

JOB

A MAN OF HEROIC ENDURANCE

STUDY TWENTY-ONE

What Job Teaches Us About Ourselves

Selections from Job

God has a plan. He just isn't obligated to warn us about it or to remind us that it could happen.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE in the rural farming village of Ulrey knew him simply as “Joe.” Didn’t matter his last name. With vast farmland, countless livestock, a beloved wife, and polite, considerate children, Joe was the backbone of the village. While supremely wealthy, he was God-fearing, family-centered, and hardworking. His boundless generosity toward others matched the equally boundless prairie landscape.

Like a lightning strike on a sunny day, however, tragedy struck without warning. An EF5 tornado descended out of the sky and carved a path of destruction through his homestead. In one overpowering blow, all of Joe’s children, his livestock, his house, and his barns were gone. Joe and his wife survived—broken, devastated, and horribly confused. Unbelievably, days later Joe was diagnosed with a rare, agonizing skin cancer. *Why, God?*

Ulrey was stunned. At first, friends arrived to sit silently and grieve with the village patriarch. But then the murmuring began. Rumors flared accusing Joe of an insincere walk with God and dishonest business dealings. *Surely God has judged him for his secret sins*, they smugly surmised. His friends decided to confront him. On and on they pompously droned with round after round of exhausting lectures. Unfounded and uncaring.

Weakened and confused, Joe appealed to his integrity and his faith in God. He wept. He cried out in pain. He couldn’t understand why God allowed this excruciating trial, but his trust in Him never wavered.

Joe illustrates what Job might look like in today’s world. He’s Job in cowboy boots. The truth is anyone could be a Job, because in every corner of the world, *good people suffer sometimes for seemingly no good reason*. Unfair suffering is one of the few things all people have in common. In fact, there’s a little bit of Job in your story.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

What Job Teaches Us About Ourselves

Selections from Job

If Job could share some lessons from his experience, what would he say? In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll explore several important principles Job teaches us to help us handle unfair suffering when . . . not if . . . it comes.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

The psalmist captured the cry of Job's heart.

I am suffering and in pain.

Rescue me, O God, by your saving power. (Psalm 69:29)

As you open God's Word, open your heart to receive the truths He has prepared for you. Here's some space for you to write your prayer.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Through his suffering, Job recognized his utter dependence on God. When God met him in the whirlwind, all that really mattered was that the Almighty One was on the throne, and Job could rest in that truth. In that sense, we, too, can be thankful for suffering because it can make all of us aware of our desperate need for God.

To gain perspective on all the lessons God wants to teach us through the book of Job, let's take a step back and consider the big picture. We'll take seven important *truths* from Job's experience and then turn those into *timeless principles* we can apply.¹



Observation: Lasting Truths Drawn from Job's Experience

Job's life ran the gamut from initial prosperity to severe trials. From his righteous response to suffering, to his divine encounter with God. From his devastating losses to his full restoration and reward. Let's observe selected passages from the book and reflect on seven truths that Pastor Chuck Swindoll observed in his study.

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We Never Know Ahead of Time the Plans God Has for Us

Read [Job 1:1, 6–14, 16–19](#). Summarize what happened behind the scenes in the sovereign counsel of God. What aspects of God's nature do you see? How does it make you feel to know God has plans you know nothing about?

A Vertical Perspective Will Keep Us from Horizontal Panic

Read [Job 1:20–22](#). Despite Job's abject grief, he immediately worshiped the Lord. How does his remarkable response demonstrate this truth? How might he have responded without this perspective?

Great Discernment Is Needed to Detect Wrong Advice from Well-Meaning People

Read [Job 2:1, 3–10](#). Summarize the second dialogue and plan between God and Satan, found in 2:1, 3–8. What unfolded? Why was the counsel from Job's wife in 2:9 shocking yet understandable? What would have happened if Job had followed her advice?

How did Job's response in 2:10 demonstrate the truth about discerning wrong advice? Why is this truth so important in close relationships?

What Job Teaches Us About Ourselves

Selections from Job

When Things Turn from Bad to Worse, Sound Theology Helps Us Remain Strong and Stable

Read [Job 1:20–21](#); [2:10](#). How did Job’s initial responses to tragedy illustrate his sound theology? Why is a foundation of biblical truth essential in stressful times?

It’s amazing that Job, after suffering such a barrage of cataclysmic events, would be thinking so correctly without wavering. No uncertainty. How could he do it? He was so grounded in his knowledge of God.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Caring and Sensitive Friends Know When to Come, How to Stay Quiet, and What to Say

Read [Job 2:11–13](#). What actions did Job’s three friends initially take to demonstrate this truth?

