make it sound right and what you say is good. But I know my own integrity before God and I know there's nothing wrong between me and God." He goes on to say, "I know very well it is wise for a man to fear God, and to depart from evil. I know that. But this is not the issue in this problem. I have never failed to fear God not to depart from evil. I have been doing these things." He goes on to say in chapter 29, "I remember my former prosperity" and then he describes it. In chapter 30 he says, "My present affliction is grievous. I'm having this terrible trouble and it's awful. And I know very well that my integrity has not lessened. My circumstances have become bad; things have gone against me but I know I didn't turn away from God. And when you are saying that I turned away from God you are simply not telling the truth."

In these chapters 26-31, Job is reviewing his situation and emphasizing the mystery of his difficulty. He finds it hard to understand. He knows that his suffering was not caused by his conduct. Job is right. His conduct did not produce the situation. The actual experience Job was enduring did not come out of what Job had done, so the question is unanswered: "How can one understand suffering?"

In chapter 32, another man speaks, a young man. He says, "I would have thought that you older men would know something. I have all my life had the thought, the feeling in my mind that grey hairs indicate wisdom, and here you are grey haired men and I just naturally thought that you folks would know." Thus he says, "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:6-8). A man has his own inner consciousness before God, and God deals with him there.

Elihu went on to say, "Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment." This is very important. Have you by chance stayed away from God because you have accepted the popular feeling that if you do wrong, you are going to be punished? Thus you expected to be punished. There is so much more to the Gospel than the exposure of sin and guilt. A person may go to church but not really

listen, even when the minister is saying that a sinner can be converted and can be saved. The sinner may think deep down in his heart "That's wonderful and that's true, but not for me." Why not? Because deep down in his heart he has the feeling that he has done wrong and he is having some suffering now and there's going to be more. He is really going to have to suffer because he has not *earned* the blessing of Heaven. Many people are discouraged and downhearted in this fashion. But this is all a mistake. A man's conduct is not the deciding factor about his consequences. Wrong is wrong, and will be judged wrong in the sight of God. But, God is gracious. God is able to save to the uttermost those who come to Him by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the blessedness of the Gospel.

Do you realize that being very fortunate brings a person face to face with a very real problem? It is at this point he could make a great mistake. Such a person could make the mistake of thinking that his good fortune is the result of the way he is living. I am sorry to have to say this is not why he has good fortune. Whenever a person is being fortunate and being blessed, he should not take the credit to himself. That would make him vain and proud, and that would be a good way to lose everything he has. On the other hand the principle is the same when a person has trouble. The trouble any person has now is not always the result of something he did. This is in the hands of God. No doubt in the long run, at the Great White Throne before God, men will be judged according to deeds done in the body. Certainly the soul that sins shall die, and the wages of sin is death. But the sinner can actually be forgiven.

Any person who believes in God according to the revelation in the Bible can review his own life and say to himself, "I'm not getting what I deserve. If I get good, I'm not that good. If I get evil and bad, I'm not that bad. I'm not getting what I deserve." He can be sure that what happens to him is what the will of God shares with him for a reason. God is watching over him and God is making "all things work together for good to them that love Him." Christians can pray Almighty God to show them these things that they may prosper in them.

Chapter 2 Job 4-32

Questions for Study and Research

1. Why is it so natural to assume that if a person is having trouble he must have sinned?
2. Is it wrong for a person to be heavy-hearted and to lament his sad state when suffering comes? How does the book of Job show this?
3. Is a believer responsible for all that happens to him in this world, be it good or bad? How does the book of Job show this?
4. What natural explanation of the cause of trouble is implied in the statement "Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man?"
5. What natural principle of understanding the cause of misfortune was affecting Job's mind when he found it so hard to accept his own calamity?
6. What is wrong with the idea that if God is blessing a person he will have health, wealth, and happiness in this world? How was this truth shown in the New Testament? Do you know of a present day illustration of this truth?
7. Interpret Job 13:15.
8. Interpret Job 19:25-27. What great spiritual truth did Job foresee?
9. Interpret Job 23:1-7. How did Job think he would be treated, if he stood in the presence of God?
10. What argument does Job set forth in Chapter 21 to show that his friends are in error when they insinuate that his trouble is the result of his sin?
11. How could these three men be yet counted as Job's friends, though they held the view that his trouble was his own fault?
12. Why was Job so sure they were wrong in their explanation?

