

Withstanding Suffering

There was a man named Job, living in the land of Uz, who worshiped God and was faithful to him. He was a good man, careful not to do anything evil. Job 1:1 (GNT)

Satan replied, “Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it? You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country. But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!” Job 1:9-11 (GNT)

When we suffer, we’re tempted to turn from God.

Then Job got up and tore his clothes in grief. He shaved his head and threw himself face downward on the ground. He said, “I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The LORD gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!” In spite of everything that had happened, Job did not sin by blaming God. Job 1:20-22 (GNT)

When we suffer, we grieve.

Satan replied, “A person will give up everything in order to stay alive. But now suppose you hurt his body—he will curse you to your face!” Job 2:4-5 (GNT)

Job went and sat by the garbage dump and took a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores. His wife said to him, “You are still as faithful as ever, aren’t you? Why don’t you curse God and die?” Job 2:8-9 (GNT)

Then they sat there on the ground with him for seven days and nights without saying a word, because they saw how much he was suffering. Job 2:13 (GNT)

When we suffer, we need others.

Finally Job broke the silence and cursed the day on which he had been born. Job 3:1 (GNT)

When we suffer, we can become angry.

I would state my case before him and present all the arguments in my favor. I want to know what he would say and how he would answer me. Job 23:4-5 (GNT)

When we suffer, we question.

From out of a storm, the LORD said to Job: Why do you talk so much when you know so little? Job 38:1-2 (CEV)

When we suffer, we don’t understand.

I heard about you from others; now I have seen you with my own eyes. Job 42:5 (CEV)

When we suffer, God is with us in the midst of it.

Talk About It

1. Have you ever been to an emergency room or in a hospital? What was that like for you?
2. How did the family you grew up in deal with the big problems of life?
3. When is a time you felt unjustly accused or completely misunderstood? What was that like for you?
4. What do you think of the idea that if you obey God you'll be blessed, and if you aren't blessed it's because you didn't obey God?
5. What do you think of the idea that people obey God primarily for what they get out of it?
6. When is a time your faith was tested? How did you respond?
7. What's a loss you've experienced? How did you cope?
8. When is a time you experienced something that tempted you to turn your back on God?
9. When is a time you asked God "Why?"
10. When is a time you got angry with God?
11. What do you think of the concept that God's love is greater than our suffering?
12. What do you think of the belief that at the very heart of God there's a cross, so God is with us in the midst of our suffering? If that's true, what difference does it make?
13. What is some hurt in your life that you need to prayerfully offer up to God and allow his love to transform your heart?