



Dependence Declared

God honors those who humbly profess dependence on Him.

JOB 42:1-11

Reading about something, hearing about it, or watching it on television can never compare to witnessing it in person. Seeing a professional sporting event live gives you a greater appreciation of the skill of the athletes. Visiting a historical location gives you a clearer view of the events that took place there. Observing a sunset over an ocean opens your eyes to the true beauty of God's creation. At the end of the Book of Job, Job said that he had heard about God but now he had seen Him. Job had gained a greater understanding of God.

Think about the first time you saw a professional sporting event live or visited an important historical location. How did visiting or seeing that in person impact your understanding of that sport or place?

UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

JOB 42:1-17

The final chapter of Job should be understood in light of the entirety of the Book of Job. The story begins by introducing Job as “a man of complete integrity,” fully devoted to God (1:1). Right away, the narrative establishes that none of the adversities that were to beset Job were the result of divine judgment. Instead, it was because of his faithful obedience to God that Job would suffer.

Satan, the “accuser” and “adversary,” challenged God, claiming the only reason Job worshiped God was to get what he could from God. Satan contended that if God removed His hedge of protection around Job, then Job would curse God. Consequently, God allowed Satan to do whatever he wanted to do to Job except take Job’s life. So Satan wiped out Job’s possessions, killed his ten children, and struck Job with a terrible affliction. Nevertheless, Job clung to his faith in God, silencing Satan (1:6–2:10).

Then came Job’s friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, intending to “comfort” Job (2:11). However, these men compounded Job’s suffering, accusing Job of deserving it. They contended Job’s adversities were God’s divine judgment on Job for his sin. Job maintained his innocence, insisting he had committed no sin to warrant such divine judgment (4:1–31:40). Still, Job struggled with understanding God’s justice (6:29; 9:22-24; 19:6-7; 27:1-6).

Next came Job’s fourth friend, Elihu (32:1–37:24). Elihu recognized Job’s failure to fully trust in God’s wisdom as Job sought to vindicate himself. Elihu observed that God used suffering for instructive purposes.

Finally, God responded to Job. Pointing out Job’s mortality and limited perspective, God rebuked Job for questioning His just rule over all creation. God’s display of His power and majesty revealed to Job that God was more than equal to the task (38:1–41:34).

**Read Job 42:1-11, noting God’s directions to each person.
How do the actions called for point to our dependence on God?**

EXPLORE THE TEXT

ADMIT (JOB 42:1-6)

¹ Then Job replied to the LORD: ² I know that you can do anything and no plan of yours can be thwarted. ³ You asked, “Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?” Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know. ⁴ You said, “Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform me.” ⁵ I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes have seen you. ⁶ Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes.

VERSES 1-4

Just as it was significant that “The LORD answered Job” in Job 40:1, it is equally important that Job responded to God. God’s word is never given just for the purpose of giving information. God’s revelation of Himself, whether in word or deed, demands a response. In this instance, God had just finished asking Job a series of questions. He asked Job a simple but profound question: “Who are you to question Me?” God demanded Job answer this question.

Job’s response began with what he had learned from God. He realized he had been saying things about God that he ***did not understand***, but now he was sure of two things. First, God has the power to ***do anything*** He wants to do. Second, nothing God determines to do ***can be thwarted***. Whatever God wills to do will be done. Down to the most minuscule detail, the happenings in this world transpire according to God’s purposes by His power and wisdom. Job confessed that even though the reason for his suffering was incomprehensible to him, he knew God had a purpose in it and God could be trusted.

In verse 3, Job quoted a question and a statement God had spoken to him from the whirlwind (38:2-3). The question was, “***Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?***” The word *conceals* translates a Hebrew word meaning “obscures, doubts, or clouds.” The word *counsel* translates a word meaning “plan, purpose, or design.” Therefore, with the expression, *conceals my counsel*, God accused Job of doubting the wisdom of God’s plan or purposes. Job’s response to this question

reveals that he finally realized he truly was ignorant. Even though Job had done nothing to deserve divine judgment when Satan struck him, Job had struggled to trust God's wise purpose for his suffering. Now he confessed his sin, saying, "I was the one who ignorantly questioned your wisdom and misrepresented your intentions."

The first step to experiencing God's mercy and being reconciled to God is the confession of sin. As Job confessed his sin to God he opened himself up to the mercy and grace of God to forgive and restore him.

In verse 4, Job quoted a statement God had made when He first responded to Job (38:3). Twice, Job had told God to "let me know" or "reveal to me," but now Job realized he was the one who needed to listen to what God wanted him to know (10:2; 13:23). It is presumptuous for anyone to question God for how He directs and rules His creation, yet it is a part of our sinful nature to do so. Without any true knowledge or understanding of the ramifications of the decisions God has made, we delude ourselves into thinking we could give Him a hand with our "wise" counsel.

The mindset of thinking God owes us anything, including explanations, is the essence of our prideful, sinful nature. Creatures have no right to instruct the Creator on how He should rule His creation. Job finally realized this in his reaction to his adversities and was sorry he had presumed to question or educate God. Job's omniscient, omnipotent sovereign God owed him no explanations nor word of vindication.

How does professing our shortcomings open the door for greater understanding into God?

VERSES 5-6

Through all that had transpired in Job's life, including God's speaking to him from the whirlwind, Job did not receive an explanation for the cause of his suffering. Instead, Job received something much more precious. Job's spiritual eyes were opened, and he was able to see a glimpse of God's wisdom and power. Before these events in his life,

Job had only **heard reports about** God. He grew up hearing the teachings his friends had also heard. He had heard of God’s wisdom and His omniscience. He had heard that God blessed the righteous and cursed the wicked, and so he had ideas of how God should conduct Himself as He ruled over human affairs.

Job saw God with a clarity he did not have until now.

Now God had revealed Himself to Job in a way that Job had never previously experienced. It was not the council of Job’s friends that opened his eyes; it was God and His word. Job saw God with a clarity he did not have until now. Just like the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,” the eyes of Job’s heart were opened (Eph. 1:18). Job now saw that God is incomprehensible to humans. Job saw the folly of thinking anyone could ever argue with God or assume one could competently advise God. Moreover, the eyes of Job’s heart were opened so that he could clearly see that he could trust God with his life without need of any explanation from God.

When the eyes of Job’s heart were enlightened and he was able to see God, his spiritual eyes were also able to see his own sin more clearly. In verse 3, Job had admitted that he did not know what he had been saying. In verse 6, he followed his confession with repentance. While Job was always devoted to God from the beginning, he regretted and rejected the words he said during his suffering. Job had fallen to the temptation of thinking perhaps God had not done everything right concerning him. But now Job shifted his focus from demanding answers to submitting to the Lord even though he did not have all the answers to his questions.

Putting **dust and ashes** on one’s head or sitting in them was a way of conveying grief and repentance. Therefore, sitting in the ash-heap where he had been since Satan had struck his body (Job 2:8), Job repented to God with contrition, submission, and self-humiliation.

REPENT (JOB 42:7-9)

⁷ After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you

have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.⁸ Now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. Then my servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves. For you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.”⁹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

VERSE 7

After God had finished speaking to Job, He addressed Job’s friends, bringing charges against them. God told **Eliphaz** that He was **angry** with him and his **two friends** because they pretentiously thought they could instruct Job about the mind of God and His ways. They were emphatic in their accusations against Job with their simple-minded ideas of the retribution principle—that if good things happen to people then they must be right with God, and if bad things happen to people then they must be wicked.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar should serve as a warning to all to beware of thinking they can perfectly comprehend God’s ways. God said, “For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). Job’s friends were sincere but misrepresented God. Ironically, those who were convinced of Job’s guilt were themselves the objects of God’s wrath.

BIBLE SKILL: *Review a Bible dictionary article for insight.*

Read a Bible dictionary article on the role of a priest. Review the passages identified in the article, paying close attention to how the role of priest was fulfilled by Jesus. How does what Job was called upon to do give us insight into what it means for today’s believers to be called priests?

VERSES 8-9

God took the initiative to provide these men a way to be reconciled to Him. God allowed each of them to offer sacrifices to atone for his sin. What's more, God would only accept the sacrifices if Job assumed the priestly function of interceding on the men's behalf. God referred to Job as **my servant** three times, emphasizing Job's faithfulness to God in contrast to these men. Those who had believed Job's standing before God depended on what they had to say found their own standing before God depending on what Job would say.

God chose what sacrifice He would accept, and He also determined who the acceptable mediator for them would be. If they were to be reconciled to God, it had to be done God's way. God allowed the men no say in how it would be accomplished. In so doing, God extended mercy to them by not dealing with them as their senseless declarations about Him deserved.

Why is it such a serious matter when apparently pious people misrepresent God? How should believers think about this in light of their calling to be ambassadors for Christ?

To their credit, Job's friends did as the Lord commanded them. To Job's credit, he graciously interceded to God for them even though they had spoken so wrongly and harshly to him. And to God's glory, He accepted their sacrifices and forgave them because His appointed mediator interceded on their behalf. Jesus serves as our Mediator. No other option exists for us except to follow God's provision, which is faith in Jesus alone.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Son*

Jesus ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

RESTORED (JOB 42:10-11)

¹⁰ After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and doubled his previous possessions. ¹¹ All his brothers, sisters, and former acquaintances came to him and dined with him in his house. They sympathized with him and comforted him concerning all the adversity the LORD had brought on him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold earring.

VERSES 10-11

Job's restoration of his prosperity came after his intercession for his friends, and it is important to note that *the LORD* did the restoring. One should beware of misunderstanding this verse to be a promise God will restore all one's losses or fully reward His people this side of heaven. Rather, it demonstrates God will not forsake His servants. What's more, in spite of Satan's intense barrage of attacks on Job, Job remained true to God and his *fortunes* were restored. However, there was one notable change in Job. He had a greater understanding of God and, therefore, a deeper faith in God. Even this most devout of men had room for spiritual growth.

Job opened up his home to his family and fair-weather friends even though they had abandoned him during his trials (19:13). It demonstrates the integrity of his continued devotion to God. Their gifts of *silver* and a *gold earring* were probably expressions of atonement for having forsaken him. Graciously, Job received them.

How does what was restored to Job compare to what God will provide His redeemed people in heaven?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Believers can admit their dependence on God for all things.
- Believers can pray on behalf of others.
- What God has in store for His redeemed people will far outweigh any losses in this life.

Reflect on Job 42:5. Reflect on times when you expressed the same thing as Job. How did those experiences impact your understanding about God? Memorize the verse and share at least one of your experiences with a friend.

List people you know who need you to pray for them, especially for them to turn to God in repentance. Place a check by each person's name you listed as you pray for him or her daily this week.

Share with the rest of the group times God used suffering to reveal Himself to you, resulting in your having a deeper knowledge of who He is. What did God reveal about Himself to you through the difficulty and how does that encourage you today?

PRAYER NEEDS
