



# 8

## Job's Suffering

### Key Themes

- God tests the faith and obedience of His children.
- God is sovereign over all things—even our sorrow and pain.

### Key Passages

- Job 1:1–12, 1:14–22, 2:4–7, 38:4, 38:8, 38:12, 38:17, 38:22, 38:28, 38:35, 42:12–17

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that God is sovereign over every circumstance.
- Describe the faith and trust of Job.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

page 5

Students will decipher a “Backward Message” relating to the lesson.



### Studying God's Word

page 5

The account of Job proclaims the sovereignty of God over all things—both good and bad. Job's faith and trust in God remained firm through much affliction. We can find comfort in knowing that God works everything in our lives according to His good purpose because we are His children and have faith in Him.



### Activity 1: God's Omnipotence

page 9

Students will fill out the worksheet as you read and discuss that God is omnipotent and rules over the entire universe.



### Activity 2: Memory Verse

page 11

Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Picture sheet.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- Print one Backward Message worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Backward Message worksheet for each student



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work outline



### GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

- Print one God's Omnipotence worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your own use.

- God's Omnipotence worksheet for each student
- God's Omnipotence worksheet answer key
- Pencils



### MEMORY VERSE

- Print one Memory Verse Picture sheet and Picture Key from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Picture sheets
- Memory Verse Picture Key



## Memory Verse

**Acts 17:26–27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Read the following passages to prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson: Job 1:1–2:10, 38–42; James 5:11; Romans 8:28–31.

"Then 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, one who fears God and shuns evil?'" (Job 1:8). Thus begins this epic account of God's blameless servant turned over to the devices of Satan by God Himself. Oh, the sovereignty of God! It is too deep for any human to grasp—yet it is the very power that upholds all things in the universe (Hebrews 1:3).

God's sovereignty is the theme of the book of Job. The book opens allowing us a glimpse into the relationship between God and Satan. God controls Satan and uses him to accomplish His purposes on the earth. Satan can do only what God allows him to do—and in this account, God allowed Satan to test Job (Job 1:6, 1:8, 1:12, 2:6).

Job quickly discovered through his messengers that in one day he had lost his livestock, servants, and children (Job 1:13–19). And what a lesson we can learn from Job's faithful response as he tears his robe, shaves his head, falls to the ground, and worships the one who has taken every blessing from him in one day (Job 1:20). His worship and prayer in this desperate time provide a solid example of steadfast trust in the sovereign, almighty hand of God.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

God was not finished with Job yet, and He permitted Satan to again afflict Job—this time in his body and health (Job 2:7). With grace that could only come from God Himself, Job stood true to His Creator as he responded to his wife who suggested Job curse God and die (Job 2:9). Job plainly understood God's sovereignty as he asked her, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10).

Job's friends approached to comfort him, but they only served to confound him with their accusations that it was because of his iniquity against God that he was suffering in this way (Job 4:7–8). They insisted that if Job would only repent of his sins, God would remove his suffering (Job 11:13–19). But if he refused to repent and continued in his wickedness, he would die (Job 11:20).

In chapter 19, we find Job clinging in his suffering and despair to the one thing he knows for sure—that his Redeemer lives! How Job yearned for what his heart knew to be true—that he would one day behold the Redeemer God with his very eyes (Job 19:25–27). Within the midst of this long Old Testament book, God gives us a foreshadowing of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the gospel of forgiveness and redemption He would provide.

Job's suffering and the accusations of his friends continued. And finally, Job begged that the Almighty would answer him and reveal the purpose, wisdom, and reason behind his pain. In answer to Job's question, the Lord began a tirade of rhetorical questions—questions meant to humble Job by the demonstration of God's power, wisdom, knowledge, and greatness (Chapters 38–41).

In the end, God did not intend to answer Job's questions about the purpose of his suffering, but meant to draw Job's focus to Himself—the sovereign Ruler, Creator, and Sustainer of the entire universe. Job learned his lesson well when he answered the Lord by saying, "I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2).

Our God is in control. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28); that our God is in heaven and does all that He pleases (Psalm 115:3); that He works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11); and that no one speaks and it will come to pass unless the Lord has commanded it. Both woe and well-being proceed from the mouth of the Most High (Lamentations 3:37–38).

## APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Throughout this account Job continues to argue his innocence, and his friends continue to tell him he must be guilty because bad things don't happen to good people. This is a very popular misconception even today, and one that Jesus's disciples held to, but one that Jesus flatly rejected (see John 9:1–3; Luke 13:1–5).

Many today insist that a loving God would not let innocent people suffer. They have no concept of their own sinfulness nor do they understand the holiness of God—that He can't tolerate any disobedience against Him. Instead, these people make a god in their imaginations to suit their own desires and reject what the Bible clearly teaches—there are no innocent people (Ecclesiastes 7:20); all of mankind has sinned (Romans 3:23); and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

But is the suffering we experience on earth the direct result of our sin? Is the suffering a manifestation of God's punishment? Scripture tells us that God disciplines His children. However, this discipline is exhibited out of the Lord's love for us—we are not perfect, and consequently we need training from our heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:5–7). Paul also explains that our suffering may be a consequence of a sinful decision, choice, or lifestyle—God is not mocked by our rebellion; we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7–8); our suffering and trials often test our faith and produce patience (James 1:2); we can be humbled by affliction brought on by God (2 Corinthians 12:7); and often our trials give us the wisdom and understanding to comfort others in their troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3).

We often will not be given a clear answer as to why we are suffering—just as Job's question was never answered by God. However, we must remember that God is our sovereign, holy God and He is able to work all things together for good for those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). His desire for His children is not to necessarily make us happy—but to make us holy (1 Peter 1:15) while conforming us throughout our lives to the image of His own Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The book of Job has often been praised as a masterpiece of literature.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job." Alfred Lord Tennyson called Job "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature." Daniel Webster said that "the Book of Job taken as a mere work of literary genius is one of the most wonderful productions of any age or of any language." And Martin Luther said that this book is "more magnificent and sublime than any other book of Scripture."

When was the book of Job written and who is its author? Except for the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the book of Job is probably the oldest book in the Bible. Most likely, Job himself was the original author (Job

19:23–24), writing down an account of his life after the restoration of his health and prosperity. He probably lived around the time of Abraham, and because there is no mention of the laws given by Moses or even of Israel—it is believed he definitely lived before Jacob.

Job was considered "the greatest of all the men of the East" (Job 1:3) and he "dwelt as a king in the army" (Job 29:25). Job lived in the land of Uz, which is believed to be the land of Edom (see Lamentations 4:21). Uz, who perhaps settled there first, was a grandson of Shem (Genesis 10:22–23).

Job is not a fictional character in a great dramatic poem, as many have suggested. He was a real man who served a real God, and as James said, a man who persevered and experienced the compassion and mercy of God: "You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11).



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Oh dear Lord, as I prepare for this week's lesson, I thank you for your sovereignty in all things. I thank you too, Lord, that you have given me the gift of faith—a faith that knows that you are in control of all that happens in my life. And as I journey through this life, I pray that even as the difficult times continue to come, I will be able to stand on the foundation of your Word, your sovereignty, and your omnipotence—knowing that through it all you are working for my good because I love you and I am called according to your purpose. Lord, please bring the tender hearts of my students to a faith that stands on the rock of your sovereignty and the truth of the gospel, so that as they encounter hardships they will do so knowing that your perfect plans are being worked out for their salvation.



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Distribute the Backward Message worksheets for students to decipher.

To make it more exciting and engaging for the class, you may want to have your students compete by setting up teams—with girls against boys, blondes against brunettes, etc. Time them to see who can figure the message out first.



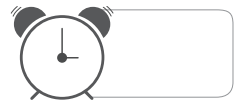
After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



## REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



# Studying God's Word

## READ THE WORD

We are going to read from the book of Job. We don't know for sure who wrote the book of Job—but we think it was Job himself. Job probably lived about 200 years before Abraham. Job is listed on our timeline right here—about 2150 BC. *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline. Discuss briefly the history before Job and right after.*

OK. Let's start by reading Job 1:1–5. The book of Job is in the Old Testament right before the book of Psalms. *Refer to the Books of the Bible poster if students need help finding the book of Job in their Bibles. Choose a volunteer to read the passage.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

This passage tells us a lot about Job. Let's ask some questions and see if we can understand what God's Word is telling us.