Job's Mistake

Do you realize that a person reveals his own inner attitudes and his own personal convictions by the very questions he asks? Questions that men ask are never as innocent and neutral as they may sound. The heart of a man prompts his interest even as the situation formulates the question. Often the question that he asks is grounded in what he already believes.

As we continue to look into the book of Job, we are reminded that Job's situation was not the result of his own conduct. We know that from reading chapters 1 and 2. Job was involved in conflict between God and Satan, and the situation as it developed came as a surprise and a shock to Job himself. It raised in him a question about understanding the ways of God. Job could not see how such things could happen. Job was a good man in the sight of God, and blessed with prosperity. It is natural to think that prosperity is the normal result of virtue. The common view is that when you do well, God will bless you with material benefits.

And now because of a conflict in the spiritual world between God and Satan, Job is suddenly stricken so that he loses everything he has. He loses his family; he loses his fortune, all his flocks and herds; and finally he loses his health itself. Job is distressed because he can see no reason for this turn of events.

Job's distress is due to two factors. Job had in mind that blessing from God meant prosperity in this world. Now his prosperity is gone: does that mean his blessing is gone? In the second place, Job had confidence that he could understand the ways of God. He had a feeling that since he believed in God, that he should be able to see what God was doing. It bothered him when he could not. The result was that Job was in distress: bewildered in his soul. His heart cried out, "Why?"

No doubt we have had experience of trouble when we and loved ones have asked in our hearts, "Why?" Perhaps some "friend" came along and told us that it was because we had done wrong, when deep down in our hearts we knew this was not the truth of the matter! Such was the case of Job. Despite his distress we read that Job did not sin with his lips nor charge God foolishly. He was troubled, distressed and burdened but it never occurred to him to say that God was wrong. Still the question loomed in Job's mind so clearly, "Why would a just God allow a righteous man to suffer?"

Job does not say anything against God but the account as it is written seems to reveal that deep in his heart Job is troubled because it looks to him as though God is unfair. Job believes in God. That means that Job believes that God could do anything He wanted to do. Also, Job believes that God would be righteous. But all this left Job in real perplexity.

Three friends came to visit Job, and were deeply moved in sympathy. Whenever I read the account, I appreciate the fact that when they did come, they didn't talk they sat down with him for seven days and were so deeply stirred they didn't have a word to say.

Conversation began when Job opened his mouth and lamented his plight. In his comments he expressed the honest, earnest, sober wish that he were dead. He felt that then he would be so much better off. The friends undertook to help him understand by stressing repeatedly: "You must have sinned. What is happening to you must be because you have sinned." There were three rounds of speeches. The men said many true things, yet they were all beside the point. Their remarks did not apply in this case. Job knew they were mistaken and stoutly maintained his innocence, his own integrity in his life before God. But he was not able to understand the meaning of his experience.

In chapter 32 there is another speaker, Elihu. He begins his remarks by saying, "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:6-8). Thus Elihu is saying, "I didn't want to say anything about this. I felt that you men were older and you knew more; yet I have in me my own sense of the truth of the matter,

because of the spirit that is in me." Elihu went on to say: "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgments" (Job 32:9), and he was right.

