

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 138: JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

(Lesson plan says Job 2:11 through Job 32:1, which is really long.
Below are condensed verses as an option to read to the children instead)

**JOB 2:11-3:6, 3:20-26, 4:1-6, 4:17-21, 5:8-27, 6:1-11, 8:1-8, 9:1-10,
10:1-3, 11:1-9, 11:13-20, 12:1-13, 13:1-6, 13:13-26, 15:1-18, 16:1-8,
18:1-13, 19:1-9, 19:25-29, 32:1**

Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah were three of Job's friends, and they heard about his troubles. So they agreed to visit Job and comfort him. When they came near enough to see Job, they could hardly recognize him. And in their great sorrow, they tore their clothes, then sprinkled dust on their heads and cried bitterly. For seven days and nights, they sat silently on the ground beside him without saying a word to him, because they realized what terrible pain he was in. Finally, Job cursed the day of his birth by saying to God: Blot out the day of my birth and the night when my parents created a son. Forget about that day, cover it with darkness, and send thick, gloomy shadows to fill it with dread. Erase that night from the calendar and conceal it with darkness. Why does God let me live when life is miserable and so bitter? I keep longing for death more than I would seek a valuable treasure. Nothing could make me happier than to be in the grave. Why do I go on living when God has me surrounded, and I can't see the road? Moaning and groaning are my food and drink, and my worst fears have all come true. I have no peace or rest-- only troubles and worries.

Eliphaz from Teman said: Please be patient and listen to what I have to say. Remember how your words have guided and encouraged many in need. But now you feel discouraged when struck by trouble. You respect God and live right, so don't lose hope! "No humans are innocent in the eyes of God their Creator. He finds fault with his servants and even with his angels. Humans are formed from clay and are fragile as moths, so what chance do you have? Born after daybreak, you die before nightfall and disappear forever. Your tent pegs are pulled up, and you leave this life, having gained no wisdom." Job, if I were you, I would ask God for help. His miracles are marvelous, more than we can count. God sends showers on earth and waters the fields. He protects the sorrowful and lifts up those who have been disgraced. God swiftly traps the wicked in their own evil schemes, and

their wisdom fails. Darkness is their only companion, hiding their path at noon. God rescues the needy from the words of the wicked and the fist of the mighty. The poor are filled with hope, and injustice is silenced. Consider yourself fortunate if God All-Powerful chooses to correct you. He may cause injury and pain, but he will bandage and heal your cuts and bruises. God will protect you from harm, no matter how often trouble may strike. In times of war and famine, God will keep you safe. You will be sheltered, without fear of hurtful words or any other weapon. You will laugh at the threat of destruction and famine. And you won't be afraid of wild animals-- they will no longer be fierce, and your rocky fields will become friendly. Your home will be secure, and your sheep will be safe. You will have more descendants than there are blades of grass on the face of the earth. You will live a long life, and your body will be strong until the day you die. Our experience has proven these things to be true, so listen and learn.

Job said: It's impossible to weigh my misery and grief! They outweigh the sand along the beach, and that's why I have spoken without thinking first. The fearsome arrows of God All-Powerful have filled my soul with their poison. Do oxen and wild donkeys cry out in distress unless they are hungry? What is food without salt? What is more tasteless than the white of an egg? That's how my food tastes, and my appetite is gone. How I wish that God would answer my prayer and do away with me. Then I would be comforted, knowing that in all of my pain I have never disobeyed God. Why should I patiently hope when my strength is gone? Bildad from Shuah said: How long will you talk and keep saying nothing? Does God All-Powerful stand in the way of justice? He made your children pay for their sins. So why don't you turn to him and start living right? Then he will decide to rescue and restore you to your place of honor. Your future will be brighter by far than your past. Our ancestors were wise, so learn from them. Job said: What you say is true. No human is innocent in the sight of God. Not once in a thousand times could we win our case if we took him to court. God is wise and powerful-- who could possibly oppose him and win? When God becomes angry, he can move mountains before they even know it. God can shake the earth loose from its foundations or command the sun and stars to hold back their light. God alone stretched out the sky, stepped on the sea, and set the stars in place-- the Big Dipper and Orion, the Pleiades and the stars in the southern sky. Of all the miracles God works, we cannot understand a one. I am sick of life! And from my deep despair, I complain to you, my God. Don't just condemn me! Point out my sin. Why do you take such delight in destroying those you created and in smiling on sinners?

