The Book of Job

Session 8: Job 42:7–17

SESSION GOALS

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

Main Idea: When we center ourselves on God and his purposes, we can recognize and worship him for the generosity and grace he extends to us.

Head Change: To know that God shows grace to the humble.

Heart Change: To feel hopeful that our faithful lives will glorify God.

Life Change: To recognize the grace God gives us as we experience the hardships and joys of life.

OPEN

What is a favorite gift you have received, and why?

Gift-giving, whether for a birthday, Christmas, or a random surprise, tells the recipient that someone cares. We know that we are loved when someone makes the effort to choose a gift for us. Gifts by design cannot be earned—they express affection or celebration, not as an obligation in return for something we've done.

In our final session, God shows Job grace through the gifts he lavishes on him. We will see through Francis Chan's teaching that every good gift we have is from God, if only we will recognize it.

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READ

Read Job 42:7–17.

Note: *To see a weekly plan for reading through Job, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 4*** *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 always follows humility?

What does the book of Job teach us about approaching God during difficult days?

Show Session 8: *Job 42:7–17* (10 minutes).

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DISCUSS

The book of Job ends with Job praying for his friends and God restoring his fortune. Read Job 42:7–17.

God doubled Job's previous possessions and gave him more children. **What did Job do to deserve God's generosity? What did you do to deserve God's grace?**

Sometimes it is tempting to equate possessions or status as payment for good behavior. We think, "If we behave a certain way, God will do _____ for me." But, as we saw in previous sessions, we do not earn our gifts from God. Job did not deserve anything he received. Before God appeared to him, Job was fighting against God. God's generosity is as much a mystery as suffering: we don't know why he chooses to show us grace. **If God's generosity is an unearned gift, how should we respond to his gifts? How should we use the gifts and blessings he has given us?**

Note: *To examine whether the end of Job promotes a prosperity gospel, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 1*** *at the end of this study.*

Job did not prove himself righteous through his ordeal. Yet God blessed him greatly anyway. **When did God show graciousness to you despite your lack of faith or unrighteous behavior? In what ways did his goodness to you draw you back to him?**

Francis emphasized that Job's humility was necessary and good, and God's grace to him was a gift. "Grace always follows humility," Francis said. Not that God is obligated to show grace, but that we must be humble when we receive it. If we feel entitled to God's goodness, we aren't actually humble. **What helps you have a rightly ordered perspective of yourself and God? To what extent do you struggle with humility?**

It's difficult to say with authority, "I am a humble person," but we can recognize the virtue in others more easily. Think of a person you consider humble. **What attitudes or actions reveal their humility? Which qualities about that person remind you of Christ? How does he or she inspire you to change for the better?**

Humble people refuse to focus on themselves. As his disciples, we are called to orient our lives around God

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and others, rather than to expect the world to accommodate us. **What about your life—habits, thoughts, words, etc.—puts God first? What can people who observe your life identify as God-centered and God-glorifying?**

Francis pointed out that obedient, faithful disciples do not always receive a reward in their lifetime, but will realize God's purposes in eternity. "The point of my existence is not about me. It's about me living in such a way that [God's] name is glorified, and that there's going to come a day when our humility, our repentance, our steadfast faith in his reward is all going to make sense." **In what ways are you inspired by the promise of eternal rewards? How does the future hope of eternity shape your daily life?**

Read Hebrews 10:32–39. Francis referenced the saints who suffered for their faith and held fast to their hope in the "better and enduring possession" (v. 34). **To what extent have you suffered socially or economically because of your faith in Christ? What inspired you to endure rejection, discrimination, or name-calling?**

In what ways can God's future goodness encourage you to endure your current suffering?

Note: *For an introduction to martyrs who willingly died to glorify God, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 2*** *at the end of this study.*

The end of Job lists out the number of cattle Job owned, the names of his daughters—the most beautiful in the land—and the length of his years. The author wanted readers to see the extravagant grace God showed to Job. Contrary to his wishes that he'd never lived (3:11), Job lived to be "old and full of days" (42:17). **What does the grace of God look like in your life right now? What can you do to acknowledge his goodness to you?**

Note: *For a reflection on the greatness of God, go to* ***Go Deeper Section 3*** *at the end of this study.*

The book of Job reveals the point of our existence: we live to glorify God. We were created to love him, be in a relationship with him, and bring him glory. Because he alone deserves worship. Take time to reflect on his place in your life. **In what area have you not let him**

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reign supreme? What's stopping you from focusing on him and his purposes? What about God brings you joy through suffering?

In the book of Job, we've looked at suffering, prayer, God's sovereignty, grace . . . concepts that apply to the most important moments of our lives. **What do you hope to remember from this study of Job? What could it look like to apply what you've learned in your daily life?**

LAST WORD

Sometimes good things happen when we obey, but sometimes we suffer because we've been faithful to God. We cannot judge our faithfulness or God's goodness by our circumstances. Rather, we should be faithful to the one at the center of the cosmos who promises us an eternal reward. We exist to make his name great—not our own.

The book of Job points us to the majesty of God, his splendor, enormity, and holiness. When we can keep our perspective on him God rather than ourselves, we position ourselves to receive his grace in good times and bad. Reflect on everything God taught you through this series this week and thank him for the grace he's extended to you.

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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. Does the end of Job promote a prosperity gospel?