Because great important men say certain things does not make such statements true. Often some man who is a great scientist makes some remark about God. But does he know anything about God? Does he believe in Him? It may be true he is a great scientist, but does he know anything about eternal life? Does he know anything about the grace of God? Because he is a great scientist does not mean that he knows about Heaven. This is a fact that should be remembered by high school and college young people, especially Christian young people. It is hard for a young Christian to hold to his own convictions if his teacher or professor comes down heavily with sarcasm on the Bible. This fact is sad but true: "great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment."

Elihu went on to say, "I am so full of this matter that I will have to speak. If I don't speak I'll just burst." He goes on in speaking and finally turns to Job and says to him, "You have emphasized that you are innocent and that is probably true enough; but in so doing you may have made out that God should be counted for your enemy; now that was a mistake." In these words of Elihu some intimation begins to appear of the mistake that Job made when Job evaluated or judged God's action. In this Job was out of bounds.

Elihu continues to point out in chapter 33 that God's ways are often hidden and "man perceiveth it not." Man is often not able to grasp the meaning of God's ways. Elihu shows several different ways in which God communicates His ideas to man: He has ways of getting to people. One way is by dreams: "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed" (Job 33:15). The fact is that some people do get intimations of truth in dreams and in visions. In the New Testament, Joseph the husband of Mary the Mother of the Lord Jesus, had the experience of God revealing things to him in dreams. Peter and Paul had visions in which God actually communicated His ideas.

Then Elihu pointed out how God uses sickness: "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out" (Job 33:18-21). There will be some people who will learn from God through pain and suffering.

Again Elihu notes that God communicates through preaching. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33:23-24). Thus the preaching of the Gospel will reveal to some men the mind of God. And there are yet other ways. "He shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness" (Job 33:26). Thus it may be by praying that a person can be led to a response to the will of God. Finally, there is the matter of repentance. "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (Job 33:27-28). God will watch to see if any man will repent, because repentance can be actually something that God can use in revealing His will to the soul.

Throughout his discussion, Elihu is telling Job that God's ways are often hid. Sometimes He uses dreams and visions; sometimes He uses pain and suffering; sometimes He uses preaching; sometimes He uses praying; sometimes He moves the soul to repent. All these things are done to draw the man back from disaster. God actually wants to incline the soul away from that which would hurt and bring the person into His will.

Elihu went on to say that Job was wrong when he judged God by what he saw. It was natural that Job looked out upon life as he lived it. He saw the things which he actually experienced. Then he tried to figure out from the very things he experienced what God was like; and Elihu said that was a mistake. No man can tell what God is like by the things which that man can see. The natural man might say "It prof-

iteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God" (Job 34:9). That is not true. But even so, a person could get that impression by just looking at what happened. "Therefore hearken unto me," Elihu goes on to say, "ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity" (Job 34:10). He is arguing anyone should know better than that; God will not do wickedly: God will be just and fair. Because this is so, Elihu emphasized it would be a fitting thing for Job to repent and be humble.

In the course of his argument, Elihu pointed out that God is so far above Job that He could not be affected by Job's conduct. This is rather a humbling truth. The wrong that I do will not take God off the Throne. It will affect me, and this is what Elihu emphasizes. Elihu feels Job should have trusted God all the way through.

The whole discussion by Elihu showed Job two big faults of which he was not aware. One of them was vanity: conceit in himself. Actually, when a man starts to figuring out God that means he thinks he can do it. This is overestimating his own capacity. No man is that smart. No man is that big. No man is that good. No man can see that clearly. No man on earth can figure out God in Heaven. The other great truth revealed to Job was his inadequate concept of God. Job had failed to see how great God is! Job was like a person inside a barrel trying to figure what the outside looks like. A man cannot do it. Thus the attempt to explain God was his great big mistake.

Apparently Job was not aware of his pride. A man should humbly trust God, even in a situation he does not understand. He should simply look up into the presence of God and trust Him. God is able and He is Almighty. He made all things and holds all things in His hand. There isn't anything going to happen that God isn't going to control. He is going to be in charge and if God is going to be in charge and He is controlling, I can call upon all that is within me to bless His Holy Name and trust Him. God is to be trusted, and is to be looked up to. God is to be honored, and anybody that has any sense will humbly bow down his heart before God and put his trust in God.

