

**Job's Humility Before God**

**Lesson Scope:** [Job 40:3-5](#) and [chapter 42](#)

**Lesson Focus**

Job had been tested severely. Earlier, he had wrestled with the fact that God is answerable to no one. Now Job did not seek to blame the Lord for his losses. He was finished with trying to understand why he had suffered. Job's response had changed to "Behold, I am vile." His broken and contrite spirit was what God desired. And significantly, now he was beginning to see the reason for his trials. "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

As Job sought to find answers to his hard trials, he wondered whether God was to blame. He even considered a head-on debate with God, but reason forbade him. His endless questions turned into endless awe and adoration. Job saw himself the way God viewed him. Now his attitude was that of Isaiah—"Woe is me" (Isaiah 6:5).

The unfolding of the rest of the story emphasizes the importance of Job's humility before God. As he surrendered, he was able to intercede for his friends. Yes, they had wronged him, but he did not remember that any more. His changed view of his own trials had allowed him to reach beyond himself and to be a blessing to others.

We do not pursue humility so that others may see it. But just the same, do underscore that humility in the heart will have real, visible, practical expressions.

That the Almighty exists and superintends the affairs of men is no question. But how do we view our own unexplained tests and trials? The voice of God demands a response. When confronted by God's sovereignty and holiness, man sees his need to "repent in dust and ashes."

**Lesson Aim:** To portray characteristics of a humble response before the Almighty.

**Theme Verse:** [Ecclesiastes 5:2](#). Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

## Lesson Text

### Contrition

Job 40:3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Job 42:1-6<sup>1</sup> Then Job answered the LORD, and said,<sup>2</sup> I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee.<sup>3</sup> Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.<sup>4</sup> Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.<sup>5</sup> I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.<sup>6</sup> Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

### Intercession

Job 42:7-10<sup>7</sup> And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is* right, as my servant Job *hath*.<sup>8</sup> Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your* folly, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is* right, like my servant Job.<sup>9</sup> So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.<sup>10</sup> And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

### Restoration

Job 42:10-17<sup>10</sup> And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.<sup>11</sup> Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.<sup>12</sup> So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.<sup>13</sup> He had also seven sons and three daughters.<sup>14</sup> And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.<sup>15</sup> And

in all the land were no women found *so* fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. <sup>16</sup> After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations. <sup>17</sup> So Job died, *being* old and full of days.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Contrition**

1. How had Job's attitude toward God changed?
2. How does worldly wisdom threaten humility today?
3. List experiences in life that help to keep us humble.

### **Intercession**

4. How was Job's intercession for his friends Christlike?
5. How should we be interceding for others?
6. How does obedience foster humility?

### **Restoration**

7. Explain the relationship between Job's prayer (Job 42:10) and God's approval of him.
8. How does God promise to reward the humble?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

One meaning of vile (Job 40:4) is "small." Job was confessing that he was of little account compared to God.

In Job 21:5, Job had instructed Zophar to lay his hand upon his mouth. Now Job was expressing the need to take his own counsel.

In Job 42:3, Job restated the question God had challenged him with in Job 38:2 and admitted that he had been speaking about things that he did not understand.

Job had suffered unjustly at the ill-advised words of his friends. Yet he kindly performed the work of a mediator on their behalf (Job 42:8), thus typifying Christ, who forgave many injustices, committing Himself "to him that judgeth righteously."

The Bible records that Job had spoken "the thing which is right (Job 42:8), but he still needed mercy (Job 42:10). As Job extended mercy to his friends, God was merciful to him. Thus the captivating circumstances brought on by the destructive purposes of the devil were reversed.

After Job had submitted himself to God's refining fire, God displayed His approval of Job's response to his difficulty (Job 42:16). His blessings included twice as many animals and as many children as he had

lost. Truly "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning," both physically and spiritually.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Contrition**

1. A humble person is speechless as he surveys the sovereignty and wisdom of God (Job 40:4-5). Meditating on the beauty and order of God's creation leads us to conclude that we could not improve on His design. If all the nations of the world are as the drop of a bucket in His sight, how small are we? Just the same, God's ability to order the events of our lives surpasses our best foresight. Seeking to place a blame for our trials is like trying to edit God's foreknowledge.

2. The humble readily acknowledge God's omnipotence and omniscience (Job 42:1-2). Do we question God's power to overrule in the political developments of our day? May our faith prevail! We bear the most effective witness to God's power when we submit to the circumstances He allows us to go through.

3. The humble acknowledge that their understanding is very limited (Job 42:3). The worldly wise asserts himself, proud of his wealth of knowledge gained from "ever learning." What about our knowledge? Do we consider ourselves professionals in the business world? The fear of the Lord, which leads to true wisdom, begins with humility. It is of greater value than any skill or certification we have. Our confidence rests in our faith in the Infinite, who is the source of all knowledge worth having.

4. A humble person finds fulfillment in a growing relationship with God (Job 42:5). Seeing God is one thing; knowing Him as a Father is quite another. Have sickness, death, financial difficulty, or ridicule been steppingstones that brought us ever nearer to God?

But beware, for "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Galatians 5:17) and would have us find fulfillment rather in our close-knit family, our multitude of social engagements, or the success of our business.

