

The Book of Job

Session 3: Job 3:1–26

NOTE TO LEADERS

This lesson addresses difficult subjects like loss, grief, despair, and even suicidal ideations. We encourage you to be sensitive to the dynamics and situations of the people in your group. Don't miss Go Deeper Section 1, which offers resources for anyone walking through a deep valley.

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea: Our faith allows us to grieve deeply without succumbing to hopelessness and encourages us to comfort those who do.

Head Change: To know that grief and faith are not mutually exclusive.

Heart Change: To feel free to grieve deeply and to extend compassion to the depressed and grieving.

Life Change: To allow yourself to grieve heartache and to mourn with the grieving.

OPEN

Who are your longstanding friends—those who have seen you grow and change for many years? What do you enjoy about sharing your life with them?

Longtime relationships can be rare, but those few people we've either grown up with or known for years offer us a unique intimacy. If they've stuck around a long time, chances are they know us well and have chosen to tolerate our faults in favor of loyal friendship. They've shared in our joys, and they've gathered around us in our sorrows. We need them when times get tough.

In today's session, Francis will address the anguish that Job shares with his three friends. They have sat with him for a week, and now Job is able to talk. He needs their listening ears.

READ

Read Job 3:1–26.

Note: To see a weekly plan for reading through Job, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

When pain threatens to make us focus only on ourselves, what should we remember?

When others mourn, how are we supposed to react?

Show Session 3: *Job 3:1–26* (12 minutes).

DISCUSS

Toward the end of chapter two, we saw Job sitting with his friends. After a week of mourning, Job finally began to speak.

Read Job 3:1–10.

Job’s pain was so great that he regretted being alive. We can also feel the pain of loss so deeply that it seems like we will never recover. **When you are going through difficulties, whether momentary or life-changing, in what ways can it be difficult to face the future?**

Job seemed to have forgotten all the good he’d experienced in life. His pain was overwhelming. The focus required to get through a day of suffering can blind us to the reality that not all of life has been this way. **What do we have to be thankful for, even in seasons of suffering? What would it look like to reminisce on the good times with a person you have lost?**

It can be difficult when our world changes to recognize that the rest of the world is still going along as if everything were normal. Job demands that God disregard his day of birth, that the stars would not shine on that day, and all people curse it. Suffering has shattered his world and he wants everyone to acknowledge him. **In what ways is it good to have others acknowledge our grief? At what point can our demands for affirmation become myopic or self-centered?**

Read Job 3:11–19.

Job compared himself to those whose lives had been so hard they were glad to die: the wicked (v. 17), the weary (v. 17), captives (v. 18), and slaves (v. 19). His life looked nothing like theirs, yet his suffering was so great he empathized with the lowest in society. **In what ways could suffering help us relate to people with very different experiences from our own?**

While Job did not express a plan to end his life, his thoughts led him down a dark path. Pain can hold us captive, making us feel like there is no hope or way out of our grief. **What healing strategies have helped you or someone you know who’s suffered from**

Horizontal lines for writing responses.

times. To feel sad, to grieve, to weep can feel disloyal to God. But the Bible includes many expressions of lament, including many psalms, the entire book of Lamentations, and Job 3. **How surprised are you to know that God welcomes your lament? What could it look like for you to faithfully lament and grieve?**

Francis referenced Jesus’s reaction to Mary and Martha’s grief when their brother, Lazarus, died. Though Jesus knew he would be bringing their brother back to life, he joined the sisters’ weeping. Death is a result of the fall, the “final enemy to be destroyed” (1 Corinthians 15:26), and worth mourning, even if we will be raised with Jesus. **What does it mean to you that God understands your sorrow and suffering?**

Francis encouraged us to look at the big picture, to see ourselves properly within the larger world and God’s purposes. Suffering is common, even though we all react to it in our own way. Instead of comparing our pain to others’, we can take comfort from knowing we are not alone in the brokenness of our world. It is right to weep and mourn and yet cling to the hope that Christ is with us. **What habits can you begin or continue to encourage honesty with God and others, especially when you suffer?**

LAST WORD

What do we do when we feel stuck in our pain? Job voiced his true feelings, dark as they were. But God did not condemn his dark thoughts, his sorrow, or his questions. Instead, in Christ, we see God enter into our brokenness, experiencing and grieving the loss of loved ones. He knows the emotional trauma of suffering and loss.

