

Job

(Not!) God's Answer to Suffering

© 2026 by Through the Word Inc.

All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. ® Used by permission of Biblica Inc. ® All rights reserved worldwide.

Disclaimer: This transcript is provided with the understanding that neither the author nor the publisher is engaged in rendering professional advice. The information contained herein is for educational and informational purposes only. Readers should consult a professional for specific advice.

About Through the Word

Through the Word is a 501c3 nonprofit ministry dedicated to equipping people around the world to read the Bible, understand it, apply it, and make it a habit. We provide simple yet powerful tools via the web and mobile apps that lead users on a journey to understand the entire Bible, one chapter at a time. TTW combines clear, balanced, and relatable teaching with direct accessibility. Our purpose is God's calling: to make disciples, equip the saints, and preach the word. (Mat. 28:19, Eph. 4:12, 2 Tim, 4:2)

Understand the Bible in 10- minutes a day with clear and concise plans for every book and audio guides for every chapter of the Bible.

"Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said,"unless someone explains it to me?" Acts 8:30b- 31a

www.throughtheword.org

Job Intro | Preparation

Hello, my friends. Welcome to Through the Word and the Book of Job. And I know what you're thinking, "What are we doing here? Job? The Job? The Bible's answer book for suffering? That, by the way, famously does not have answers for suffering. At least not the way I want it to. That Job?" Yes, that Job. Only it's not what you think, certainly not what I thought. It's not an answer book, and it's not really about suffering. Job's suffering is the setting, but not really the subject. It's just not that kind of book. So then, what kind of book is it? The answer to that question was an adventure, and it's the reason that you and I are here in this theater lobby.

Yep, theater lobby. Okay, so it's an imaginary lobby. We'll explain momentarily. First, I should tell you who's here. You're you, I'm Kris, and with us is our favorite theater friend, Peyton Jones. Say hi, Peyton.

Hi, Peyton.
All right, my friend, what are we doing here?
Well, we're at the theater, red carpet under our feet, smell of fresh popcorn in the air, and we are checking our tickets to find out our seats for the next showing. But I think what we really need to explain is how we got here.
That's good thinking. Allow me to explain. It all started some time ago when I got the assignment to create a guide for Job. I began with study, reading, rereading, commentary, sermons, and I kept coming back to one question: What kind of book is Job? See, one of my core philosophies for Bible teaching is simple: teach in the genre of the text.

The Bible has story, history, personal letter, and whatever the text is, I want to deliver that. But what is Job? It's just different. And one day, as I was rereading the text, I saw it. Job has a prologue. It has dialogue, and then an epilogue. It has characters, plot, tension, phenomenal poetic style and structure. The whole thing reads exactly like a play.

See, most other Bible books have elements that clearly mark them as historical, like genealogies and time markers. Job has forty chapters of monologues. That's just different. Now, I was not the first to see Job as drama, but that realization changed my experience. And it hit me that I hadn't particularly liked Job because I was reading it wrong.

Now, fast-forward more than a year, and as I step out of the theater having experienced the whole thing, it was powerful. Like, hard to even explain powerful.

You know, I remember when you first floated the idea at a team meeting to present Job as a drama, and I thought, "Please don't make it a musical." I'm kidding. But you said, "Let's trade off on the voices, not like we're acting, but like we're sitting in the theater with our listeners." And that clicked. The typical approach to Job is analysis. Who's right, who's wrong, and how do we apply it? And that can help, but it can also be like sitting in 10th grade English class while Miss Saperstein dissects Shakespeare. Sure, you get the answers for the test, but the drama dies in the process. And now that we've recorded it, I can say this story rocked me. Job is a masterpiece.

So here's my question. Why would God put a play in the Bible? It was quite curious when I first saw it, but once I realized what drama does, it clicked.

And there's a little-known verse in Proverbs 20 that happens to be a favorite of mine.

