

# JOB - JESUS - YOU

AN EXAMPLE IN SUFFERING



A PASEO PATHWAY STUDY

# PASEO PATHWAY

HEART, SOUL, MIND, STRENGTH, NEIGHBOR

**28** One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

**29** “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

**MARK 12:28-31**

# PASEOPATHWAY

The Paseo Pathway is Paseo del Rey Church's method of discipleship. Jesus makes it clear in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), that his followers have been given a singular charge: to make disciples of all nations. This begs the question. What is a disciple?

## **MAKEDISCIPLES**

The word for disciple in the New Testament comes from the Greek word, *mathetes*, which means, "one who engages in learning through instruction from another." In other words, a disciple is a student. However, we need to be clear about the differences between the Biblical world's understanding of a student and ours. Disciples of teachers were common in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Philosophers and religious teachers would gain disciples, but the disciples didn't seek to just learn from the teacher's lectures. This wasn't a classroom teacher-to-student style learning from today. Instead, the disciples would follow the teacher throughout their everyday life. They sought to learn not just their teachings, but their character and lifestyle as well. In other words, disciples followed teachers in order to become like their teachers.

This puts a new twist on our understanding of what being a disciple of Christ means. We aren't just believers and we are not just invited to come and learn from his teachings. We are invited to come and know him, live everyday life with him, and in so doing become like him. But unlike earthly teachers, when you grow to know and have a relationship with Jesus to this level, you will find that not only will your knowledge of him grow, but your love for him will grow as well. In fact, this is God's ultimate aim in our discipleship! To see him, learn about him, grow to know him, and fall in love with him more and more.

## **MEASURINGGROWTH**

Simply put, if Jesus says loving him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves are the two most important things to God, then those are the things we need to focus on. The Paseo Pathway, our method of discipleship, has two major focuses, growing in our love of God in every aspect of our life and loving our neighbors in genuine, selfless, relational ways. Growth is not measured simply by growing in knowledge, though knowledge is good. It is not measured by acts of service, though serving is good. It is not measured by attitude or church attendance, though both are good. It is measured by love in all aspects of our lives.

## **HEART = LOVING GOD WITH OUR EMOTIONS**

SOUL = LOVING GOD WITH OUR TRUE SELVES

MIND = LOVING GOD WITH OUR INTELLIGENCE AND THOUGHTS

STRENGTH = LOVING GOD WITH OUR EFFORTS

NEIGHBOR = LOVING EVERYONE AROUND US ALWAYS

Growing in love for God and others is the greatest goal of the Pathway. As you read and as you meet, as you share and as you support, do so with the desire to grow in love. As you encourage those in your group, do so with the greatest focus on seeing them grow in love.

## **HOWTOWALK**

The Pathway, like everything God does, is not meant to be walked alone; it's meant to be shared and experienced with a group of friends. It is far more like developing a relationship than it is like a class or process. At least, that is our hope for all of us involved. But in order for it to maintain that focus, you must commit to not treat scripture reading like homework and group times like classrooms. Instead, every bit of scripture reading is an opportunity to meet with God and grow in your love for him. Every time you gather with friends or serve is an opportunity to love others as yourself.

Everything about the Pathway hinges on you making a commitment to what we call REALationships. Yes I know that is misspelled. We spelled it that way to make a point. Be REAL and Be Relational. Be this with God and be this with others. Bring your whole, messy, un-put-together, unperfected self and be honest about who you are and what you are struggling with. And in the Grace of Jesus you will experience life and growth.

Each week on the pathway you will be asked to meet with God on your own through Scripture reading and journaling. This may be a completely new practice for you, so be patient. Picture it like a daily time to sit down and chat with God. He will speak to you through scripture and His Spirit, and you will speak to him through your prayers and response. At the end of each week you'll gather with your friends and have meaningful conversations about what your time in scripture and what God has impressed upon you. Your group's leader will have questions to help guide these conversations, but this is not meant to be used like a teacher and a classroom. Remember, this is all about relationships. So if you don't like the questions, ditch them. The main point is to focus on what God is saying through scripture and how he wants to use that to affect change in your life. In particular, *how can what you've been reading deepen your love for God and others?*

# JOB, JESUS, AND YOU

*An Example In Suffering*

*“run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

**Hebrews 12:1-3**

## WHYJOB

The book of Job exists because suffering exists. And anyone who has ever believed in God as a good God has had troubles understanding why suffering exists. We run to God and we demand to know why. The clearest answer we have from God comes in Job. But he does not answer the way we expect him to.

Instead of answering why suffering exists, the book of Job simply seeks to correct our prideful assumptions about him. Its purpose is ultimately to show that God does NOT operate on Karma. He is far beyond our comprehension and understanding. And anything or anyone that assumes they understand the reasons for God's actions in this universe overstep their bounds. They, like Job's friends and even like Job himself, assume they are capable of understanding God. Job's conclusion, though, is simple:

*Then Job replied to the Lord:*

*2 "I know that you can do all things;  
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.  
3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without  
knowledge?'  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know."*

Job ultimately does not give answers for why suffering exists. It does the exact opposite. It drives us to not even ask such questions because they assume too much of ourselves and too little of God.