This, then, was Job's big mistake. He was an honest man, a good man, a righteous man, a faithful man, a man with deep integrity; he was a man who actually tried to do right and good, but he made a big mistake. He tried to figure out God, thinking he could; and he tried to figure out God, thinking God was so small that he could. He was wrong on both counts. May God keep us from presuming when we think of God.

Chapter 3 Job 33-35 **Questions for Study and Research**

1. In all his thinking about his situation what was wrong in Job's confidence in his own capacity?
2. What was wrong in Job's estimate of God?
3. According to Elihu how does God reveal His will to man? (33:14-24, 27-28).
4. Why did Elihu accuse Job as in 34:9?
5. Why is it impossible to come to know the ways of God by looking at the things that can be seen?
How does this limit the findings of science?
6. How does Elihu exalt God in Chapter 35?
7. Why would it be a mistake for any man to try to explain God's ways?
8. What words of comfort could be spoken to Christians who have lost their only child in a car accident?
9. How could the reading of Job be helpful to a Christian who has just found that he has a terminal cancer?
10. What is the basis of Elihu's criticism of Job in 33:12?
11. What new insight regarding the ways of God have you gained from this study?
12. How is the truth of Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 demonstrated in the book of Job?

Job's Weakness

Do you realize that a person may fail to do the right thing even if he should want to because he is just so weak? "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" (Romans 8:3) is the way Paul puts it when he refers to this fact that even though a person knew what was right and wrong, it would not be done because he is so weak in himself. The same idea is revealed when the Lord speaking in Gethsemane reminded Peter, "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak."

In seeking to understand Job we need to think of his trouble as well as of his anxiety in his mind and heart. One thing that makes this whole experience so tragic was the weakness of Job. He was weak in that he was human. Man was created in the image of God, which is wonderfully true, but he was made out of the dust of the earth and that's his limitation. The spirit of man is from God, and in his spirit man can have fellowship with God who is eternal and infinite. But man in his flesh cannot please God. Thus Paul writes "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). A human being naturally is not able to walk obediently to Almighty God. God's ways are above him. God's ways are different and man cannot understand them. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50). The natural man has his natural mind and in that he can never understand the ways of God.

This is true for anyone, but it is demonstrated in the book of Job. There it is written that God and Satan are in conflict and that Job was taken as a case of point. Job did not know this. The real truth recorded in chapters 1 and 2 was unknown to him. Job was aware primarily of the calamities which befell him: his camels were stolen; his cattle were run off; his sheep were taken by the enemy; a heavy wind destroyed the buildings; his family was destroyed. He suffered the loss of his fortune, the loss of his family, and finally the loss of his health when he was stricken with a sickness and covered with boils from head to foot. This was what Job knew and that is what he had to live with. His distress, not only the pain but the confusion and uncertainty and the darkness of his mind, was increased when he tried to understand. Why was this happening to him?

Job was a man who believed in God. This actually increased his distress because in the light of what he believed about God, how could this happen? Job knew his own integrity. He did not claim to be perfect. He knew that he sinned. But he knew that God was gracious, that God was Almighty and that God was good. Then why was this trouble happening to him? At this point in the story, Job seems to share the natural view. He seems to accept the natural man's view of God's way of doing things, which we call "the law." A simple statement of that principle is this, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Job knew he was virtuous and righteous in the sight of God, but he was having trouble. In his natural way of thinking when he would think of being blessed he expected he would have prosperity in temporal, material things. On the basis of the law as Job saw it, if a man were doing the right thing and living as he should, the idea of calamity would be out of place. Distress is shocking when it comes to a person who has done everything he should do, and who has lived honestly, humbly, and devoutly before God. When a person has done everything that he could in obedience to God, why should he have trouble? In his perplexity Job made a mistake. He tried to understand God and here he made a twofold mistake. He overestimated himself. When any man tries to understand God, there is a trace of arrogant pride. The other point of error was to underestimate God. He perhaps unconsciously thought God was so small that he could understand Him. That was a mistake. God is so great, so far above man and beyond man that no human being can possibly comprehend Him.

