

JOB

A MAN OF HEROIC ENDURANCE

STUDY FOUR

Job's Advice to Husbands and Friends

Job 2:7–13

Job endured the crucible. He didn't attempt to escape it. The only thing he had left when all was said and done was a wife and a handful of friends.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WIDELY considered one of the greatest US presidents, Abraham Lincoln was intimately acquainted with deep loss, setback, and grief. At age nine he endured the death of his mother and later his two young sons, aged three and eleven. He persevered through a failed business venture leading to bankruptcy, lost five election races spanning 26 years until elected president, and suffered with chronic, decades-long, frequently incapacitating depression. Lincoln's later murder marked the first time a US president was assassinated in office.

No doubt, Lincoln's leadership ability was formed in the *crucible* of his suffering. Merriam-Webster's defines *crucible* as "a severe test; a place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development."¹ The concentrated forces of Lincoln's hardships changed him. They forged within him tremendous resilience and unwavering commitment to principles that defined his life and presidency.

Millennia earlier, the righteous and wealthy Job endured the scorching crucible when he lost all his possessions, his family, and his health. All that remained were his wife and some friends. The intensity of his suffering and grieving was unimaginable, and yet, Job's faith didn't crack. He held on to God through it all, and, in the crucible of Job's suffering, deep spiritual wisdom was forged.

It's been said, "Don't trust a man who hasn't suffered." Job suffered greatly. In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, through Job's words and actions, we'll gather some crucible-refined gems of wisdom that could only be formed in the heat of suffering. This is counsel we can trust.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Even Jesus, the Son of God, “learned obedience from the things he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). As you open God’s Word, thank Him for loving, shaping, and refining you—in the searing heat of the crucible.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In round one of Satan’s assaults, Satan targeted Job’s *possessions* and *family*, wiping out all his livestock, most of his servants, and all ten of his adult children. In round two, Satan attacked Job’s *person*, afflicting him “with terrible boils” from his scalp to the soles of his feet (Job 2:7). Satan waited anxiously for Job to curse God for his woes; however, although physically ravaged and emotionally distraught, Job maintained his integrity and “said nothing wrong” (2:10).

Disfigured from his affliction and scraping his skin for some measure of relief, Job “sat among the ashes” at the city dump on the outskirts of town (2:8). No one dared approach him, except his wife and some friends from afar. Let’s glean wisdom from Job as he interacted with these visitors.



Observation: Job’s Interaction with His Wife and Friends

Observation lays the groundwork for interpreting the passage, seeing how it relates to other Scriptures, and knowing how to apply it.²

Job’s Wife Pays a Visit—Job 2:9–10

Review Job’s visit with his wife in [Job 2:9–10](#), which we overviewed in the previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study. Remember, Job wasn’t Satan’s only victim. Job’s wife had lost ten children, her wealth, and her possessions too. She lost her status as wife of “the greatest of all the men of the east” (Job 1:3 NASB), and she lost the enjoyment of her husband, who had become a shell of his former self.

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Out of her cauldron of grief and anger spewed a blistering accusation: “Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). What was she telling Job about God? About Job’s faith in God? What emotions was she feeling?

Despite his pitifully painful condition, Job gently reproached his wife. Paraphrase his rhetorical reply in 2:10. What point was he making? What truth was Job clinging to in his storm?

How lonely must Job have felt? What other emotions do you observe in him?

“Curse God and die!” Satan was holding his breath hoping that Job would take his wife’s advice. But Job does not follow her lead. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Job’s Friends Pay a Visit—Job 2:11–13

Alone in his pit of suffering, four friends pay Job a visit. Three are mentioned—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Elihu was present but not mentioned until Job 32. It’s probable they were wealthy elders or businessmen who knew Job.

Use your skills of observation as you read [2:11–13](#). What *prompted* their visit, and what was their *purpose*?

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How did they react upon seeing Job? What does that indicate about the severity of his condition?

Job's friends expressed their emotions in what three ways, according to Job 2:12?

How did they demonstrate their friendship with Job in 2:13? What were they communicating to him without using words?

Suffering presence. You look up and you look into the eyes of somebody you've known over the years and their eyes reflect compassion. There's no judgment; they're just there. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Job's Wise Counsel

Interpretation helps us understand the meaning of the text, which we glean as principles—timeless truths—about God, about life, about us—that apply to all people.