## READINGJOB

Understanding the genre of Job is extremely helpful in reading Job. It belongs to a genre of books in the Hebrew Bible known as Wisdom Literature. It is not one of the biographical books like 1st or 2nd Kings, but is instead laid out like an epic poem. Chapters 1 and 2 are prose and set the scene. Chapters 3 through the beginning of 42 are Hebrew poetry. And the book concludes with another prose section describing Job's restoration. Job is notorious amongst Hebrew scholars as being hard to translate as it contains more Hebrew words that are only found in the book of Job than any other respective book of the Hebrew Bible. In other words, the author had a massive, fancy vocabulary and was an extremely gifted poet. God uses those gifts to capture an incredible story that teaches humbling truths about the magnificence of God and the insignificance of man.

## OUR EXAMPLE

What Job is not intended to do is give an example of how to suffer. No, for that we turn to Jesus. In fact, Jesus and Job have many things in common. They both are seen as good. They both suffer unfairly. They both are restored. What they don't have in common is how they suffer.

We have to decide who we will adopt as our example in times of suffering. Will we suffer like Job - indignant, angry, entitled, proud? Or will we suffer like Jesus - humble, trusting, hope filled, glorifying? Scripture challenges us to:

*run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3)*

Notice the assumptions and the assertions of these verses. We have a race marked out for us. It will require perseverance. We will be tempted to grow weary AND lose heart. The solution to this is to choose to fix our eyes on Jesus and consider how he handled the hard times in his race.

## THE CHARACTERS

So as we study Job we will also study Jesus. And then we will reflect. Therefore, let us start by introducing the characters in this study.

First, there's Job. Not much is known about him. We know he lives in a far east land called Uz. We know he is most likely not an Israelite. We know he loves Yahweh, is wealthy, and has a large family. We don't know what time period he lives in. We don't know how he got his wealth. We don't know much about him. And all of that seems intentional so that you and I can relate to him. But we do know he lives in the Old Testament, meaning he existed pre-Jesus and the New Way. He's a person on Earth under God's authority. He's not perfect but he is good (even God says so). And he suffers. He suffers greatly. Here is what we know about his suffering:

- God allows his suffering. This is uncomfortable to deal with, but it is an inescapable part of the study of Job. God allows the accuser, Satan, to test Job's faith through suffering.
- Job loses his family and his wealth and eventually his health. He becomes so disfigured with sores and a skin disease that he is unrecognizable.
- He holds on to his trust in God at first, but then he finally snaps and curses the day he was born. He loses all hope and trust in God and by the end of the book he demands that God come and give him a reason for his suffering.

- He has friends, but their opinions on God are not accurate or helpful. His friends operate on the idea that God brings good things to good people and bad things to bad people. Yet, we know from God's conversation with Satan that Job does nothing to deserve his suffering.
- Job is never given a reason for his suffering. Instead, God simply points Job to his own smallness, ignorance, and powerlessness in comparison to God.
- In the end, Job repents of his lack of trust and anger. God restores him. He brings back his wealth and even gives him a larger family.

Second, there is Jesus. The Son of God who left his throne of glory and clothed himself in humanity to take on the sins of the world. He lived, ministered, and died sometime around 30 A.D. in Israel under the rule of the Roman Empire. He was perfect and without sin. The only fully righteous person to ever walk this Earth. Yet, he suffered. He suffered greatly. Here is what we know about his suffering:

- God ordained his suffering. This is also uncomfortable to deal with. We often wonder if there wasn't another way for God to have handled our guilt. Yet, as God teaches Job, our discomfort and lack of understanding for God's purposes are irrelevant. We were not there when God established the earth. His ways are not our ways.
- Jesus lost everything, including his life. He went from Heaven's glory to the grave's darkness. He was beaten and disfigured, mocked and ridiculed, crucified and pierced.
- Jesus also had three friends who sat with him in his time of anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane. They also proved to be of little help as they kept falling asleep.
- While Job lost all trust in God, Jesus trusted God through it all. Though he did not want to drink the cup of suffering, he ultimately ended his prayer in the Garden with "your will be done." And he took the suffering head on with an enduring trust.
- While Job assumed God had forsaken him, God truly did forsake Jesus. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
- Jesus endured because of his hope of the coming joy set before him (Hebrews 12:2). He knew God had promised eventual good despite present suffering.
- God restored Jesus to life and restored him to glory, sitting him once again at his right hand side.

And finally, there is you. We know a lot about you. You live here and now in the 21st century. Like everyone else who has walked this planet besides Jesus, you are imperfect and sinful. You have worries and fears. You have joys and loves. You have embarrassment and shame. And like Job, and like Jesus you have suffering. But, because of Jesus, you have some things Job did not. Here is what we know about your suffering:

- At the minimum, God allows suffering, at most God ordains it. Either way it is uncomfortable and we often want to know why and rarely are we ever given an answer.