In the book of Job after the speeches of the three friends and Job's replies, is found the remarks of Elihu, the fourth friend. Then the story goes on and blends into the message, as it were, words from the Lord Himself. Both the speeches of Elihu and the speeches of the Lord expound the limitations of Job and

show Job he was trying the impossible. He was just not able. Job was helpless. Actually, as a human being, Job was helpless before providence. What can a man do about what has happened? How can he control what is going on? How could anyone know whom he is going to meet? How would he know what will happen on the highway? Before the ways of God, even today we like Job are helpless. But we also like Job can be assured God is in control. Regardless of the nature of any situation He is always in control.

Just last night as I was reading some radio mail I read a letter that touched my heart. A young man wrote in and asked us to pray for his aunt. She was stricken with incurable cancer and was going to die. I can hardly express to you how I felt: how I was inwardly blessed when this young man asked us to pray that his aunt might be able to die in peace. He wanted us to pray that she could, in dying, realize that she was going right into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When I read that request, I was impressed to appreciate again what a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian. The young man could not stop that cancer. Someone may say, "God could have stopped it." I would not doubt that but the fact is that many, many, many people die of cancer and other diseases and God is over all, all the time. God has never promised anyone that he or she will live here all the time. Actually, "it is appointed unto man once to die"; you can be sure of that, and that man is helpless in the face of that. But God can comfort with His presence. This is what the young man wanted for his dying aunt.

Job's weakness included his helplessness. But there is another aspect of this: Job was ignorant. Job did not know what was happening to him. Do you know what God has in mind for you? Do you know what Satan has in mind for you? You do not even know what people have in mind! Job was ignorant about God's plans. God was using Job for His own glory but Job didn't know it. God would use him in spite of his weakness.

Perhaps some of you are suffering and are in trouble. If I were to say to you that God is using you for His own glory, would you be able to accept it? All things are in His hands and God doeth all things well. Actually when we look forward, no man knows what a day will bring forth. God knows and because God knows, He says a word to us. He says "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Job did not know what God meant to do. But Job believed in God and trusted in God. When you read in the latter part of Job those chapters by Elihu and by the Lord, you will note how great God was as Creator, far beyond anything that Job had ever thought. You will see how great God is in Providence in the way He overrules far beyond anything that Job has ever thought. How great God is in His sovereignty! God is in absolute control!

I realize some good people do not believe that. I mean by "good" people, people who really want to serve and trust God. But the people I have in mind, when an accident occurs seem to have some feeling such as this: "Isn't it just too bad that somehow or other God's hand must have slipped? Surely He would not want such a thing to happen." But do such people really think anything takes place without God's knowledge? They may say honestly, "I don't understand it." That could be true, I might not understand it either. That would be because of our ignorance. That would be part of our weakness.

But as we go on to study Job we may note not only that Job was helpless and ignorant, but Job was sinful. After all, he was a human being. I know he may have been well disciplined; I know he controlled himself. He guided himself; he watched himself. Being human and a child of Adam, deep down inside himself, he would have egotism, pride of some sort. Such human elements would be there. They wouldn't need to be ugly. You may know some people who are real nice folks, so that you are glad to admit they are decent and kind wonderful people. Would it seem terrible to say about these that deep down underneath they are sinners? It is true Job wanted to be well pleasing in God's sight, to do His will; but he was also interested in himself. Job was limited in his knowledge and he was limited in what I am going to call grace: in the inward ability to do the will of God.

The whole book of Job is intended to bring to our minds this great truth; life as we live it is in the hands of God. What's happening in this world, good and bad, is under the control of God. This may seem

confusing. It would be so simple if every good thing belonged to God and every bad thing belonged to the devil. When you put it that way, you may wonder why is anything bad? God is Almighty, why doesn't He just wipe the devil out? These are things I don't know, and you don't know. All this is part of our limitations.

As weak as we are, the book of Job presents a very strong emphasis. We should put our trust in God. I am reminded of the old farmer who was living his life as a Christian and many people who knew some of the troubles that he had, said to him, "Henry, you don't ever seem to be worried about anything. Aren't you ever afraid?" The old farmer said, "Oh yes, oftentimes I tremble. But you know," with a smile he said, "the rock never trembles under me." He has rested himself in God.

Job's question, "Why does the righteous man suffer?" is never answered. Job is never told. Job is given to understand, "Look at God. No, you won't understand. Understanding isn't everything. Knowledge is only in part. Understanding is very limited. Trust, believe, yield, count on God. Put your trust in God and Almighty God will glorify Himself in keeping you, in watching over you, in bringing you through anything and everything to Himself." Believe me, when your hand is in the hand of God and you are walking with Him you are on a good road, and you are safe.

Chapter 4 Job 36-41 **Questions for Study and Research**

1. How would you describe Job's weakness? Was it a personal peculiarity or would all natural men have this?
2. List items found in Chapters 37-39 which show Job's human limitations.
3. What does I Corinthians 2:8-9 reveal about man knowing the "ways of God"?
4. What does the nature of the created world reveal about God? (Romans 1:20 and Job 37-41).
5. What aspect of the truth about God would never be learned from the created world?
6. Why is it presumptuous for man to try to understand God?
7. If a person undertook to explain the Gospel of God in terms that would be understood by the natural man, what would he be doing to the Gospel of God in the minds of his hearers?
8. What new truth have you learned in this study? How will it affect your own living?
9. How would you deal with a person whose baby had just been killed in an accident? Could this tragedy be used to help that person to trust God? How?
10. Why is it more important to trust God than to be able to explain some tragedy?

Job's Blessing

Did you know that the best things in life are free? The book of Job raises the most profound problem in human thought: Why do the righteous suffer? This can be felt in the Scriptures, as it is written, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2). This is the natural man's outlook on the whole world. He looks at the creation about him, sees all that is, and if he has any kind of understanding at all, he is impressed to realize that God is Almighty. He is the Creator. He made all things. He is sovereign. He overrules all things. He is the Judge.

To be sure, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God," but all creation testifies to it. Anybody that sees a machine knows there is a mechanic. If one sees a picture, he knows there is an artist. If one hears music, he knows there is a musician. All round about is the universe, as it was made, and the

conclusion is obvious: there is the Maker, the Creator – we call Him God.

Job trusted God, believed in Him, but his mind was limited because of his weakness. This was the weakness of man that prevents him from ever understanding God. When the greatness of God's power and wisdom was revealed to Job, he yielded. He uttered these famous words, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). This is the way Job was affected and this humble repentant soul was blessed by the grace of God.

How did Job qualify for this blessing? The blessing came in his receiving more property, more flocks, more herds, more family, everything more than it had ever been before. Before such blessing came Job could say and did say:

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Here, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2-6).

This is penitent confession. This is where Job starts qualifying for blessing. The first thing he does is to recognize that he in himself isn't any good. Job was standing in the presence of God and in the presence of God he felt utterly undone. Isaiah had this experience as it is written:

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

We have also the words of Paul when he says, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). This is the essence of true repentance.

Repentance is not a matter of being sorry for what has been done wrong. No! Perhaps a person should be sorry for what has been done wrong, but that is not repentance. Repentance does not focus attention upon what was done, repentance is about the person! A sinner does not repent about his sins, he repents about himself. I repent myself. I look at myself and I say: "I am the man that did that. I'm guilty. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." That would be true repentance. Such a person could be moved to trust God because real faith enters in beyond what can be seen into the very presence of God. The person that wants the blessing of God should trust Him. I mean trust Him right now, with everything!