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Wise Counsel for Wives

Let's first consider Job's wife. In her pain, she believed Satan's lie that God can't be trusted—like Eve did when she ate the forbidden fruit. From her accusation and harmful counsel to Job, Pastor Chuck finds two principles for offering advice. These principles are for wives advising their suffering husbands, but the principles are true for everyone.

1. *Always guard your words when your husband is going through a hard time.* Be careful not to unload the full weight of your emotions on an already burdened soul.
2. *Never suggest that your husband compromise his integrity.* In a weak moment, a vulnerable sufferer might take your advice! Don't point him the wrong way.

What other principles can you glean from Job's wife's example?

Wise Counsel for Husbands

Thankfully, Job didn't bite the poisoned fruit that his wife handed him. Instead, he said, “You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we actually accept good from God but not accept adversity?” (Job 2:10 NASB).

Review your observations of this verse. Notice what Job did *not* say and what he *did* say. What advice do you think he would give husbands? Convert Job's advice into principles and list them below. Pastor Chuck gleaned several principles based on his observations, and we'll list them in the application section.

Wise Counsel for Friends

Living alone on the outskirts of town at the city dump, in physical anguish, emotional turmoil, and wrestling with spiritual doubt, Job likely ruminated over “Why?” and “What's next?” Into his agony stepped four friends.

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What *did* they do in [Job 2:11–13](#)? What did they not do? Review your observations from earlier and write down as many principles as you can find from their example of support.

Sympathy includes identifying with the sufferer. Friends do that. They enter into his or her crucible, for the purpose of feeling the anguish and the pain. Comfort is attempting to ease the pain by helping in any way to make the sorrow lighter.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Wisdom Gleaned in the Crucible of Suffering

New Testament apostles James and Paul were also well acquainted with suffering. Let's consider their wisdom.

How does [James 1:2–4](#) encourage us to view our trials? What is tested and what is produced?

Paul adds to the concept of producing endurance in [Romans 5:3–5](#). As we celebrate trials, in what other ways do we grow? What additional qualities are developed?

Counsel I have received that has been valuable for me has never come from a novice. It has come from one who bears the scars and the marks of some pain in his or her life. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Taking Job's Advice to Heart

Job's crucible-refined wisdom through the principles we've gleaned can help us navigate our hard times. Can you relate to one of the principles for wives we listed earlier? How might you adjust your approach to someone who is suffering based on these principles?

Review the principles you wrote based on Job's response to his wife. In addition to what you wrote, Pastor Chuck offers four more principles. Just as Job responded to his wife, husbands should . . .

1. *Listen well and always tell your wife the truth.*
2. *Teach your wife what you've learned about God.*
3. *Model verbal purity.*
4. *Accept your wife completely and love her unconditionally.*

Which principle would you like to put into practice today—if you're a husband, with your wife, or if you're not a husband, with any loved one?

If you're married, assess your attitudes when your mate is in turmoil like Job's wife. What adjustments can you make to better demonstrate acceptance and love?

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Now review your principles based on the caring actions of Job's friends. In addition, Pastor Chuck offers these five principles. Friends . . .

1. *Care enough to come to us without waiting for an invitation.*
2. *Respond with sympathy and comfort.*
3. *Openly express the depth of their feelings.*
4. *Aren't turned off by distasteful sights.*
5. *Understand, so they say very little.*

Have you been like Job's friends, drawing near to your suffering friend even though not invited? What was the situation, and what did you do?

When a friend is suffering, how can you demonstrate sympathy, comfort, and depth of feeling toward him or her? How can you make those qualities stronger or more apparent?

Of these five characteristics of true friendship, which are you best at modeling? Which characteristics need cultivating or strengthening?

Job's friends were the most helpful when they first arrived. They empathized with Job's pain. They grieved with him. They stayed by his side. And they said very little. Even when you don't know what to say to someone who is suffering, just *be there*. Your compassionate presence makes an eternal difference.

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A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for being so good to me. At times, I ran from You when You were seeking me, rejected You when You reached out, and resented You when You didn't relieve the pressure or answer yes to my pleading. I may have even cursed You. But because You are a faithful and consistent God, You have never stopped loving me unconditionally. Thank You for that. Now Lord, whatever this week might hold, I pray that Job's wisdom will go with me and stay near me and become a part of me. In the lovely name of Jesus. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2014), "crucible."
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Marshall F. Davis in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2002, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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