We may feel stuck in grief, but we do have someone to go to. God has not left us alone. The witness of past believers, friends surrounding us, and the truth of God’s goodness can carry us through the worst. He can handle our grief. Turn to him with your deepest wounds this week.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

1. What if I feel like Job?

Grief can feel paralyzing. We may feel like no one can understand us or that we cannot be helped. But all people suffer, and, in his wisdom, God has provided specialists and strategies that can help us process and move through our grief.

Seek Professional Help

Sometimes events out of our control devastate our families, our health, and our lives. We can feel overwhelmed and unsure of how to cope with loss, but there are people who can help, even in crises.

With the rise of mental health awareness in recent years, the United States has developed an emergency hotline dedicated to people in crisis. [Dial 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#), which provides free and confidential support to those in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. Callers will be connected to trained counselors who will listen, provide support, and connect them to local resources if necessary.

There are also professionals who can help you walk through grief over longer periods of time—gifted people who are educated, and trained to listen, empathize, and offer steps toward emotional healing. If your situation has brought you to despair, we encourage you to seek out a professional counselor who can tailor treatment to your needs. Pastors and friends can love and support you to an extent, but some situations require trained therapists, qualified experts in mental health. There is no shame in asking for help. Ask your pastor, teacher, or trusted friends to connect you with a local counselor.

Live in Community

Every person's situation is unique, but isolation is never

healthy. We were created for community, and in times of despair, we especially need the support of others. Friends and family can love us by being present, listening when we're ready to talk, meeting physical needs, or walking alongside us in silence. They can't necessarily fix our situation for us, but they can remind us we are not alone and meet our needs when we cannot.

Seek Physical Health

Being healthy will not shield us from grief, but diet and exercise are essential tools for enduring seasons of depression. Try moving for at least thirty minutes a day, ideally in sunlight. Drink plenty of water. Get at least eight hours of sleep each night. Eat nutritious food. These practices may not feel relevant to your suffering, but taking care of our bodies is a key component to mental and physical health. Talk to your doctor about what steps are best for you.

Talk to God

As much as you are able, keep talking to God. Psalm 34:18 tells us, "The Lord is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit." Trust in the good God you've come to know, and rely on his Word and his people to support you as you walk through the valley.

If you feel like Job, what next step could you take to seek help this week? If you know someone who's in a Job-like situation, how can you support them in the coming days?

2. Pause and Reflect: Lectio Divina

We can sometimes breeze through familiar or difficult passages of Scripture, speeding over the words instead of letting the truth of Scripture sink into our minds and hearts. Lectio Divina, or prayerful reading, is a historical Christian practice that has helped generations of Christians to pause and reflect on God's Word.

Below are the four steps of Lectio Divina, which will help you pray and think deeply about Psalm 86, a prayer of David. Carve out some time this week to go through this exercise. Take your time with each step. This isn't something to rush through, so make sure you have plenty of time before you start.

Lectio (read): Remove all distractions and quiet your mind before God. Read Psalm 86 all the way through. Then focus on verses 5–8, reading them three times slowly. If you can, read it out loud to yourself. Let the message hit you. After reading it three times, find something that stands out to you. Re-read it a couple more times and place emphasis on different words as you read.

Meditatio (meditate): Think about the words or phrases that stood out to you the most. What do they mean? What do they say about God? What do they say about you? How do they illuminate the main idea of Psalm 86:5–8?

Oratio (pray): Pray through your words or phrases. Ask God to show you what he’s saying through this verse. Take the verse and turn it into a prayer. For example, you could pray, “Thank you, God, that you answer my cries,” or, “Help me, oh God, in my distress.”

Contemplatio (contemplate): Now that you’ve read, thought, and prayed through Psalm 86:5–8, finish your time in silence. Ask God to speak to you. Pray he’d show you one practical thing you could apply to your life from this passage. Then listen. Write down what he says and then do it.

3. Weekly Reading Plan

Job is a long book, and we won’t be able to study every verse of it during our group sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of Job so that you can dig more deeply into God’s Word. Some weeks will have more reading than others, so feel free to complete the daily readings at a pace that makes the most sense to you and your group.

Day 1: Job 8:1–22

Day 2: Job 9:1–10:22

Day 3: Job 11:1–20

Day 4: Job 12:1–13:28

Day 5: Job 14:1–22