Job never did understand why things happened as they did, and he was never told. The problem did not seem to bother him any more. He realized something of how great and how wise God is. Job trusted Him. Job was told, "Look up, look at God, look at who is doing it." When Job saw Who was doing it he bowed down his heart and said, "Pardon me! I should not have said a word. I should have kept my mouth closed. God doeth all things well." "The Lord also accepted Job. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends, also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:9-10). God blessed Job. Here is to be seen the primary qualification for favor from God. It is plainly stated "The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." Anyone could apply this in his own experience. You could look back into your own life, and take stock in your own heart. Is there someone right now who has not done right by you? Do you have a feeling that there is someone who is taking advantage of you? Do you have the feeling that someone has ignored you, that someone has actually done wrong to you? If you will take the position in your heart and mind that you will never retaliate, you will never try to get even, you will not try to pay them back: you will actually humbly yield yourself to God saying, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." When you honestly and sincerely turn to God and pray for the very people that have done you wrong, God will richly bless you. This does not mean you approve them. This does not mean what they did was all right. What they did may have been wrong, and

that is why it bothered you. This does not mean that it didn't hurt. Perhaps it did hurt you. But it does mean this: there will be no retaliation, no getting even, no paying back. When Jesus of Nazareth was reviled He reviled not again: "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." This is the attitude that is pleasing to God and which qualifies for his blessing.

Surrounded as he was with confusion and with hurt and with misrepresentation and with argument, when Job had seen the greatness of God and the goodness of God, he yielded himself into the hands of God. Job was inwardly melted. His heart was softened toward everybody. He prayed for the very men who had falsely accused him and this was the supreme qualification for favor from God. "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends."

"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12). Then the record goes on to tell how many sheep, camels, oxen and asses that he had. He had also seven sons and three daughters. So the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, as the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.

This blessing of God came from God in His grace. The blessing was not a reward. That blessing was to the glory of God, quite apart from anything that Job ever did. He did not earn it. What Job did was to yield himself to God. The blessing he received was far beyond anything that Job could ever have expected. No doubt it was more than he ever thought was going to happen. This consequence was something that God did.

Jeremiah wrote, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). What happens to a man is not directly the result of what the man does, it all comes from God. It is God who doeth all things well. The believing person who is resting and trusting in God will look to God for God to work out His will. This is why it is such a wonderful thing to be a Christian. If you are a Christian you know that if God spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" God will take care of us if we will put our trust in Him. Does that mean we will never be hurt? No; we may be hurt, but God will help us. Does that mean we will never be in the dark? No; we may be in the dark, but God will take us by the hand and lead us through. Does that mean we will never have burdens? No; it doesn't mean that, but it does mean that we can cast our burdens on the Lord for He cares for us. Does that mean we will always know what is going to happen? No; "no man knoweth what a day will bring forth" but we know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him. This is the great truth that comes to us from the book of Job. In everything and at all times we can trust Almighty God. Let us thank God for His goodness and mercy in taking us by the hand and leading us every day.

Chapter 5 Job 42

Questions for Study and Research

1. What could a man do to qualify for the blessing of God?
2. What helped Job to change his mind about God? (Job 42:1-6)
3. What should be the attitude of a man when he comes into the presence of God?
4. What does the Bible mean by the word "repentance"?
5. Why is "being sorry for my sins" not an adequate meaning for "repentance"?
6. How would you understand the statement: "I believe in God but I don't trust Him"?
7. What does it mean to "have faith in God"?
8. How does the book of Job answer the question "Why do the righteous suffer?"
9. How was praying involved in Job's blessing?
10. If you had been mistreated by someone, but you wanted the blessing of God, what could you do?