

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, May 1, 2011

Passage: Job 29-30

Memory Passage: Palm 34:17-18

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Job 29:1-6.** According to v. 2b, how does Job describe the blessings he used to enjoy? What does this tell you about Job's view of the source of all of his blessings?
- (b) What is Job saying in v. 3? What was the darkness through which Job walked, and how did God's light guide him?
- (c) Verses 4b-5a speak of a deep intimacy Job experienced with God. Do you experience this kind of intimacy with God, an intimacy that would lead to you describing times of blessing as being characterized by the friendship & presence of God? How can you begin to (or further) cultivate this kind of intimacy with God? Be specific and concrete as you think & write.
- (d) To what is Job's metaphor referring in v. 6? Which do you think is more important to Job, spiritual or physical blessings? What do you see in this text to justify your answer?
- (e) *Family: Read Job 29:1-6.* Now ask your family to list the characteristics that Job thought marked his life prior to his affliction (Job's understanding that God watched over him [v. 2], that God's wisdom and care guided him through dark [confusing, fearful, troubling] times as a lamp lights the darkness [v. 3], that Job experienced God's intimate friendship [vs. 4-5] and that Job received God's material blessings [v. 6]). Now spend time explaining and discussing how your family can live in the same relationship with God, reminding them the material blessings are not only secondary to the spiritual blessings, but they are dispensed according to God's plan and not promised to everyone all the time.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Job 29:7-10 & 21-25.** The gate of a city was the place where the men of the city would gather to dispense & apply wisdom & justice. Describe the effect Job had on the other men who gathered at the gate. How would you describe Job's reputation in the community?
- (b) Think back on what we learned when we studied wisdom in Job 28. Write down at least 5 ways that you will attempt to grow in wisdom during the next season of your life (don't forget verses like Col. 1:28, 2:3; James 1:5-8; Rom. 11:33-36).
- (c) We might not have city gates in Cabot at which people can gather to dispense wisdom & justice, but in what ways might God bring glory to Himself through your life if you substantially grew in His wisdom over the next season of your life? How might you be a better parent? Grandparent? Disciple? Friend? Evangelist? Remember that Job did not take credit for the wisdom with which he was blessed (29:2-5), so remind yourself that the glory belongs to God, not to you!
- (d) *Family: Read Job 29:7-10 & 21-25.* Explain to your family that the city gate was the place men gathered to preside over the settling of disputes (like a courtroom) and to provide wisdom to those who sought it. Teach through these verses, explaining each phrase and metaphor, and itemizing the ways the other men at the gate revered Job. Try to recap what you learned about wisdom in chapter 28, and tell your family that the men at the gate respected Job because of his wisdom. Discuss ways in which gaining and living by wisdom from God will benefit each one of your family members. Be sure to make specific application to each of your family members.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Job 29:11-20.** Summarize Job's actions described in these verses. How does Job's description of his actions compare with Eliphaz's last speech (22:5-9)?
- (b) Did Job use the material blessings of God wisely? Why or why not? What is your attitude toward the material blessings God gives to you? Are you as free as Job to give away your "stuff & things" for the benefit of the poor and needy?
- (c) The words "poor" and "needy" appear together in 70 different verses in the ESV. They portray our duty to care for them (e.g. Deut. 15:11 & 24:14), God's loving care for them (1 Sam. 2:8, Ps. 72:12 & dozens more), and that the wicked oppress them (e.g. Job 24:14 & Ps. 37:14). We are also told that the poor will be with us always (Matt. 26:11 & parallels), that Jesus told the man who worshiped his possessions that the key to *him* becoming a disciple was to sell everything he had, give to the poor, and then follow Jesus (Matt. 19:21), and that riches can make it difficult to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:23-24). Couple all of this with the command to "keep yourself free from the love of money and be content with what you have" (Heb. 13:5) because "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10) and it will be a characteristic of ungodly behavior in the last days (2 Tim. 3:2), and we should be challenged with our attitude toward the poor and our attitude toward "our" (God's!) money. Are you challenged? In what ways? What will you do about it?
- (d) *Family:* Lead your family through a discussion of questions (a), (b), and (c).

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read your answers from Day 3.** Let's spend today thinking through some more applications of caring for the poor and our attitude toward money. Do the commands to help the poor require us to *always* give money to *everyone* who is poor? What other ways can we help the needy without/before giving money? How do we discern whether to give or not to give?

(b) In what ways can our church become more involved in the care of the poor? Try not to duplicate ministries that are already being done (i.e. food & clothing pantry), but instead think of needs the poor might have that are not being met.

(c) The Bible is clear that the love of money is dangerous, and that it is difficult for rich people to enter the kingdom. But does that mean that being wealthy is wrong? Does it mean that we should shun wealth? How can we have a God-honoring approach toward money? Does gaining wealth always mean we have succumbed to "the love of money," and if not, how do we know when we have capitulated to this sin?

(d) *Family:* As we further apply yesterday's lesson, tell your family how you approach giving to the poor. Give examples of people you have helped and how you helped them. Encourage them to set aside a portion of their own money to help the poor. Explain to them the benevolence offering we take at BCC on the days we serve the Lord's supper and explain how that money helps people with financial needs. Then take time to consider how your family might get more involved in helping the poor. Be prepared with ways that you might consider in case your family has trouble getting started.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Job 30.** The words "but now" that begin v. 1 signal a shift from Job's past to Job's present. Upon whom does Job set his sights in vs. 1-8 and what does he have to say about them?

(b) In verses 9-16 Job describes his situation in terms of an army putting a city under siege. How does he sum up his troubles in v. 15? Which do you think Job is more hurt by, the loss of his honor or his prosperity? Why? About which would you be most concerned and why?

(c) In v. 16ff what strong accusation is Job making about God? Upon what grounds is Job accusing God of being unjust? Would you be tempted to accuse God of lacking in justice if you were suffering like Job? With what verses would you preach to yourself to avoid sinning in this way?

(d) *Family:* **Read Job 30:19-23.** Tell your family that Job is not sensing God's presence or care for him during this time of suffering, and so his faith is weak. He begins to show anger toward God for not hearing his pleas, but tell them that Job is wrong. Then **Read Ps. 34:15-18** and teach your family the truth: God hears and answers the prayers of His children. Even when we don't sense His presence we know the truth that "when the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles." Encourage your family to always trust in God's promises, even when we don't sense His presence.

DATE: May 1, 2011

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The Speeches: Job's Final Speech: Part II