The Book of Job

Session 7: Job 40:1–42:6

SESSION GOALS

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

Main Idea: The more we glimpse God's true majesty and splendor, the more our relationship with him will be transformed.

Head Change: To know that God is the central figure in history and our life—not us.

Heart Change: To feel sorry for when we speak foolishly, without a true understanding of God.

Life Change: To treat God as the rightful authority over our thoughts, actions, and relationships by approaching him with humility and reverence.

OPEN

What experience is on your "bucket list"—that once-in-a-lifetime event you dearly wish to have?

Many of us keep a mental or written list of unique adventures or experiences we long to make a reality. Some will take us to beautiful locations, others take us on heart-pounding excursions or long-dreamed encounters. Job's once-in-a-lifetime experience involved encountering God, but the encounter was not the kind he wanted to repeat.

In today's session, Francis will show us how humility is the natural result of meeting God in all his glory.

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READ

Read Job 40:1–5 and 42:1–6.

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.

What is Job's instant reaction to hearing God speak from the whirlwind?

What happens to us when we see God clearly for who he is?

Show Session 7: *Job 40:1–42:6* (11 minutes).

DISCUSS

Job 40 opens with God answering Job's questions with a challenge. Read Job 40:1–5. **When have you felt a sense of your insufficiency or unworthiness? To what degree was your experience justified because you truly did not measure up to the situation or competition?**

Being humbled by someone else can provoke defensiveness or resentment, or we could admit we deserve it. **How do you react when you are humbled?**

Recall that Job spoke extensively with his friends while he was grieving. His words were careless, driven by emotion rather than thoughtful reflection. **How closely do you watch your words when you are in emotional or physical pain?**

Job immediately acknowledged God's innate superiority by putting his hand over his mouth. He suddenly realized that his complaints had been poorly spoken. Think back to angry words you have spoken, shouted, or otherwise directed to God. **What kind of posture did you have toward him? Which complaints do you regret making, and what would you change about your prayer?**

Note: *To explore how knowing God transforms us, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 1*** *at the end of this study.*

Francis compared Job's reaction to seeing God with two other biblical men: Isaiah and John. Read Isaiah 6:1–5. **What is going on that Isaiah feels compelled to cry, "Woe is me!"? Why is his reaction appropriate? How does his reaction compare to Job's?**

Read Revelation 1:12–18. John was caught up in a vision of Jesus when a voice spoke to him. When he turned and saw who was speaking, he "fell at his feet like a dead man." As Francis said, when faced with God himself, we don't have to work at being humble. **Why do you think it is difficult to express humility now? What makes it easy to be humble in God's presence?**

Job, Isaiah, and John saw the living God, and they all fell back in utter submission, fear, and reverence. The God they had served and loved for many years revealed part of his glory and majesty to them—and they were

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floored. **When you think about speaking with God, to what degree are you in awe or fear of him? How familiar or casual do you get in your prayer times? How do you handle the tension of approaching God with reverence versus a spontaneous, friendly conversation?**

Note: *Talking with God takes many forms, such as a free-flowing conversation, reciting a psalm, repeating ancient prayers, and more. For a guide to contemplative prayer, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 2*** *at the end of this study.*

Read Job 42:1–6. This time when God asks Job a question, Job responds by admitting, as paraphrased by Francis, "I said things I didn't mean because I didn't know what I was saying. My mouth ran ahead of my brain. I said stupid things." **To what degree can you relate to Job? When you realize you've said foolish things to God, what do you do?**

When we are in pain or emotional distress, our thoughts shrink to center on our circumstances. The outside world seems distant in comparison to our ordeal. Job's complaints reflected a similar posture, demanding answers from God as if God owed him a response. But, as Francis said, when we see God clearly, we will be driven to humility—not arrogantly believing the world should revolve around us but acknowledging that God deserves center stage. **What can you do this week to realign your perspective with the reality of God's sovereignty?**

LAST WORD

God's answer to Job caused him to shut his mouth, repent, and seek forgiveness. No longer did he consider God obligated to answer him or to explain his behavior. God's presence and words proved overwhelmingly that Job didn't truly know God as well as he thought. He said in 42:3, "Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know." Job's encounter with the living God humbled him as nothing else could. May we take Job's lesson to heart and approach God with meekness, respect, and reverence.

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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. Knowing God Transforms Us

Job's countenance drastically changed when God confronted him. His encounter with his Creator forever altered the way he related with God. As Christians, we enjoy a different experience in our relationship with God. Jesus has come, showing us who God is, and sends his Spirit to indwell each of us who trusts in him. The result? We are transformed from sinner to saint, dead to living, lost to found.

Read Colossians 1:15–20. Paul's beautiful description of Jesus echoes in part God's self-description in Job. **What similarities do you see between Jesus in Colossians and God in Job?**

In verse 20, Paul reminds us that, through Jesus's death on the cross, God made peace between us and him. As we believe and trust in Jesus, we are welcomed into his body, the church. **What does it mean to you that the all-powerful creator loves you and has brought you into his family?**

Read Colossians 2:13–15. Paul describes how we were spiritually dead before God brought us to life in Jesus. His power over creation extends to ultimate power over evil, spiritual oppression, and all that would keep us in darkness. Just as we see in Job, God is in control of all things and, in Jesus, brings life. **How does realizing that God's power is absolute influence the way you worship him? The way you speak to or about him?**

Just like Job, we live differently after encountering God. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior he sends his Holy Spirit to dwell within us, empowering us to follow him and to live according to his character. Read Romans 8:5–6. **What does it look like to walk**

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according to the Spirit?

Finally, read Galatians 5:22–26. A person who knows God begins to look more and more like him in character. The love of Jesus shows up in our relationships, our work, our attitudes—everything. **In what areas of life do you need to think and behave more like Christ?**

Spend a few moments thanking God for sending Jesus to save you, to rescue you from spiritual darkness. Pray for strength to submit to the Spirit inside you, that you would yield to his leading and walk in obedience.

2. Contemplative Prayer: A Spiritual Discipline to Help Us Communicate with God

Sometimes our situation leaves us in a place where we don't have words, but we still need to be close to God. The Daily Examen is a contemplative prayer led by memory. Instead of praying to confess, the Examen is prayed to contemplate. During an Examen, one reflects on the current day, focusing on the events of the day as a way of recognizing the presence of God.

Often, the Examen awakens us to God in routine or ordinary moments, illustrating the subtle and surprising ways God speaks. This prayer practice helps cultivate and refine discernment and an awareness of God's presence.

Traditionally the Examen contains five movements or steps. The following steps are adapted from the technique developed by Ignatius Loyola in the sixteenth century. St. Ignatius required his companions, the Jesuits, to practice the Examen daily at noon and before turning in for sleep.

1. Acknowledge your awareness of God.
2. Review the day in a posture of gratitude.
3. Recognize a "consolation" and a "desolation" from the day (definitions below).
4. Choose a "desolation" to pray into.
5. Look with hope for new tomorrow.

A consolation is an experience that causes you to feel fully alive, at peace, joyful, happy, comforted, whole, connected, your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel close to God.

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A desolation is an experience that causes you to feel drained of energy, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, sorrowful, alone, isolated, unaccepted, fragmented, or less than your best self. Think of it as an experience in which you feel far away from God. When you confess a desolation, telling God about your experience, you acknowledge that he is near and listening despite the distance you felt.

Try practicing the Daily Examen for a week. Share your experience with your group and explore what you learned.

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 38:1–38
Day 2: Job 38:39–39:30
Day 3: Job 40:1–14
Day 4: Job 40:15–24
Day 5: Job 41:1–34

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