

## INTRODUCTION

What you don’t know can hurt you. Did you hear about the guy who walked into a drugstore and asked the pharmacist, “Do you have anything to cure hiccups?” The pharmacist said, “Look on aisle three.” While the guy was looking the pharmacist snuck up behind him and screamed, “Boo!” while at the same time knocking the guy’s legs out from under him. The dazed customer looked up from the floor and said, “What’d you do that for?” The pharmacist said, “I’ll bet you don’t have the hiccups any more.” The guy said, “I never did. It’s my wife out in the car who has them!” If he had only known! Have you ever said that? “If I had only known!” Over the past four months we’ve been studying the amazing story of Job. Job’s life was full of pain and suffering—and the whole time he never knew he was the subject of a test. What a difference it would have made if he had only known his suffering was part of God’s plan. If he had only known God had given Satan permission to afflict him in order to disprove Satan’s allegation that if Job suffered he would curse God to His face. In the end, God was right—as He always is!

As we come to Chapter 42, we learn Job experienced four important turning points. A turning point may be described as a change of direction leading to a change in destiny. Historians write about turning points in history. For instance, the D-Day invasion of Normandy was a turning point in WWII. We’ve all had personal turning points as well. In 1972 I met a cute college girl from Auburn named Cindy Chafin. Since that time we’ve had a strange and wonderful relationship: I’m strange and she’s wonderful. That was a turning point that changed the direction of my life.

In this message we’ll examine these four turning points in Job’s life. Each turning point served as a trigger for the next turning point. Then we’ll learn a personal lesson from each of these turning points. His turning points may be where you are, or where you need to be.

### 1. TRANSFORMATION

The first turning point Job experienced was when he repented. In chapter 38 God began to speak to Job out of the storm. God didn’t give the Job the answers he was seeking, He simply reminded Job He was greater and more powerful than Job could ever understand. After hearing from God, Job had no more arguments; instead he repented. He changed his mind about who God was and how God was dealing with him. You can find this turning point in Job 42:5-6. He said, “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” The Hebrew word for “repent” is *nacham*, which means “to change.” When Job repented, he was still in the middle of his suffering. His grief over the death of his children was still tearing at his heart. His body was still covered with painful sores. But after seeing God, he changed his mind—he changed his attitude about God.

#### **Lesson: You can change your attitude easier than you can change your circumstances**

Sometimes we have little or no control over our painful circumstances. The only thing you have power to change is your attitude about your unpleasant situation.

The Apostle Paul was a convict in prison when he wrote these powerful words: “I have learned

the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:12b-13)

Our natural response to suffering is to complain against God and try to change our circumstances. Paul wrote that he had “learned the secret.” Repenting, or changing your attitude, in the midst of pain is learned behavior; it isn’t instinctive. Suffering can either make you bitter or it can make you better—it’s your choice.

Ted Turner is a famous media mogul worth millions. He grew up in a religious family and even once considered being a missionary. But all that changed when his younger sister, Mary Jane was diagnosed with lupus and died. Reflecting on her death, Ted Turner said: I was taught that God was love, and God was powerful. I couldn’t understand how someone so innocent should be made or allowed to suffer so...if that’s the kind of God he is I want nothing to do with him.” (“Meet Ted Turner,” Readers Digest, September, 1998). How tragic. His ordeal with his sister made him bitter instead of better. Ted Turner has a lot of things—but he doesn’t have the ONE THING that matters: Faith. Jesus said, “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul.” (Mark 8:36)

For an example of faith in midst of suffering, consider one of my spiritual heroes, George Mueller of Bristol. In the 1800s, Mueller was a pastor who operated an orphanage in Britain. He cared for over 30,000 orphans, and never once asked for financial support. God always supplied his needs, because he was a great man of faith. In 1870, his wife, Mary contracted an illness and died after months of suffering. George Mueller spoke at her funeral. Compare his attitude with that of Ted Turner. Mueller said: “I miss her in numberless ways, and shall miss her yet more and more. But as a child of God, and as a servant of the Lord Jesus, I bow, I am satisfied with the will of my Heavenly Father. I kiss continually the hand that has thus afflicted me.” (*George Mueller of Bristol*, A.T. Pierson, p.161)

As you face pain and adversity, is your response closer to Ted Turner’s or George Mueller’s? Job repented when his circumstances were still nasty—and he was totally transformed when he changed his mind about God. Remember this life-changing lesson: You can change your attitude easier than you can change your circumstances.

## 2. VINDICATION

After Job suffered the loss of all things precious, three “friends” came to comfort him. But as Job described them, they were “miserable comforters.” Instead of supporting Job, they accused him of being a wicked man who was getting what he deserved. I like to call them the “three theological stooges.” Their argument was logically developed: (1) The wicked suffer and the righteous prosper. (2) Job was obviously suffering. (3) Therefore Job was a wicked man. Your logic may be faultless, but if your premise is wrong, your conclusion will always be wrong. Job’s next turning point came when God vindicated Job before his friends.

It is described in Job 42:7-8: “After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what

is right, as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer [KJV: “him will I accept”] and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.”

