

## **WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR ONE**

### **We Reap What Adam Sowed – The Curse/Chapter Six: The Example of Job (application)**

There is little doubt that throughout his sufferings, Job asks the question: “Why me?” He had every right to verbalize his confusion, frustration and pain in regard to what he was facing. In a very poignant moment recorded in chapter three, Job wishes he were dead, while repeatedly asking “why?” He goes so far as to wish he had never been born (3:16). Yet these are not the utterances of someone who is suicidal. The expressions of despair recorded in Job 3 are the normal responses of a person coping with life’s futility and a sense of hopelessness brought on by adversity. What a contrast between Job’s humble submission to the will of God in 1:21 and his despairing cry beginning in 3:1. It reveals that he was human and not made of iron, and had reached a point in his ordeal where he had no desire to keep living, if living meant continued suffering. At the same time, God never condones the taking of one’s own life. In spite of his lament, Job knew that suicide was not an option. We must be convinced of the same, no matter how difficult our life may become.

Nevertheless, Job did cross a line when he moved from confused frustration to angry rebellion. In so doing, he ceased asking “why me,” and began demanding “why?” of God, as to the cause of his suffering (19:22; 24:1; 27:2; 30:20-21). When Job crossed that line, he earned a well-deserved rebuke from God (38:1-41:34), and so will we. In addition, when going through a time of trial, it is important to remember the cosmic challenge issued by Satan in the presence of God concerning Job (1:9-11). There is no reason to think that a similar challenge isn’t being presented by the devil in regard to others who affirm a similar loyalty toward God, especially in light of Revelation 12:9-10. If you have made such a commitment, be sure of this: your loyalty will be questioned by the devil and tested by God, in the context of adversity.

Even though Job was a man of the highest moral character, he wasn’t perfect. His suffering reveals an area of weakness and provides him with much needed refinement. As he continues in his affliction under the merciless harassment of his “comforters,” a self-righteous pride comes pouring forth from within him, in protesting his undeserved pain and heartache. It was this pride which caused him to cross the line from despair to anger, from asking God “why me?” to accusing Him of injustice. Elihu makes this very point in chapters 32-37, defending God as being just (34:10), and rebuking Job for claiming the opposite (33:13,17; 35:12-16). His discourse is crucial, in that it receives no response from Job and no rebuke from God. It is also not coincidental. Elihu’s comments occur at precisely the right moment, preparing Job for his confrontation with God Himself, in chapters 38-41.

The positive end result of Job’s suffering reveals an attitude of self-righteous pride, buried deep within his fallen human nature. It was this dross that came forth from his golden character, as the heat was turned up in his furnace of affliction. While this process was both humbling and painful, it provided Job with a necessary and deeper level of spiritual refinement, as he readily admits in 42:1-6. This development is necessary in the life of every follower of our Savior. As we will learn in future studies, it cannot be duplicated through any of the other Christian disciplines, as worthy and beneficial as they may be. Every Christian who reaches that higher level of spiritual growth and development through those disciplines, must then learn from the depths of personal experience, the profound meaning of that simple proverb: “no pain, no gain.” And for those who would be inclined to disagree, I will respectfully refer you to Hebrews 5:8.