Zophar from Naamah said: So much foolish talk cannot go unanswered. Your words have silenced others and made them ashamed; now it is only right for you to be put to shame. You claim to be innocent and argue that your beliefs are acceptable to God. But I wish he would speak and let you know that wisdom has many different sides. You would then discover that God has punished you less than you deserve. Can you understand the mysteries surrounding God All-Powerful? They are higher than the heavens and deeper than the grave. So what can you do when you know so little, and these mysteries outreach the earth and the ocean? Surrender your heart to God, turn to him in prayer, and give up your sins-- even those you do in secret. Then you won't be ashamed; you will be confident and fearless. Your troubles will go away like water beneath a bridge, and your darkest night will be brighter than noon. You will rest safe and secure, filled with hope and emptied of worry. You will sleep without fear and be greatly respected. But those who are evil will go blind and lose their way. Their only escape is death! Job said to his friends: You think you are so great, with all the answers. But I know as much as you do, and so does everyone else. I have always lived right, and God answered my prayers; now friends make fun of me. It's easy to condemn those who are suffering, when you have no troubles. Robbers and other godless people live safely at home and say, "God is in our hands!" If you want to learn, then go and ask the wild animals and the birds, the flowers and the fish. Any of them can tell you what the LORD has done. Every living creature is in the hands of God. We hear with our ears, taste with our tongues, and gain some wisdom from those who have lived a long time. But God is the real source of wisdom and strength. I know and understand every bit of this. None of you are smarter than I am; there's nothing you know that I don't. But I prefer to argue my case with God All-Powerful-- you are merely useless doctors, who treat me with lies. The wisest thing you can do is to keep quiet and listen to my argument. Be quiet while I speak, then say what you will. I will be responsible for what happens to me. God may kill me, but still I will trust him and offer my defense. This may be what saves me, because no guilty person would come to his court. Listen carefully to my words! I have prepared my case well, and I am certain to win. If you can prove me guilty, I will give up and die. I ask only two things of you, my God, and I will no longer hide from you-- stop punishing and terrifying me! Then speak, and I will reply; or else let me speak, and you reply. Please point out my sins, so I will know them. Why have you turned your back and count me your enemy? Do you really enjoy frightening a fallen leaf? Why do you accuse me of horrible crimes and make me pay for sins I did in my youth?

Eliphaz from Teman said: Job, if you had any sense, you would stop spreading all of this hot air. Your words are enough to make others turn from God and lead them to doubt. And your sinful, scheming mind is the source of all you say. I am not here as your judge; your own words are witnesses against you. Were you the first human? Are you older than the hills? Have you ever been present when God's council meets? Do you alone have wisdom? Do you know and understand something we don't? We have the benefit of wisdom older than your father. And you have been offered comforting words from God. Isn't this enough? Your emotions are out of control, making you look fierce; that's why you attack God with everything you say. No human is pure and innocent, and neither are angels--not in the sight of God. If God doesn't trust his angels, what chance do humans have? We are so terribly evil that we thirst for sin. Just listen to what I know, and you will learn wisdom known by others since ancient times. Job said: I have often heard this, and it offers no comfort. So why don't you keep quiet? What's bothering you? If I were in your place, it would be easy to criticize or to give advice. But I would offer hope and comfort instead. If I speak, or if I don't, I hurt all the same. My torment continues. God has worn me down and destroyed my family; my shriveled up skin proves that I am his prisoner.