### Observe the Text

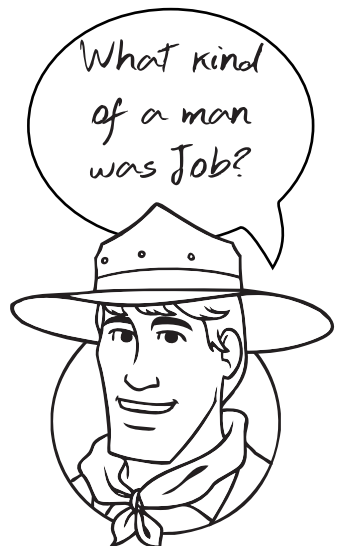
*Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.*

- ? **What kind of man was Job?** *As students answer, write on the board, "Job:" and underneath write, "blameless," "upright," "feared God," "stayed away from evil."*

Would you say that Job lived a life that was pleasing to God? *Yes!*

- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

Job 1:1-5



? What things did God bless Job with, according to verses 2 and 3? *As students answer, write on the board, "God blessed Job:" and underneath write, "7 sons," "3 daughters," "7,000 sheep," "3,000 camels," "500 oxen," "500 donkeys," "many servants."*

? What do we know about Job from the end of verse three? *He was the greatest of all the people of the East.*

Job was both prosperous and godly. He was well-known throughout the land. *Continue the list labeled "God blessed Job:" and write on the board, "great man."*

? According to verse five, what was Job in the habit of doing for his children? *After his children's period of feasting, Job sent for them and had them sanctify themselves (examine their hearts) to see if they had sinned. Then he would offer burnt sacrifices from his flocks to God.*

Job loved his children, didn't he? He wanted them to honor, glorify, and please God with their lives. And he honored God by making sacrifices for sin. *Underneath "great man," write on the board, "made sacrifices to God."*

### Discover the Truth

So what God wants us to know is that Job loved God. Job had faith in God. And Job was blessed by God with a large family and a lot of possessions. Job pleased God, didn't he?

*Write on the board, "Job pleased God."*



### READ THE WORD

Job 1:6–12

? Let's move on. I need someone to read Job 1:6–12. Listen carefully. What happens here is like no other event in the Bible.

### EXAMINE THE WORD

#### Observe the Text

This is a record of a conversation. Who is having the conversation? *Job 1:7. God and Satan.*

? Where do you think this conversation took place? *In heaven.*

? Look in verse 8 and tell me what the Lord said to Satan? *The Lord said, "Have you considered Job?"*

? What does that mean? *Allow for answers.*

We know that God is telling Satan to think about Job.

? What does God say about Job? *Job 1:8. As students answer, write on the board, "God's description of Job:" and underneath write, "There is none like him," "He is blameless and upright," "He fears God," "He shuns evil."*

? Look in Job 1:10. How does Satan answer the Lord? What does Satan think of Job's goodness? *God had protected Job and blessed everything he had done. That is why Job loved God.*



Satan believed that Job's loyalty to God was only because God had blessed Job with all of these wonderful blessings. *Refer to the board work.*

- ? What does Satan ask God to do to Job? *Job 1:11. Strike Job and all that he has.*
- ? What is Satan hoping Job will do in response to losing his blessings? *Job 1:11. Curse God to His face!*
- ? And what is the Lord's response in verse twelve? *He's going to let Satan take Job's blessings.*
- ? Yes. God says to Satan, all that he has is in your power. All of these blessings! But God held one thing back from Satan. What was it? Look in *Job 1:12. Do not lay a hand on Job himself.*
- ? The Lord makes one stipulation. What does He say that Satan cannot touch? *Job, his person.*

This is an amazing true account of a righteous man, not a perfect man, but a righteous man who was living a life that was pleasing to God. Let's read more to see what happens when Satan is allowed to take all of Job's blessings away.

