

# Faith Under Fire

## Lesson #1 (How do you respond to tragedy?)

**Scripture:** 1 John 5:4 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.”*

### Introduction:

The photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene hampered him and he asked his home office to hire a plane. Arrangements were made and he was told to go at once to a nearby airport, where the plane would be waiting. When he arrived at the airport, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, "Let's go! Let's go!" The pilot swung the plane into the wind and they soon were in the air.

"Fly over the north side of the fire," yelled the photographer, "and make three or four low level passes."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm going to take pictures," cried the photographer. "I'm a photographer and photographers take pictures!"

After a pause the pilot said, "You mean you're not the instructor?"

Troubles come in many shapes and sizes. I've been thinking lately about all the ways we struggle.

- Sickness & Health
- Death of a loved one
- Loneliness...mate has died or you haven't found a mate yet.
- Money
- Family issue
- Job problems
- Marriage problems
- Flat tires without a jack
- Then there is the struggling with sin

### Transitional Statement:

Sometimes struggles leave us wondering where God is.

Today I want to share the story of a man who went through some real hard times in his life. This man through turmoil in his soul grew closer to God than ever before.

The question for today is how will you respond when tragedy strikes your life?

## I. Let me introduce you to the man named Job (1:1-5)

A. Job name has different possibilities for its meaning:

1. To be an enemy
2. Opponent of God.
3. One God has treated as an enemy
4. One who repents

\* Most likely.....Where is my father !

B. God's view of him 1:1

1. Blameless.....Whole / Complete
2. Upright.....Didn't deviate from God's standard.
3. Fearing God.....Reverence for God with humble submission
4. Turns aside from evil.....Avoiding sinful areas of life

C. God had blessed Job greatly 1:2-3

1. 10 Children

- a. 7 boys
- b. 3 Girls.

2. Great Wealth

- a. 7000 sheep
- b. 3000 camels
- c. 500 oxen
- d. 500 female donkeys
- e. Many Servants

3. Great Prominence and position in society

- a. Greatest of all the men of the East
- b. He is on top of the world and feeling good.

D. Then Job also looked after his household spiritually 1:4-5

1. The text tells us that his kids would get together to celebrate their day (B-Day) and drinking was involved.
2. So when the party was done the first thing on old Job's mind was consecrating his children.
  - a. Consecrating here goes a step beyond mere setting apart, but the emphasis here is on the connection with holiness.

- 1) Particularly forgiveness in case any of them had cursed God in their drunken stupor.
- b. Also he offered burnt offerings to God for each of them
  - 1) To re-establish any lost devotion to God by any of them.
3. Even though they were grown and moved away
  - a. He didn't say now your on your own.
  - b. But he faithful held them before God.
    - 1) On a continual basis
4. You see Job was a family priest of sorts always concerned with his families spiritual well being.
  - a. A man of faith and trust in God.
- E. It's no wonder that of Job God said that their was *"no one else like him on the earth"*
  1. Job is top notch from God's view.... 1:8
  2. And it is safe to say that he is living the high life and things are going very good for him.

## **II. Then Satan comes to God and makes the greatest allegation against God that has ever been made. (1:6-12)**

- A. Satan shows up at a meeting between God and His angles.
  1. So God says to Satan, where have you been? V:7
    - a. Satan says, roaming and walking the earth.
    - b. 1 Peter 5:8 gives more light to this.... *"Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*
    - c. So he is roaming around the earth looking for a soul to devour.
  2. So God says *"Have you considered My servant Job"*?
    - a. I don't know about you, but my hope is that God leaves my name out of any discussion with Satan.
    - b. But here God puts forth His best man and says....why don't you take a shot at him !
    - c. Our human fear is that God needlessly put Job in danger, but that is not true, He only set a trap for Satan to walk right into.

B. Then Satan basically says to God....You don't play fair !

1. He basically tells God that the only reason men love You is for what they get out of the deal.
2. Men don't love you for who you are, but for what you do for them.
  - a. That is what Job is doing....loving you only because you have protected and blessed the hound dog out of him.
  - b. But you take away those blessings and he will curse You to Your face.

C. I think it interesting here that God applies the principle of Proverbs 26:4 "*Don't answer a fool according to his folly*"

1. God merely gives Satan the power to make a fool out of himself.
2. He allows Satan to test his theory
3. With the only restriction that Satan could lay a hand on Job himself.

D. Before we leave this section of thought, I would like to point out that Satan has a M.O. for sure, a usual way of trying to corrupt what is right.....and that is he likes mixing some truth with a lie, just like in the garden of Eden.

1. The truth part of what Satan said was that many people do embrace God only for what they can get out of it.
2. Hence an enormous movement in our own brotherhood to make worship about us and about how we feel and what we can take home.
3. I think each one of us should ask ourselves today what motivates our love for God.
4. When we don't get our way...will we turn away from God?
5. If there were not the promise of heaven ...would we still serve God anyway?

### **III. Satan sets out to prove his point (1:13-20a)**

A. Satan takes away all that Job has in a matter of minutes

1<sup>st</sup> messenger comes to Job and says: The Sabeans attached

1. Taken oxen, donkeys and killed attending servants

\* While still speaking.....

2<sup>nd</sup> messenger says: Fire from heaven (Lightning?) fell

1. Burned sheep and attending servants.

\* While still speaking

3<sup>rd</sup> messenger says: The Chaldeans raided

1. Took camels and killed attending servants

\* While still speaking

4<sup>th</sup> messenger says: A Great wind (Tornado?) tore you kid's house down on them

1. All children have died

B. Job lost all that he had

1. His wealth
2. His servants
3. His prominence
4. And even the most precious of things....his children

C. We might pause here to wonder why God would allow such suffering for a servant.

1. All I know for sure is:

- a. Enduring suffering builds character and helps complete us James 1:3-4
- b. Holding steadfast is also understood as a process of refinement.  
Isa 48:10.

D. So grief came upon Job with full force 1:20a

1. He tore his robe and shaved his head

#### **IV. Then we get to see how Job responds to all this.**

A. It has been said that people are like tea bags....you don't know what they are made of till you put them in hot water.

1. If ever there is a time for focus...it is during adversity

B. Many people are reactionaries

1. Moved by the moment
2. They act without thinking.
3. And end up lashing out at the world and even God.

C. Some people in the face of such agony close themselves off to the world.

1. They allow bitterness to consume their souls
2. And anger moves in.
3. They build a wall to hide behind

D. But Job was not ruled by circumstance....here is what this man did:

\* After loosing his dignity and honor, his wealth, his kids and crushed by grief

1. He fell to the ground and worshipped God 1:20b

2. He understands that all he had belonged to God anyway

Job 1:21 *“Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
And naked I shall return there.*

3. He also recognizes that God has allowed his blessings to be removed

*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.*

a. He doesn't think that God was asleep at His post

b. Or that He doesn't really care what happens in the lives of men

c. But fully understands that God has allowed this to happen.

4. And with his statement *“Blessed be the name of the LORD.”*

a. He is acknowledging that God's judgments are right

b. He affirms the sovereignty of God in his life.

E. In all this, Job did not sin or blame God

### **Conclusion:**

In your struggle have you got on the wrong plane?

-Who is your pilot?

-2 Corinthians 5:7 *“for we walk by faith, not by sight”*

-And if we will have any victory it will be because our faith is put in the right place 1 John 5:4

Do you have a struggle that you need to share?