God rebuked the three theological stooges because of their false statements. They were wrong about God and they were wrong about Job. In reality, Job wasn’t suffering because he was the *worst* of men. He was suffering because he was the *best* of men! Four times in this passage God calls Job, “my servant.”

Satan has many tools at his disposal, including people who have false concepts about God. Satan robbed Job of his fortune, fitness, and family. But Job refused to blame God. Satan even used Job’s wife, who counseled Job to “curse God and die.” But we must note that Satan can also use sincere religious people who believe they are making truthful statements about God. Job’s friends were sincere in their beliefs, but they were sincerely *wrong*.

### **Lesson: When you’re God’s servant, He is your Defender**

“Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them...[God is] a father to the fatherless, a DEFENDER of widows...” (Psalm 5:11; 68:5)

According to our American justice system, if you are arrested, you have the right to an attorney. If you can’t afford an attorney, one will be provided you by the court. But you also have the option of serving as your own defense attorney. But in order to defend yourself, you must “waive counsel.” In other words, to defend yourself, you must choose to forfeit your right to outside counsel. There is a saying in the legal community that “He who serves as his own lawyer always has a fool for a client.”

There is only one kind of person God defends: The defenseless. For many chapters Job had been arguing with his friends, defending himself. While he was busy defending himself, God wouldn’t defend him. But finally, Job gave up. He stopped talking and started repenting. That’s when God stepped up and began to defend him. Do you want God to be your Defender? Then, forfeit all your rights to Him.

### **3. INTERCESSION**

The next turning point in Job’s life was when Job began to intercede for his three friends. God instructed them to go to Job and make a burnt offering in his presence. This was Job’s final test. Would Job vent his hostility and resentment for these three men who had slandered him? Or would he accept the terms of God’s treaty and accept them and forgive them? This would have been the perfect occasion for Job to gloat and say, “Aha! Here you are! See, I told you I was right! You were wrong, and I was right!” But he passed the final test. Instead of extracting revenge, Job simply did what God commanded. He accepted his friends and prayed for them.

You can read about this tremendous turning point in Job 42:9-10. “So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them; and the Lord

accepted Job’s prayer. After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again [KJV: “turned his captivity”] and gave him twice as much as he had before.” To me, the most important word in that passage is the word “after.” When Job prayed for his friends, he was still in agony. It wasn’t until AFTER he interceded for them that God reversed his situation. Job had experienced God’s grace and forgiveness, so he was willing to show the same spirit to his friends.

Many think prayer is manipulating God to do something that he otherwise wouldn’t do. Some Christians think prayer is like rubbing Aladdin’s lamp, and God will appear and say, “Your wish is my command.” Wrong. Prayer is not getting God to do what we want—it is God getting us to do what He wants. And He wants us to forgive those who have hurt us.

### **Lesson: You are enslaved until you can pray for those who have hurt you**

Jesus said it this way, “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:28) I like the KJV phrasing which says “after Job had prayed for his friend, God turned Job’s captivity.” What captivity? Job was enslaved to his own attitude of bitterness and unforgiveness. His prayer indicated he was willing to forgive these three men just as God had forgiven him. The most common Hebrew word for “forgive” was *shalach*, which means “to release.” When you forgive someone, you release them from the grip of your grudge. And in the process of releasing them, you surrender your desire for revenge. When you forgive someone, you are released from the bondage of bitterness.

In my book, *Handling Life’s Disappointments*, I have a chapter on anger entitled, “When you Reach the Boiling Point.” I often come back to a quote in that chapter from Dr. S. I. McMillan: “The moment I start hating a man, I become his slave. I can’t even do my work anymore because he even controls my thoughts. The man I hate hounds me. I cannot escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. The person I resent may be miles from my bedroom, but more cruel than any slave driver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that even my inner spring mattress becomes a rack of torture.” (*None of These Diseases*, p. 72)

The point of your pain today may stem from someone who has hurt you deeply. Is there anyone who comes to your mind about whom you are harboring resentment? Have you tried praying for them? In order to talk to God about them, you must be willing to forgive them. Do yourself a favor: Forgive your enemies and start praying for them. It can be an enormous turning point in your life.

## **4. RESTORATION**

The final turning point in Job’s story occurred when God restored what Job had lost. It was more than a simple restoration, for we will see God gave Job back *more* than he ever had before. You can read about this restoration in Job 42:11-17. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring. The Lord blessed the later part of Job’s life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he

also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, (she later became famous for inventing pancakes for her nieces and nephews. No actually, her name means “Dove.”) the second Keziah, (which means cinnamon) and the third Keren-Happuch (which means “dark-eyes”). Nowhere in all the land were found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so he died, old and full of years. In His restoration of Job, God gave Job three specific blessings.

### **(1) God doubled his wealth**

After Job repented and prayed for his friends, things changed. He ended up with exactly twice as much livestock as before. In Job 1 he had 7,000 sheep, and in the end he had 14,000 sheep. He lost 3,000 camels, and in Chapter 42 we see he has 6,000 camels. In Chapter 1 he had 500 yoke of oxen (two per yoke = 1,000 oxen). In chapter 42, he has 2,000 head of oxen. He started out with 500 donkeys and in the end he had 1,000 donkeys.