Skip down to **Job 1:14–19**. Let's see what happens next. *Have a volunteer read the passage. As the passage is read, put an X through Job's blessings you have listed on the board as they are taken from him. Verses 14 & 15–oxen, donkeys, servants; Verse 16–sheep and servants; Verse 17–camels, servants; Verse 19–Job's sons and daughters.*

Job 1:14–19

Oh, my! What will Job say and do? Can you even imagine such tragedy happening all at once to a person? I'm going to read verses 20–22. Follow along as I read. *Read verse.*

Job 1:20–22

- ? What was Job's response to this terrible loss? There are four things listed in **Job 1:20**. *As students answer, write on the board, "Job:" and underneath write, "arose," "tore his robe," "shaved his head," "fell to the ground and worshipped."*
- ? How could Job worship God at a time like this? What did Job say? *Job 1:21. The Lord gave, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*
- ? That's amazing faith! Job did not blame God but recognized that God was the giver of all of his gifts and God had every right to take them away. Job did not sin or blame God. *Write on the board, "Job did not sin or blame God."*

There was still one more thing God allowed Satan to take from Job. Turn to **Job 2:4–7** and listen as I read. *Read passage.*

Job 2:4–7

- ? What did Satan want God to touch now? *Look in Job 2:5. His bone and flesh.*
- ? And how did Satan strike Job? *Job 2:7. Job got painful boils all over his body.*

Yes. At this point God allowed Satan to afflict Job, but not take his life. Job was no longer a great man. *Put an X through "great man" on the board.*

## Discover the Truth

Wow! Can you believe it? Everything Job had—gone. And, God allowed Satan to do it. In fact, Satan had to ask God to afflict Job. And God said yes! Job lost his children and his possessions; his body was covered with painful sores. What a terrible time for Job!

This did not mean Satan was more powerful than God. Satan had to get God's permission to proceed and hurt Job.

God is all-powerful. Satan doesn't have any power that God doesn't allow him to have. God was in complete control of this. God knew it was going to happen and God allowed it. God has control over Satan. God has control over everything that happens in the universe. God is sovereign.

Do you see sovereign on the Attributes of God poster? Let's read the definition together. *Refer to the Attributes of God poster and read the definition of sovereign.*

But we might say, "Job had faith and trust in God. Job loved God. It doesn't seem right!" To us, Job's troubles seem unfair. But God is perfectly wise and perfectly just. We can trust Him to know what He's doing, even when we don't understand why. We can always trust that God is in control. He has a perfect plan—everything God does is perfect and always right.

This is a very difficult lesson because we think that if God loves us, He won't let us suffer. When that thought crosses your mind, remember this. God created us, and He is perfectly wise and all-knowing! He does everything perfectly without mistakes. That means what He did in Job's life—no matter how hard it was for Job—was what God knew was best.

That's true for us too. We should believe that God wants what's best for us, and sometimes that means allowing us to suffer and endure trials. To believe that takes faith in God and His Word. Job had that kind of faith, and we should try to develop the same kind of faith in our lives.



**SOVEREIGN**  
*(Refer to Attributes poster.)*





# God's Omnipotence

## MATERIALS

- God's Omnipotence worksheet for each student
- God's Omnipotence answer key for your use
- Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Before you proceed, pass out the God's Omnipotence worksheets and pencils. As you discuss Job 38 below, the students will complete the sheet.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God speaks to Job in chapter 38. He teaches Job a lesson that we all need to learn. God is the one in control—He is sovereign over everything. As we read through these Scriptures, fill in the correct words in the blanks.

## READ THE WORD

We left Job suffering greatly from both physical pain and mental anguish. He was grieving, yet still trusting God. That wasn't the end of what happened to Job. It was just the beginning. So let's read more to find out what happened next. Turn to Job 38. While you're turning there, let me fill you in on what happened to Job between chapter two and chapter 38.

While Job was suffering, Job's friends visited to comfort him, but they only served to confuse him with their accusations. They said that Job was suffering because he had sinned against God. They told Job that he should repent, so God would remove his suffering. Today, many people think that, don't they? Suffering must be the result of sin, they say. But that isn't always the case.

In Job 19, when he was in the midst of his suffering and despair, Job found comfort in the one thing he knew for sure—that his Redeemer lives (Job 19:25–27)! Job knew that one day the Promised One would come, the one who was foretold after Adam and Eve first sinned. Job longed to one day see that Redeemer with his very own eyes. How marvelous that he could look away from his pain long enough to rejoice in His unseen Savior!

Finally, when it seemed like Job could no longer endure the pain and suffering, he questioned the Lord, begging Him to reveal the reason behind his suffering. And this is where we pick up the details of Job's life in chapter 38. God answered Job in an interesting way—with a string of rhetorical questions.