5. Abhorrence of one's sinful nature and selfish tendencies is a mark of humility (Job 42:6). Our flesh wants to stand up and justify itself, defend its "rights," and make sure the other party understands our side of the story. But if we would have the Spirit of God dwell in us (Romans 8:9), we must exercise the spiritual discipline of giving the other person the benefit of the doubt. "Every prince limps," and we are no exception,

so we had best confess our faults now and again.

### **Intercession**

6. The humble are willing to intercede for those who have done them wrong (Job 42:8). Abraham's intercession for Lot obviously was more noble than an interest in material gain. He was specifically interested in Lot's soul. God still needs intercessors to beseech Him on behalf of those whom we hear speaking ill-advisedly of God, as Job's three friends did.

7. A humble person will respond in ready obedience to the Almighty (Job 42:9). God may be asking us to intercede for a brother, a neighbor, or a business contact. Or we may be the one who needs to confess our fault to our brethren, so that they can intercede for us. Both situations call for a humble attitude.

Humility finally creates the dividing line between obedience and rebellion. We may say, "Yea, hath God said?" in an attempt to explain away a rule or position. We may try to justify our actual, erroneous position by saying "The issue is not that simple." Or we can submit to and obey the authority over us, truly keeping the rule or position simple, for yea, God hath said.

8. The Lord accepts the humble (Job 42:9). God notices sincerity, and He delights in giving His approval to the seeker who has done all in his power to find Him. Humility is not a credential we can show, but a path of daily commitment to God's way for us. It is only then that "thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).

9. The intercessory prayer of the humble moves the heart of God (Job 42:10). Sodom was not destroyed until Lot was safely out, because someone had prayed. Although God is all-powerful and all-knowing, He has chosen to allow men to influence Him by means of their prayers. If each of us faithfully prays for the "Lots" in our day, God will remember us as "God remembered Abraham" (Genesis 19:29).

### **Restoration**

10. The humble are richly rewarded by the Lord (Job 42:10-17). "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165). "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). "I have ... not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

### **Important Teachings**

1. A humble person is speechless as he surveys the sovereignty and

wisdom of God (Job 40:4-5).

2. The humble readily acknowledge God's omnipotence and omniscience (Job 42:1-2).
3. The humble acknowledge that their understanding is very limited (Job 42:3).
4. A humble person finds fulfillment in a growing relationship with God (Job 42:5).
5. Abhorrence of one's sinful nature and selfish tendencies is a mark of humility (Job 42:6).
6. The humble are willing to intercede for those who have done them wrong (Job 42:8).
7. A humble person will respond in ready obedience to the Almighty (Job 42:9).
8. The Lord accepts the humble (Job 42:9).
9. The intercessory prayer of the humble moves the heart of God (Job 42:10).
10. The humble are richly rewarded by the Lord (Job 42:10-17).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. How had Job's attitude toward God changed?

He stopped trying to figure out the reason for his trials. He submitted completely to God's sovereignty. This allowed him to see God's greatness more fully. He was speechless—he had no answers to God's questions. Instead, he desired to learn from these experiences.

2. How does worldly wisdom threaten humility today? The worldly wise are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Thinking of ourselves as professionals and as having the answers is a threat. Competing unduly with others in business or promoting our products or services as superior neither communicates nor produces humility. It makes room for pride and pushing others down.

3. List experiences in life that help to keep us humble.

This includes personal failure or sin. We are humbled when our children do not learn life's lessons as fast as they should. We are humbled by our limited understanding of the broad scope of God's plan, of His wisdom in Creation, and of His love in salvation. Our efforts to accomplish God's work are so small.

4. How was Job's intercession for his friends Christlike?

It showed that he went beyond human nature, forgiving others who had inflicted pain on him. It showed love for those who were unkind. He laid down all personal "rights."

5. How should we be interceding for others?

Job's intercession seems to have been a special, one-time experience, although he certainly may have continued praying for his friends. Abraham's intercession for Lot was short and intense. We have similar situations at times, but often we relate to continuing needs. We should be ready to intercede intensely, frequently, and persistently.

6. How does obedience foster humility?

True obedience is submission to the authority of another. Obedience may include confessing our faults to our brethren so that they can intercede for us. This requires humility. Obedience crucifies the "Yea, hath God said?" attitude. Simple commandments are sometimes the hardest ones to simply do, instead of questioning them.

7. Explain the relationship between Job's prayer (Job 42:10) and God's approval of him.

Job had experienced God's mercy and forgiveness. He was now in a position to desire the same for his friends.

8. How does God promise to reward the humble?

He promises peace in knowing they have done the will of God, confirmed by His nearness. He has promised to meet our daily needs. He promises to exalt us in "due time." This may not be in this life; it is part of the eternal reward.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Humility is not a cloak that we put on and take off at will. Rather, it is a virtue that should be seen more than heard. The humble are those God delights in using for His work, for He has more obscure tasks that need to be done than prominent ones. While the Lord does not promise us the quantity of material wealth that He restored to Job, His blessings are sufficient to make service sweet.

### **Research Guide**

Read the chapter titled "Humility" in *Doctrines of the Bible* by Daniel Kauffman