- Suffering is inevitable. Life on this side of heaven is imperfect, fallen, and under the curse of death. And yet all suffering only points to the reality that things are not as they should be. Suffering causes us to join all of creation in yearning for God to remove the curse of decay and restore all things to life.
- We also have friends who will let us down as we suffer. Some will try to give trite answers and bad worldly theology. Others will seem like they're sleeping on the job. None will truly grasp the depth of our emotions. This isn't true for all friends, but rarely will there be a friend who ministers to us perfectly.
- Unless of course you consider the Holy Spirit. Unlike Job, we have the presence of God in our hearts and lives through the Holy Spirit. He is closer than a friend and is given to minister to us in our times of trouble. Job lived pre-cross and pre-pentecost, so he did not have the power of the Holy Spirit in his life. We do!
- Unlike Jesus, we never have to question whether God has forsaken us. God forsook Jesus on the cross so that he'll never have to forsake us in life or death. We have this promise at our core.
- All suffering is only temporary. God ultimately promises good. He promises to remove the curse and make all things new. Like Jesus, we have a joy set before us.

## OURSTUDY

Each week's reading will include three sections of reading: a Job section, a Jesus section, and a Questions section. The Job section will be the longest portion of reading since we are trying to cover 42 chapters in five weeks. However, the other sections are equally important to the overall desire of this study: *to become more like Christ even in the midst of suffering.*

It is important to understand when studying Job that the bulk of the book is purposefully meant to show bad theology. The book opens with a debate between God and Satan about the reason for Job's faithfulness to God. The debate results in God allowing Satan to cause suffering to Job. What follows is the "bad theology" section. Three friends come to Job to offer their reasoning for why Job is suffering. They each speak and Job responds. This cycle of debate takes place three times. Then a fourth friend comes and he offers his thoughts. He's closer to the truth, but still assumes too much of his understanding of God. The book ends with Job demanding God to come and give an answer for why he has allowed a good man to suffer. God shows up and the result is Job ultimately repenting of his pride and ignorance. The story then ends with God restoring more to Job than he had lost. Understanding the context of what you are reading in Job is paramount. The correction to the bad theology does not come until God speaks in the end.

The book can be broken down as follows:

- I. Controversy between God and Satan over Job (1:1-2:13)
- II. First Cycle of Debate (3:1-14:22)
- III. Second Cycle of Debate (15:1-21:34)
- IV. Third Cycle of Debate (22:1-26:14)
- V. Final Defense of Job (27:1-31:40)
- VI. Solution of Elihu (32:1-37:24)
- VII. Controversy between God and Job (38:1-42:17)

Watch the Bible Project video on Job: [www.paseodelrey.org/paseo-pathway-job](http://www.paseodelrey.org/paseo-pathway-job)

### **WEEKONE**

Job Section - Job 1:1-2:13

Jesus Section - Matthew 26:57-27:61

Questions -

1. What are the similarities between Job and Jesus? What are the differences between Job and Jesus that you can discern so far?
2. Would understanding why you suffer help you endure it any more or less? Why? What role does God's glory play in our suffering?
3. How can Jesus' story help us "not grow weary and lose heart" in the middle of suffering?

### **WEEKTWO**

Job Section - Job 3:1-14:22

Jesus Section - Romans 5:1-11

Questions -

1. What are the differences in how Job and his friends understand God's actions towards sinners and what Romans 5 actually teaches?
2. Job's perceived hope for God's renewal in his life is that he was a good man and undeserving of any suffering. What does Romans 5 say is our actual hope as believers?
3. How can Romans 5 help us "not grow weary and lose heart" in the middle of suffering?

### **WEEKTHREE**

Job Section - 15:1-26:14

Jesus Section - Hebrews 4:14-16

Questions -

1. What are the differences in how Job's friends approach Job in his anguish and how Hebrews 4 says Christ approaches us in our anguish?
  - a. What lessons can we glean from this in offering comfort to friends as they are suffering?
  - b. What lessons can we glean from this in receiving comfort from friends as we suffer?
2. How does Job approach God in the passages when he speaks? How is that different than how Hebrews 4 tells us to approach God?
3. How can Hebrews 4 help us to "not grow weary and lose heart" in the middle of suffering?

### **WEEKFOUR**

Job Section - Job 27:1-37:24

Jesus Section - 1 Peter 2:21-25, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Questions -

1. What is the difference in how Job responds to the people hurling insults at him verses how Jesus responded to those insulting him?
2. Elihu is certain that he understands God's justice, yet how does Jesus' death shape our actual understanding of God's justice?
3. How can these passages help us to "not grow weary and lose heart" in the middle of suffering?

**WEEK FIVE**

Job Section - Job 38:1-42:17

Jesus Section - Matthew 26:36-44

Questions -

1. What are differences in how Job approaches God in prayer and how Jesus approaches God in prayer?
2. How is it helpful to see Jesus struggle with fear in the Garden of Gethsemane? Do you think he also struggled with trust?
3. How can Jesus' prayer in the Garden help you to "not grow weary and lose heart" in the middle of suffering?