Bildad from Shuah said: How long will you talk? Be sensible! Let us speak. Or do you think that we are dumb animals? You cut yourself in anger. Will that shake the earth or even move the rocks? The lamps of sinful people soon are snuffed out, leaving their tents dark. Their powerful legs become weak, and they stumble on schemes of their own doing. Before they know it, they are trapped in a net, hidden along the path. Terror strikes and pursues from every side. Starving, they run, only to meet disaster, then afterwards to be eaten alive by death itself. Job said: How long will you torture me with your words? Isn't ten times enough for you to accuse me? Aren't you ashamed? Even if I have sinned, you haven't been harmed. You boast of your goodness, claiming I am suffering because I am guilty. But God is the one at fault for finding fault with me. Though I pray to be rescued from this torment, no whisper of justice answers me. God has me trapped with a wall of darkness and stripped of respect. I know that my Savior lives, and at the end he will stand on this earth. My flesh may be destroyed, yet from this body I will see God. Yes, I will see him for myself, and I long for that moment. My friends, you think up ways to blame and torment me, saying I brought it on myself. But watch out for the judgment, when God will punish you!

Then Zophar from Naamah, Eliphaz from Teman, and Bildad from Shuah all kept telling Job he was sinning, and that is why God is punishing him. Job kept telling them that he was innocent, and if God wanted to destroy his life, there was nothing he could do except complain to God and beg for mercy. Job remembered his youth, and his past, all his belongings, his children, animals and servants, and wished he could go back to that time and be happy again.

Finally, these three men stopped arguing with Job, because he refused to admit that he was guilty.

138. JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

(JOB 2:11-32:1)



"Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah were three of Job's friends, and they heard about his troubles. So they agreed to visit Job and comfort him."

JOB 2:11

138. JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

JOB 2:11-32:1

MEMORY VERSE:

"For I know that my Redeemer lives." JOB 19:25

TRUE OR FALSE

1. Job's three friends heard about all of his troubles, and came to laugh at him.
TRUE or FALSE
2. They set aside a time to come and mourn with Job and to comfort him.
TRUE or FALSE
3. When they saw him, they recognized him and began singing with joy. TRUE or FALSE
4. Each one of his friends tore their clothes and put dust on their heads in sadness when they saw Job. TRUE or FALSE
5. They sat down with him for seven days and nights without saying a word because they knew he was in great pain. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What did Job say about the day he was born? Did he curse that day?
2. Did Eliphaz tell Job that he must have sinned, or else these bad things wouldn't have happened to him? Yes!
3. Bildad believed that Job needed to repent and ask forgiveness for his sins. Did Job agree with Bildad? No!
4. Zophar told Job that if he was sinning, and just stopped and put sin far away from him that he wouldn't have to be ashamed before God. Did Job agree with Zophar? No!
5. Did Job think he was innocent? And was he angry with his friends for accusing him of sinning? Yes!
6. What did Job think that God was doing to him? Did he think God was punishing him for no reason? Yes!
7. Did Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar finally leave Job alone because he believed he was innocent?

Lesson 138
Job's Three Friends Come to Mourn With Him



Lesson 138

Activity

Helping Friends

Have the children find a partner and pair up. Then have the pairs line up near a wall. Next have all of the children find a spot in front of the wall. Have them face the wall and stand arms-length from it. Their feet should be close together. Next the children should carefully lean forward against the wall so that only their forehead is touching the wall. They must keep their body stiff and straight with their arms crossed. Next, say, "On the count of three, try to stand upright. Remember to keep your body stiff, arms crossed and no bending of the knees." Count to three.

Children will struggle to stand upright without bending at the waist or using their arms. Allow a few seconds for children to attempt this, and then have the pairs choose who would like to try. The partner will help their friend to stand upright. Give them another couple of seconds to try this. Ask the children if it was easier with a friend's help. Next trade spots and have one child lean forward, but this time the partner will only tell their friend, "You will have to do better," "Can't you do it right?" or "If you would only do it this way!" They can be creative. As an alternative activity you can have them try scratching the center of their back and tying their shoe with only one hand.

Have the children sit down and ask them which was the most help; telling about how someone should do better, or actually helping them. In today's lesson, we have seen Job's friends attempting to "comfort" him. Unfortunately, it really did not provide much comfort. In fact, they only caused Job misery! Let's look at how Job handled his situation.

We can trust God even when our "friends" judge us wrongfully.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord even in difficult times and to continue to trust in Him no matter what our "friends" say. May we keep our attention focused on Him! If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.