

The Surprising Virtue of Loss & Depression

Dark Clouds, Silver Linings-part 4

April 21, 2024

Depression's chief reason: "No matter what I do I'll never get the _____ (life) I need."

DAY 1: Depression: Will a man serve God for nothing?

Job 1:1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. ² He had seven sons and three daughters, ³ and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

1. What is your impression of Job in verse 1?

2. After reading verses 2 and 3, how would you describe Job in your own words?

3. Satan goes to God. They have a discussion.

Job 1:8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

⁹ **"Does Job fear God for nothing?"** Satan replied.

¹⁰ *"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.*

¹¹ *But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

4. What do you think Satan is suggesting about Job in 1:9-10?

5. The point Satan is making is an important point for all of us. Is God worthy of worship (first place in our lives) even if He removes every blessing from us? Or, do we "worship" God more because of the blessings He gives us and the protection against Satan He offers? Is that even "worship"? How would you answer these questions?

6. How would we ever know the real state of our heart? Would we only *really* know if we were tested by the loss of much of what we counted as "life"? (blessings)

DAY 2: Depression: the loss of what we deem "life." (our most important "blessings")

Job 1:12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

1. Utter calamity struck Job, all in a day. There are several difficult things in today's and yesterday's verses that challenge how we "naturally" think.

a. God allowed Satan to take anything he wanted from Job except his life. What reasons can you think of as to why God would allow Satan to do that to Job?

b. The messenger in 1:16 attributed the fire that burned up the sheep and servants as from God. Whether or not that was true is speculation. However, God did allow Satan to have a free rein.

2. This begs a very important question. What really is the most important thing in our lives? What is our greatest purpose? How we usually define "**life**" has to do with our **blessings**. But does real "life" have to do with something even more important than raising our kids? Marrying off our daughters? Our financial assets? What thoughts come to your mind?

DAY 3: Depression: Job's initial response

1. Job had three initial and immediate physical responses in 1:20. Underline each one.

Job 1:20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship...

²¹ and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

2. Let's unpack each physical response:

a. He "*tore his robe.*"

This is a sign of turmoil and shock.

b. He "*shaved his head.*"

This is a sign of the loss of glory. (see Jeremiah 48:37; Ezekiel 7:18)

c. He "*fell to the ground in worship.*"

This is a sign of surrender to God, an anchoring of the soul into the hand of God.

2. What strikes you most from these three physical responses?

3. Job's response in 1:21 is one of the most famous responses to tragedy in all the bible.

a. Re-write 1:21 in your own words...

b. "*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*"

4. What strikes you about Job's response in 1:20-21?

5. How would you respond to God if everything you deemed "important" was taken from you?

6. Satan told God that Job would curse God to His face. Would you curse God? Why or why not?

DAY 4: Depression: exposes our greatest beliefs about God, blessings, and "life"

1. Suffering exposes the deep purposes of the heart like nothing else can. It particularly exposes what we are really living for.

Job 2:1 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.

² And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

2. In God's dialogue with Satan, God reminds Satan about Satan's former challenge about Job. "Job only serves you, not because he loves you, but because you're a "sugar-daddy" to him. But take away his toys and then see how much he loves you!!! You're in for a big shock."

Job 2:4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵ But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

⁶ The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

3. What calamity does Satan inflict on Job?

4. What did "Mrs. Job" think was the most reasonable way to respond? The "human" way?

5. How did Job characterize his wife's suggestion?

6. Job answers his wife with a rhetorical question. Re-write Job's response in your own words.

7. Satan's test of Job was that Job only hangs around God for the blessings God gives, not for God Himself. How does Job answer this test, both in 1:20-21 and in 2:10? What is Job saying about his relationship with God, and the value of loving God Himself more than the blessings God provides?

DAY 5: Depression: exposing the "gunk" that drives us in wrong directions

1. Depression is fueled by the **belief** that no matter what **I do**, I cannot get the "**life**" I believe I **need and deserve** in order to be **happy**. When we (1) don't get what we believe we need and deserve, and (2) can see no way to get what we need and deserve, we will be depressed.

2. Let's personalize those two statements:

a. What do you believe you "**need**"?

b. How would you define "**life**"? (not physical life, but what you would call ultimate pleasure, meaning, fulfillment, purpose, etc.)

c. What do you believe you "**deserve**"?

d. What do you find yourself trying to create in your everyday life? What are you trying to get people to do for you?

e. "**Happy**." Is this life's most important purpose? Is there something greater?

f. "**A belief**." Letters a-e, above, all represent "beliefs" about how we think life "should work." Summarize the items you've written into your "real" beliefs about how life "*should* work."

3. Don't be surprised if we have our own "Job-experience." What are the **silver linings** that should appear even in the dark clouds of depression? **I begin to see:**

___ a. My stubborn commitment to hold on to what I believe I need.

___ b. Blessings should be "non-negotiables" with God. I deserve them.

___ c. Blessings can keep me from discovering the real treasure of life: knowing God personally; finding Him as my greatest treasure, first thing pleasure, realizing that what I most long for can only be found in Him. Nothing else lasts long enough, flows wide enough, or drills down deep enough in the heart.

___ d. A hidden, but deeply embedded entitled and demanding spirit in me.

___ e. The belief that what I most need *justifies whatever I want to do*, even when it is forbidden.

___ f. Turning to blessings instead of God is the essence of moral and spiritual treason.

___ g. Other: _____

4. This list is not exhaustive. There's more "gunk" that needs to be exposed. What strikes you most from this week's devotionals on the dark clouds of depression and its silver linings?