From your knowledge of the book’s overall theme, how did his three friends fail him? What would you have said to Job if you were one of his friends?

It’s Easy to Be Monday-Morning Quarterbacks When We Encounter Another’s Suffering

Read [Job 3:3](#), [11](#), [25–26](#). Deep in the valley of despair, Job lamented and cursed his existence. How might his anguished vulnerability prompt some to step into the role of a Monday-morning quarterback—someone who criticizes or offers “expert” advice in hindsight? What prompts such temptation? Why is it dishonest and hypocritical?

What Job Teaches Us About Ourselves

Selections from Job

The Cultivation of Obedient Endurance Is the Crowning Mark of Maturity

Read [Job 42:6–7](#). Despite Job’s desire to plead his suffering case before God, how do these verses reflect his heart? How did the Lord validate and bless Job? What about Job’s response instructs you the most?

Whatever role you play, it’s important to remain caring and sensitive. To know when to come, to know how long to stay silent, and if to speak at all, to know what to say. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Timeless Principles for Today

Use these important *truths* from Job’s experience to craft your own *timeless principles*. We’ve completed the first one below as an example. Use first-person pronouns to make these principles personal.

We Never Know Ahead of Time the Plans God Has for Us

PRINCIPLE ONE: *Living each day under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I must be prepared for and accepting of anything God sovereignly permits in my life.*

A Vertical Perspective Will Keep Us from Horizontal Panic

PRINCIPLE TWO: _____

Great Discernment Is Needed to Detect Wrong Advice from Well-Meaning People

PRINCIPLE THREE: _____

When Things Turn from Bad to Worse, Sound Theology Helps Us Remain Strong and Stable

PRINCIPLE FOUR: _____

What Job Teaches Us About Ourselves

Selections from Job

Caring and Sensitive Friends Know When to Come, How to Stay Quiet, and What to Say

PRINCIPLE FIVE: _____

It's Easy to Be Monday-Morning Quarterbacks When We Encounter Another's Suffering

PRINCIPLE SIX: _____

The Cultivation of Obedient Endurance Is the Crowning Mark of Maturity

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: _____

Do you know what that tells me? It tells all of us that maturity is a slow, arduous process and Job reached the goal. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: God's Ways Are for Our Ultimate Good

Trusting God's plan even when we don't understand it is a common struggle for God's people in Scripture. When God's people endured seventy years in captivity in Babylon, they wondered if God had abandoned them. What did Jeremiah promise in [Jeremiah 29:10–11](#) to reassure them?

According to [Romans 15:4](#), to what does “whatever was written in earlier times” (NASB) refer? How are the Scriptures designed to benefit you today?

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Peter reflected Job's heart toward God in [1 Peter 5:6–10](#). What assurance does this passage give you?

The ultimate plan our Lord has for us is not a calamitous, fatalistic, heartbreaking, or life-ending plan, designed to disturb or corrupt our faith. It is a plan that is profound, and it's different from what you or I would have ever expected or planned. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Cultivating Obedient Endurance

Job's faith enabled him to withstand his trials, yet his excruciatingly painful experiences left certain questions unanswered—the same questions God might not answer for you either. Where are you today? Are you in a hard place? A severe trial? Review the seven principles you wrote based on the truths observed in Job.

Which of them stands out as your focus to put into practice? What would you like to do differently today?

What circumstances or distractions sometimes hinder you from maintaining a vertical focus on God? What can help you “think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth” (Colossians 3:2)?

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How can you navigate suffering with an open heart to learn the most from it and be further transformed into the image of Christ through it?

When you faithfully and passionately seek after God and lean on Him during suffering, you pay less attention to temporal things. What used to matter doesn't matter as much anymore. You give increasing time to the eternal—to what the Lord is doing deep within your soul.

Think more deeply about the things Job has taught you. Focus on what truly matters. And let go of whatever lesser priorities might be keeping you from your first priority—knowing and loving your Savior who loves and knows you.



A FINAL PRAYER

Lord, I love You, I thank You, I worship You, and I submit to You. I confess to You the stubbornness of my own will and all the energy I have burned up running away from the very things that I needed to face. Deepen my relationship, Lord, so You and I are closer, and You become the focus of my full attention and my absolute affection. Break me to the point of full surrender, and then use me as You have used Job through the centuries as a model of endurance. I pray these things through Christ, my Lord. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. 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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