A rhetorical question is a question with an obvious answer. *Pass out the God's Omnipotence worksheets and pencils if you haven't done so.*

Turn to Job 38 in your Bibles. We are going to read the verses listed on your worksheets. After each verse is read, we will fill in the worksheet.

Job 38:4, 38:8, 38:12,  
38:17, 38:22, 38:28,  
38:35

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

Assign readers for each of the verses listed. Pause in between to allow the students to fill in the answer to the rhetorical question given in the verse. God has complete power over the earth, the sea, the morning, death, the snow and hail, rain, lightning, lions.

### Discover the Truth

- ? So, according to these verses, what is God saying about His power? *It is complete. He has power over everything! All of nature. Life and death.*
- ? What are all of these rhetorical questions about? What lesson did Job learn? *God is God and Job is not. God's power is beyond what we can imagine.*

God was showing Job that He knew far more than Job and that Job couldn't begin to understand why God does anything! God called Job and calls us to trust Him and humbly recognize His greatness and ability to control all things.

Sometimes God does things that we don't understand. Job did not know why he was made to suffer like he did. But, God made something very clear to Job—that He is the Creator who is in control of everything—He is sovereign. He has power over all things—He is omnipotent. He is also good. And what He does is always perfect—whether we understand it or not. We need to trust God, not question Him. Job needed to believe that about God. And we do, too.



## READ THE WORD

Job 42:12–17

So what happened to Job? Let's see what God's Word says. We will read Job 42:12–17. *Assign readers.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? What did God restore to Job? *Job 42:12–13. Next to the crossed off words on the board from earlier in the lesson, write, "God restored to Job:" and underneath write, "14,000 sheep," "6,000 camels," "1,000 oxen," "1,000 donkeys," "7 sons," "3 daughters."*
- ? How old was Job when he died? *Job 42:16. 140 years old.*

### Discover the Truth

We serve an omnipotent, sovereign God. Job showed his faith in these truths about God by showing his unwavering faith in God. And God restored all of Job's riches to him. He lived to see his children and his grandchildren grow.





## Memory Verse

### MATERIALS

- Memory Verse Picture sheets
- Memory Verse Picture Key

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Read through the verse together slowly the first time, explaining how the pictures relate to the words from the verse. Then read through the verse one or two more times until the students are familiar with using the pictures instead of the words. Have students recite the verse alone using the Memory Verse Picture sheet.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God is pleased when we do our best to memorize His Word. This verse reminds us that we are all descendants of Adam and Eve. It also reminds us that God is sovereign. He has ordained when we would live and where we would live since before we were born. As we spend time memorizing God's Word, we learn more about God. And that will help increase our faith!



## Applying God's Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

This has been a very good—but difficult—lesson. Job was a good man who obeyed God. God was pleased with Job's faith. Yet God allowed Satan to test Job by destroying his children, all his animals, his servants, and then allowed for Job to get terrible boils all over his body. Satan could not have done any of it if God had not allowed it.

Job remained faithful to God even when all those terrible things happened to him. He showed this by worshipping God after he lost everything.

Do you see how this true account of Job teaches us that God is sovereign over everything? God has control over all good things that happen to us. But He is also in control of all the bad things that happen to us—and that isn't so easy to understand. God allowed Satan to test Job by taking away everything he owned and taking away his children. We need to remember that because God is perfect and good—whatever He does is perfect and good. Job had that kind of faith in God, and we should too.

### GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You know, sometimes when bad things happen like a terrible earthquake, or someone dies, or a tornado—anything that seems really bad—people ask, "Why did that have to happen? Those people were so nice—they

were just innocent bystanders.” And that does seem true. But, remember, there are no innocent people at all. The Bible says that we are all sinners against God. We live in a world that is cursed because of sin. It’s not the way God created it—but it’s the way we made it. Because of Adam and Eve’s sin and the sins of all people, bad things happen. Death came into the world because of sin.

But the good news is that for those who are in Christ, we can rest in knowing that God works all things—both good and bad—together for our good. And if we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are children of God, and He will always give His children the ability to get through whatever He brings our way.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



### MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 17:26–27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Pray that God will help them to see that He is sovereign—in control of all things—and that they can trust Him to work everything out for our good.
- Pray that they will have the faith and the trust in God that Job had to help them get through the hard times in their lives.