

# Growing Through Loss and Grief

SELECTIONS FROM JOB

**S**everal years ago we took an evening class called “Death and Other Endings.” Death is the most commonly feared ending, but we also discussed other “endings”: leaving home, losing a job, divorce, losing health or independence. All of these losses cause us pain, grief, anger, resentment, despair, loneliness, or isolation.

When the professor asked us to explore possible positive outcomes from our losses and grief, a number of amazing insights, new possibilities, and new beginnings emerged from some of the students’ stories. But others angrily rejected the possibility of any positive outcome and grew more isolated from the class.

In the Bible, Job experienced a staggering series of tragic losses. But he faced them in a way that strengthened his relationship with God and allowed for new beginnings.

1. In her book *Early Widow*, Mary Jane Worden shares her discovery that grieving leads to healing. As part

of the grieving process, she encourages anyone facing grief to:

- face it, name it, allow yourself to feel the sadness
- acknowledge your loss, talk about it, don't run away from it
- allow God to comfort you

What parts of this process have brought healing to you, or to a friend, in grief?

**READ JOB 1:1-2:10.**

✎ 2. What impresses you about Job's character and his position in the community?

✎ 3. What different kinds of losses does Job suffer?

Give modern-day equivalents to Job's losses. What would these kinds of losses look like today?

✎ 4. When you suffer grief and loss, what temptations often accompany them?

5. What is Job's initial response to these devastating losses and the accompanying temptations (1:20-22; 2:9-10)? Why do you think he reacted that way?

**READ JOB 3:20-26.**

*Three friends of Job come to comfort him but are so moved by the sight of him that they sit silently for seven days. Finally, Job begins to speak, cursing the day of his birth and wishing he had never been born.*

- ✧ 6. What do you learn of the depth of Job's pain from the words he used to describe his grief?

What emotional impact do these words have on you?

- ✧ 7. When facing grief, a Christian may feel compelled to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (1:21). But most of us would hesitate to quote 3:20-26. What healthy steps did Job take to talk honestly about his pain?

**READ JOB 23:10-17.**

*Job's friends—assuming that trouble is punishment for the wicked—condemned Job for some secret sin. Job insisted that if he could only find God and question him, God, as a just judge, would vindicate him.*

8. How did Job describe his own righteousness (verses 10-12)?

- ✧ 9. Job longed for an explanation from God about why a righteous person like himself should suffer such calamity. What conflicting ideas about God trouble Job (verses 10-17)?

10. Job was confident that God's purpose was not to destroy him, but to refine him as gold (verse 10). How can such confidence in God's character and purpose comfort you during times of grief?

READ JOB 40:1-5; 42:1-6.

*Instead of explaining Job's situation or finding any moral fault with Job, God questioned him: "Where were you when I created the world? Can you command the constellations and all of nature? Do you send lightning bolts on their way? Can you act like God?" (chapters 38–40).*

✧ 11. Why did Job have nothing to say in the presence of God (40:3-5)?

✧ 12. Of what did Job need to repent (42:2-6)?

Did Job need to be humbled? Why or why not? (See 23:10-12.)

13. Why was God himself, not explanations or arguments, the source of comfort for Job? How is he your source of comfort when you suffer loss?

### *Pray the Bible into Life*

- Thank God for who he is: your wise, loving, just, and powerful Creator and Judge.
- Confess your honest feelings of grief to God as well as the temptation to doubt his character rather than trusting his goodness.
- Thank God that he can use your grief to show you more of who he is, to purify you, and to make you more like the Lord Jesus.