If you wonder where he got his newfound wealth, notice it says Job’s brothers, sisters and other people came to see him to support him. They had heard Job had lost everything, so they responded to help Job. God could have just opened heaven and dropped money to Job, but He used these people to restore Job’s wealth. Each of them brought Job a piece of silver and a gold ring. No doubt, this outpouring of generosity provided the venture capital for Job’s financial recovery. When you serve God, don’t be surprised if He chooses to use other people to bless you.

### **(2) God doubled his children**

If you recall in Job 1, he had seven sons and three daughters. So when you read that God gave Job a double blessing in chapter 42 you might expect to see that God gave him 20 children. But instead, we read God gave Job 10 more children. When you discover the truth in this mathematical point, you’ll be blessed. Job had ten children in heaven plus ten children on earth, so he really had twenty children. Job hadn’t lost his ten original children, they were still his—he would be reunited with them—and today he is with them.

This should be a great comfort to any of you who have ever had the painful experience of burying a child. In II Samuel 12, King David had a newborn son who was critically ill. David prostrated himself on the ground praying and fasting for the child to recover. After a week, the child died. After the child died, David got up, cleaned up, and went to the House of God to worship. Some of his servants questioned his behavior. They said, “While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!” David’s response is one of the most powerful statements in the Bible about life after death. David said, “While the child was still alive I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” (II Samuel 12:22-23)

So if you’ve ever lost a child, realize that you didn’t *lose* that child, because you know where he or she is. And if you are a servant of Jesus Christ, that child cannot return to you, but you can go

to him or her.

I have a friend who buried a child. He told me one time, "I really have three children, two teenagers on earth and one child in heaven. Frankly, I worry sometimes about the two kids on earth, but I never worry a second about the one in heaven."

### **(3) God added life to his years**

People are looking for special diets, exercise, and medicine to add years to their lives. God offers something far better. He can add LIFE to your years! We read of Job, "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first...And so he died, old and full of years." (Job 42:12, 17) The phrase doesn't mean Job died as an old man, it means he lived a full life. And in the end, did you notice the description of Job's blessing? There is no mention of material blessings; instead Job's wealth was measured in terms of his family. He lived long enough to see his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and his great-great-grandchildren.

The older we get, the more we understand the greatest gifts we have are our relationships. You want to know how rich you are? Consider everything you have that money can't buy, and death can't take away, and you'll discover how rich you really are.

### **Lesson: God always saves the BEST for LAST!**

People often speak of the patience of Job—but patience is a passive emotion. What Job really had was *perseverance*—and that's an active conviction. The New Testament gives us the last word on Job in James 5:11: "We consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."

## **CONCLUSION**

Do you recall the first public miracle of Jesus? It was at a wedding party in Cana where Jesus was a guest. They had run out of wine, which was a terrible breach of hospitality. Jesus' mother asked Him to do something, so Jesus quietly changed water into wine. When the guest of honor tasted this new wine he made this observation to the groom, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." (John 2:10)

That's the difference between Jesus and the devil. The devil always serves his best first and then it gets progressively worst. The prodigal son started out with wine, women, and song, but he ended up with pigs, slop, and filth. That's a picture of sin. There may be the initial thrill of sin, but the next time it's not quite as thrilling. That's why millions are constantly searching for the next pill, the next snort, or the next on-the-edge experience to break the boredom. The world, the flesh, and the devil always operate according the law of diminishing returns. What starts as a moment of pleasure always ends up as an eternity of misery.

But with Jesus, He always saves the best for last. As the song says, "Every day with Jesus is

sweeter than the day before." Job *had* to receive his reward in this life in order to complete the object lesson for us. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the best part of your existence is ahead of you—it may come after you die, but it *will* come. Think about this: if you aren't a Christian, this is as good as it will ever get for you. But for those of us who know Jesus, we will experience the joy of the Lord forever and ever amen. Christians really do live happily ever after and ever after.

Robert Browning expressed this truth when he wrote: Grow old along with me! / The best is yet to be, / The last of life, for which the first was made: / Our times are in His hand / Who saith, "A whole I planned, / Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Are you looking for some turning points? Did you notice that what Job DID triggered the turning points? When he repented, then God vindicated him. When he prayed for his tormentors, then God rewarded his faithfulness. Is there something you need to repent of today? Are there people you need to pray for and forgive? God is waiting to prove Himself strong on your behalf.

Wouldn't it have been sad if the book of Job ended with chapter 41? At that point, Job was still miserable, weak, and poor. But Job didn't quit. He persevered. And there was a chapter 42 in which he was rewarded for his faithfulness. Right now, you may be in Job 41. Don't quit. Don't give up on God. He always saves the best for last!

## OUTLINE

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Lesson: You can change your attitude easier than you can change your circumstances.

### 2. VINDICATION (Job 42:7-8)

Lesson: When you're God's servant, He is your Defender.

### 3. INTERCESSION (Job 42:9-10)

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### 4. RESTORATION (Job 42:11-17)

- (1) God doubled his wealth
- (2) God doubled his children
- (3) God added life to his years

Lesson: God always saves the BEST for LAST!



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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes