

Job's Journey of Joy

Bible Study • Leader Guide

Please provide ESV Bibles and copies of this Bible study to the participants. Words in italics are direct quotes, either the entire verse or a portion of it. Verses, or portions of verses, not in italics are shortened or paraphrased. This Bible study is a continuation of the Bible study entitled “Joy in the Journey,” but it also can be used as a stand-alone Bible study.

When we hear the name “Job,” the word “joy” is not usually the first thing that pops into our heads. However, let’s take a look at the Book of Job and discover how it relates to joy.

Theme verse: *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:2–4).*

Opening Prayer (All): Dear Holy Trinity, please guide us in our Bible study, and open our eyes to the benefits of suffering, so that we are better able to experience joy when we face trials and adversities. In the name of Jesus, who suffered for our joy. Amen.

Job's Journey of Joy

Excellent and Encouraging Example of Embracing Embittering Experiences (Eventually!)

- A. Just as Proverbs 31 portrays a model godly woman, the Book of Job is the story of a model godly man. He was blameless and upright, feared God, and turned away from evil. He is also described as a man of integrity. In addition, he was blessed with wealth and a wonderful family, and was esteemed and influential in his community.

The Story of Job — An Overview for Leaders

The story of Job is one in which God allows Satan to take all of Job's earthly goods and his 10 children away from him, but not his wife. Satan hopes to show that people only serve God because He rewards obedience and punishes disobedience. However, Job maintains his righteous qualities.

Satan then wonders if that would still be the case if Job's body were severely attacked, so God allows Satan to cover Job's body with boils. However, He tells Satan to spare Job's life and the life of his wife. Job has more spiritual challenges when he is in pain and death seems imminent, but he does not abandon God.

Three of his friends believe Job is suffering because he sinned, but Job refuses to believe that. Another friend, Elihu, also gives Job advice and comes closer to the truths about God. He does not believe Job was suffering because he had sinned. He believes we experience suffering to keep us from a wrong course and to focus more on God.

God finally speaks to Job, heals his body, and blesses him with double the material wealth and goods than he had before, as well as giving him 10 more children.

- B. Before Satan took away everything Job had, life was indeed joyful for him because he was wealthy, influential, and, above all, was leading a godly life. It would have been easy to lose joy when he lost his wealth, children, and influence in the community, because it is usually much easier to love and feel good about God when things are going well. However, Job maintained spiritual joy at this point and even praised God.

1. Read Job 1:20–22. (These verses refer to the time period after Satan had taken everything away from Job.)

[Job] ...fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, ... “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

2. Read the following portions of Scripture that support praising, glorifying, and thanking God always, not just in the good times. Fill in the blanks.

- a. Psalm 34:1,3: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth ... Oh, magnify the Lord with me.
- b. Habakkuk 3:18: yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
- c. Acts 16:20–25: After being beaten and put into prison, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.
- d. 1 Peter 1:6–7: In this you rejoice, ... if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith ... may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- C. The following information helps fill in the gaps in Job’s story and especially follows the progression of his spiritual growth and joy on his journey.

1. Praise did not come as readily after Job was afflicted with boils, and death seemed to be imminent. He took a step backward in the joy department, which can happen to all believers. Sometimes we need to go backward in order to move forward in an even greater way. God lovingly lets his children falter through adversity. Such was the case with Job in Chapter 12. In his suffering, Job begins to sin by cursing God, saying he was innocent and God wasn't fair.
2. God does not send suffering because a person sins, although some hardships are consequences of sin. Job pleads with God to take away his pain and suffering. Chapter 29 describes Job's life before Satan's attack, as a joyful life — helping the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, the elderly, the blind, and the lame. In other words, he was reaching out and considering the needs of others before his own. Material possessions were not his greatest losses. Job pleaded with God to grant him purpose again.

Interspersed between the complaints and pleadings, the Book of Job provides some positive insights. Fill in the blanks with the following words: judgment, faith, slay, argue, abandon, hope, sin.

- a. The reason Job didn't abandon God, which Satan and Job's three friends didn't take into account, was that Job had a loving relationship with God and had faith in Him. They didn't focus on God's love or a person's spiritual life, only on sin and God's judgment.
- b. In Job 7:6, where Job is speaking to God, he says he has no hope. By the time Job speaks in Job 13:15, he has progressed to say, *Though he slay me, I will hope in him.* In the same verse, however, he still wants to argue with God.
- c. In Chapter 19, Job is still complaining and even cursing God for his suffering, yet he makes a profound declaration of faith that is one of the most well-known verses in the Bible. Having this assurance certainly contributed to his joy. Read Job 19:25–27. To what future events was Job referring? Who is the Redeemer and what is Job looking forward to?

Job was referring to Jesus' resurrection — being raised to life, and also to the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. Job realizes God is his Redeemer and is his only hope. No matter what happens on earth, Job looks forward to being raised on the last day, seeing his Redeemer, and having a new body.

- d. Read Job 27:2–6 (the “you” in verse 5 is Bildad). Job even accuses God of his misery as well as his suffering: the *Almighty*, who has made my soul *bitter*. Although God allowed Job to experience terrible tragedies, what does he say he would not put away? *his integrity*. To what does he say he will hold fast and not let go? *his righteousness*.

D. To conclude our exploration of Job’s Joyful Journey, read these Bible passages. In addition to the theme verse (James 1: 2–4), these are good examples of the benefits of suffering on our journey:

1. Matthew 5:11–12a: *Blessed* are you when others revile you and *persecute* you and utter all kinds of *evil* against you falsely on my account. *Rejoice* and be glad, for your reward is great in *heaven*.

2. Romans 5:3–5. Why are we to rejoice in our sufferings?

Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts.

3. Hebrews 12:10–11: For they disciplined us for a *short time* as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his *holiness*. For the moment all discipline seems *painful* rather than *pleasant*, but later it yields *the peaceful fruit of righteousness* to those who have been trained by it.

- E. Eventually our earthly journeys and suffering will end, but our joy will not! When we die or Jesus returns, whichever comes first, all believers will go to heaven where joy will never end — there we will experience an eternal journey of joy!**

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank You for being the perfect example of suffering by enduring the cross for the joy set before You, so we might follow in Your steps. In Your Holy name. Amen.

Optional — Sing “Joy is Like the Rain” written by Sister Miriam Therese Winter, or a few verses of the hymn “I Know that My Redeemer Lives.”

All quoted Scripture is from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers). Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Job’s Journey of Joy, by Patti Thies, Ankeny, Iowa

Copyright © 2021, Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. All Rights Reserved.

lwml.org