



Eternal PERSPECTIVE *Job*

BIBLE TEXT | JOB 15:1-35

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: **2** "Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? **3** Should he argue in unprofitable talk, or in words with which he can do no good? **4** But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God. **5** For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. **6** Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; your own lips testify against you. **7** "Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills? **8** Have you listened in the council of God? And do you limit wisdom to yourself? **9** What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not clear to us? **10** Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father. **11** Are the comforts of God too small for you, or the word that deals gently with you? **12** Why does your heart carry you away, and why do your eyes flash, **13** that you turn your spirit against God and bring such words out of your mouth? **14** What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous? **15** Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight; **16** how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water! **17** "I will show you; hear me, and what I have seen I will declare **18** (what wise men have told, without hiding it from their fathers, **19** to whom alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them). **20** The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, through all the years that are laid up for the ruthless. **21** Dreadful sounds are in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer will come upon him. **22** He does not believe that he will return out of darkness, and he is marked for the sword. **23** He wanders abroad for bread, saying, "Where is it?" He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand; **24** distress and anguish terrify him; they prevail against him, like a king ready for battle. **25** Because he has stretched out his hand against God and defies the Almighty, **26** running stubbornly against him with a thickly bossed shield; **27** because he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat upon his waist **28** and has lived in desolate cities, in houses that none should inhabit, which were ready to become heaps of ruins; **29** he will not be rich, and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the earth; **30** he will not depart from darkness; the flame will dry up his shoots, and by the breath of his mouth he will depart. **31** Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself, for emptiness will be his payment. **32** It will be paid in full before his time, and his branch will not be green. **33** He will shake off his unripe grape like the vine, and cast off his blossom like the olive tree. **34** For the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of bribery. **35** They conceive trouble and give birth to evil, and their womb prepares deceit."



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DEVOTIONAL FOR JOB 15:1-35

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As we read in Job 14, Job is understandably in despair concerning his present circumstances. He considers the frailty of men (Job 14:2) compared to the might of God and prays for God's mercy on him (Job 14:3-6). Then he ponders his impending death out of self-pity and questions if there is anything beyond the grave (Job 14:7-12). Finally he longs for the grave with the hope of something beyond (Job 14:13-17).

While earlier in Job 4:2, Eliphaz was gentle and courteous, in chapter 15, he speaks up a second time to criticize Job. Eliphaz lets Job know that his self-defensive speeches are now useless and no longer persuasive. During his rebuke, Eliphaz criticizes Job's prayer life by saying "you are...hindering meditation before God", but how would he even know that (verse 4)?

These few verses made me ponder ways in which I might "hinder meditation before God." Do I pray often enough or regularly enough? Do I prepare my heart properly first before praying? Are my prayers too formal or redundant to the point that I'm not allowing myself to really pour out my heart to God when I need to? When I pray, do I pray with complete faith or is there sometimes doubt and maybe even a little bit of unbelief?

According to the teachings and traditions of that time, Job's friends are convinced that they "know" for a fact that Job is definitely a sinner in need of repentance. But, Job, on the other hand, "knows" that he is blameless, and there must be some other reason for his many troubles. Have you ever been in a situation or have something happen to you that you honestly felt like you didn't deserve, or even wondered why God was punishing you?

During my twenties and thirties, God was like a distant relative who I only called when I wanted something. I was rebellious and insisted on living my life my way, knowing very well the difference between right and wrong, but allowing the desires of this world to rule my life, which usually resulted in pain or hurt or depression. During those times, I dismissed the disappointments as consequences for my sinful choices. I believed I deserved every bad thing that happened to me, so I simply ignored them and moved on. However, there were a few times when I realized that my sinful actions were getting out of hand, or I felt guilty or ashamed. Then I would actually strive to be better as long as I could, but still on my own.



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I remember once getting off work at 2 am and standing in line at a gas station to get a money order to pay my electric bill. I had \$300 on me and I held it tightly close to my chest under my jacket to protect it. When I got to the window, I asked the cashier for a money order. As I was handing him the cash, this man came from out of nowhere, grabbed the cash out of my hand and ran across the street into the darkness. No one attempted to stop him or run after him. I was left standing there with a dumbfounded look on my face and no money.

I remember driving home that night, trying to think of what specifically I had done to deserve that, much like Job was thinking. I even appealed my case to God, reminding Him that I had really been trying to do better and I felt like I didn't deserve that. And now, what was I supposed to do? I eventually concluded that the man who robbed me must've needed that money worse than I did. God ended up providing more than I needed to pay that bill. He wanted a relationship with me and for me to trust Him in my problems.

Job trusted God, despite his turmoil. He never lost faith in God and he sincerely wanted to resolve whatever had brought about all his problems. Do you seek God fervently, both in good times and bad?

Questions:

1. Do you ever question God when something bad happens in your life, and wonder what you did to deserve it?
2. Do you ever doubt God's intentions or plans when your life is not going smoothly or when there seems to be no end to your problems?
3. Do you tend to spend less time abiding with God during the times when your life is going well and you have no worries?