

## COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

### Responding in the midst of suffering

#### INTRODUCTION | When we are in the midst of suffering, how should we respond?

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We all experience various forms of suffering in our lives. Whether the death of a loved one, or personal depression, or difficult circumstances at work or in our family. When we are in the midst of suffering, how should we respond? Today, we see three answers from the book of Job: 1) Worship the LORD; 2) Speak the truth; 3) Understand God's greatness. Worship, Truth, Greatness.

#### SCRIPTURE | The Book of Job

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Job 1:1 <sup>1</sup> There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

1:8 <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" <sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? <sup>10</sup> Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup> But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

1:13-15 <sup>13</sup> Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup> and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup> and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

1:20-21: <sup>20</sup> Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

4:7-9 (Job's friend Eliphaz): <sup>7</sup> "Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? <sup>8</sup> As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. <sup>9</sup> By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

9:21-22 (Job): <sup>21</sup> I am blameless; I regard not myself; I loathe my life. <sup>22</sup> It is all one; therefore I say, 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'

38:1-4: <sup>1</sup> Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: <sup>2</sup> "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. <sup>4</sup> "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

42:1-3: Then Job answered the LORD and said: <sup>2</sup> "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

42:6: <sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

42:7: <sup>7</sup> After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

#### QUESTIONS |

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1: In chapter 1 verses 20-21, how did Job respond in the midst of suffering?

2: What suffering have we experienced in our lives? How does Job's response both comfort us and challenge us in the midst of our suffering?

3: How does God's judgement in chapter 42 verse 7 help us to evaluate Job's friend Eliphaz's answer to why Job is suffering in chapter 4 verses 7-9, and Job's answer to his own suffering in chapter 9 verses 21-22? What did Job say that was correct about God and his suffering?

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4: In what way do you think it would comfort someone being bullied, or with family problems, or who is ill, to know that “there is innocent suffering; it is not your fault”? Discuss any personal experiences of this that you may have had.

5: In chapter 38 verses 1-4 and chapter 42 verses 1-3 and 6, what does Job come to understand about God and how does Job’s attitude towards God change?

6: Jesus is the ultimate innocent sufferer, the ultimate Job. And yet, God was using Jesus’ innocent suffering at the cross to bring forgiveness to you and to the whole world and to usher in a new heavens and new earth where there will be no more suffering. How does this gospel story comfort you in the midst of your struggles and sufferings this week? (Ref.: Matthew 26:36-39; Revelation 21:1-4)

### REFERENCES |

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#### **Matthew 26:36-39**

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

#### **Revelation 21:1-4**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

### PRAYER |

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- Pray that even in the midst of suffering, we would remember God’s character and be comforted and worship him.
- Pray that we and others would remember in the midst of suffering that it is not necessarily their fault
- Pray that we would understand the greatness of our Creator God, and trust him with our sufferings and struggles

### UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

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Lunchtime meeting (10/4, Akasaka; 5, Kasumigaseki; 6, Otemachi)  
Worship & fellowship (9, Prince of God: David’s Life ④ "David’s Community")  
New York Mission Team Trip (9-16)  
Tohoku Relief Volunteer Trip (9-11)  
Lunchtime meeting (11, Kudanshita; 12, Kasumigaseki; 12, Marunouchi; 13 Otemachi)  
Lunchtime meeting Evening Party (12)  
Obento project (15)  
Broken: Faith and Art Event (15)  
Worship & fellowship (16 Prince of God: David’s Life ⑤ "Love’s Revenge")