What is the prosperity gospel? It's the teaching that says physical well-being and material riches are always God's will for the faithful. But Job was faithful and suffered. So, how do we evaluate the end of Job's saga?

The end of Job (42:10–17) shows him receiving double what he lost. His wealth is returned twice over, the relatives and friends who earlier had despised him now arrive with gifts and comfort, and he has ten more children (doubling his total number of offspring). God generously returned to him much more than he originally took.

Is Job an example of the material blessings God's faithful followers can expect? Was God's generosity a payment for being faithful, for refusing to blame his misfortunes on God?

Several factors lead us to a confident "No."

- God rebuked Job for maligning his character: "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" (40:8). So it cannot be that wealth is a reward for good behavior. If anything, Job deserved judgment.

- The book of Job is wisdom literature, a genre that communicates lessons on wise living and how God works in the world. Wisdom literature does not require a story to be historical for the lesson to be valid. The double measure of gifts is meant to show God's abundant grace.

- We must consider the whole counsel of Scripture. While good things can happen as a result of

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obedience to God's commands, they are not guaranteed. Often, obedience brings suffering. Read Luke 22:39–48. Though Jesus prayed that God would make another way for him to accomplish his purpose, God allowed his betrayal and eventual crucifixion. **In what ways can Christ be your example as you endure hardship because of your faith in him?**

- Scripture teaches that humility is better than a high reputation, riches, or great power. Read James 1:9–12. **What place do riches have in God's kingdom? To what extent are you willing to trust in the future "crown of life" waiting for those who love God?**

The only prosperity God promises his children is eternal life with him. Everything else is a sign of his grace. Rest in the truth of God's Word that assures you of his love no matter what your circumstances look like.

2. An Introduction to Martyrs

Francis introduced the idea that faithful followers of Christ do not always see their prayers answered. They do not always experience the tangible blessings that Job enjoyed in his latter days. Some saints even lose their lives because of their faith. During the first several centuries of the church, pockets of persecution broke out against Christians, and many faithful believers were killed for their resistance.

Why die for your faith instead of submitting to live another day? The church understood martyrdom to be imitating Christ. Jesus willingly allowed his jailers to beat and scourge him at his trial and execution, modeling for his followers to not fight because his kingdom was not of this world. And their faith was more than a mental assertion—Jesus ruled their lives in a very real way.

The first believer to die because of faith in Christ was Stephen, one of the first deacons of the early Jerusalem church. In Acts 6:8–15, we learn that he had been performing great wonders and signs, which angered some Jewish leaders. After false charges were laid against him, he explained how Jesus was the fulfillment of the entire history of Israel. While his enemies raged, he looked up and saw "the glory of God, and Jesus

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standing at the right hand of God" (7:56). This provoked the Jews to stone him to death. He did not struggle against them but asked God to forgive them.

As the centuries rolled on, many more Christians died for their faith, including women. Perpetua and Felicity, a pair of women persecuted in 203 AD, displayed remarkable bravery. Perpetua, a wealthy young mother with a nursing infant, brought her child to prison with her until he was weaned and able to stay safely elsewhere. Her slave, Felicity, was pregnant at the time, which meant she would not be sent to the arena with her group of imprisoned Christians. She prayed to give birth early so she could die honorably with them—and she did. Her post-partum body was evident even to the crowd, and both women, once in the arena, were miraculously spared being torn apart by the beasts. The emperor was forced to have them executed with honor by beheading.

Speaking of Perpetua and Felicity, on their feast day, the anniversary of their deaths, St. Augustine praised their sacrifice:

> We believe, my dearest friends, and rightly believe, that the martyrs win the best prizes . . . it is this very great attachment to living and fear of dying that the martyrs of Christ, with outstanding strength of mind, despise in the sincerity of their love, the certainty of their hope and their faith unfeigned. (1 Timothy 1:5) . . . They have gone ahead of us, they tower over us like giants . . . Just as that one man laid down his life for us all, so the martyrs too imitated him, and laid down their lives for their brothers and sisters; and in order that this bumper crop of Christian peoples might spring up like sprouting seeds, they watered the earth with their blood.

Read Philippians 1:20–24. The apostle Paul, himself martyred a few years after penning this letter, saw both life and death as a "win." Like the martyrs who would come after him, he believed that the moment of his death was actually the beginning of his new, eternal life. He relished the idea of being "with Christ" (v. 23).

To what extent is your life now centered on Christ in a similar manner to Paul, Stephen, Perpetua, and Felicity? In what ways do their stories inspire you?

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We probably won't be forced to choose between faithfulness or death, but we do face daily choices to be faithful in the face of opposition, suffering, and punishment. **When did you last have to choose between faithfulness to Christ and your own temptations or someone else's expectations?**

How does an understanding of your eternal destiny strengthen your resolve and eagerness to serve God now?

3. *Lectio Divina: A Reflection on Job 42:1–6*

Sometimes Scripture becomes too familiar, and we rush through 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 Job 42:1–6, Job's response to God. 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 Job 42:1–6 all the way through. Read the verses 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.
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> **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 Job 42:1–6?
>
> **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, "I spoke of you from my grief, not truly understanding who you are," or, "Help me, oh God, to worship you

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rightly."

Contemplatio (contemplate): Now that you've read, thought, and prayed through Job 42:1–6, 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.

4. 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 1:1–22
Day 2: Job 2:1–10
Day 3: Job 42:1–6
Day 4: Job 42:7–9
Day 5: Job 42:10–17

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