"The purposes or motives of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." In other words, it's hard to know what's really going on in your own heart. Things get messy in there—mixed motives, deep hurts, things we hide even from ourselves—and they can have profound impact on our words and our relationships.

So a wise person draws them out. And we should pray with Psalm 139, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." God can help. He knows our hearts. But then, how does He show us when we refuse to look?

Hebrews 4 says, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." What that means is that God's word penetrates the mess of my heart like a sword, and it judges my motives. It shows me what I couldn't see about my own thoughts when I've got my guard up. What does that have to do with drama? Job is an epic poem, the storytelling equivalent of what a Hollywood blockbuster would be for us today. And when we're in entertainment mode, we enter into a different place. Think about it. When you step into a theater, something happens. Your mind switches gears. You hit pause on your own troubles, and you enter their story. Your heart's defenses go down because it's not about you.

That is key. It's not about you. It's a story.

Right now, we're at the theater, and it's kind of like you're heading in for the show, and you spot your old friends Kris and Peyton walking out. And you're like, "Hey, I got two extra tickets. Wanna head back in?"

Sure. But before we do that, let's get in the popcorn line, and we'll prep you for the experience. Don't worry, no spoilers. But we want you to be prepared because most guides through Job do not take this approach. And the key difference is this: We're not going to talk about the Book of Job.
We're going to walk through it and experience it.

And the first key to doing that is simple: trust the story. The opening scene is like one of those movies that takes you back in time. It feels old and dated for just a moment, then suddenly draws you in, and you're there. Engage the story like that.

The second key: respect the monologues. In drama, a monologue allows one person's view to expand. Don't interrupt it. Save your counterpoint and understand them. Listen to Job and relate to him. Then listen to his friends and relate to them. They are not villains.

They are well-meaning religious friends like us, and they make the same well-meaning mistakes that we are all prone to. We're not here to analyze. We're here to empathize. They are us. Let that challenge you.
Third, the process. Don't skip to the end and don't cherry-pick wisdom. Don't be the guy who talks over every line. Just listen.

In my family, when someone talks over a movie or asks questions that haven't been answered, we say, "Eat the popcorn." That means just watch and let the story play out. As we read Job, eat the popcorn. We'll discuss later.
Fourth, recognize perspective. We open with a view that Job does not have, a glimpse into heaven. It's quite rare in scripture, but God wants us as readers to know what Job does not, and to grapple with this from both views: heaven and earth.

Finally, pay attention early. Like any good mystery, there are clues in the opening scene that you should not miss, so pay attention.
And for you parents with kids listening, understand that this story requires maturity. It's not gruesome or graphic, but there is tragedy. It will process some dark emotions that young kids might not be ready for. Older kids who already have dark emotions and need help processing—Job is powerful. So use your discernment and guide your kids wisely.

Okay, so now let's talk about this drama. What should we be ready for here? The irony of Job is that not only does it not have answers, it's a story about what's wrong with answers, even right answers. In fact, it's Job's religious friends who offer lots of great doctrine and truth, yet somehow do lots of damage. Because sometimes healing isn't an answer; it's a journey.
You know, honestly, I was frustrated with that at first, the lack of answers thing. But as the story progressed, I discovered something. I don't think answers would have helped me because the suffering and hurt that I hold doesn't really want answers. Not that way.

Like, there is no possible collection of words that any person or book could assemble that answers my pain. One thing Job taught me: sometimes answers are the problem.

And you might wonder, if Job isn't going to answer my pain, should I even bring my pain? Well, yes and no. Bring yourself into the theater, and your pain is a part of you. But no, you shouldn't force your hurt into the story. This is Job's story and Job's hurt. It's not about us. The magic of theater is it's safe. Your heart is safe. You can set your pain at rest and simply engage with Job's story.

And I think it's that very safety that allows your heart to process some things in a way that a direct approach never could. If you tried a direct approach on my pain, it just wouldn't work. Too painful to process, so I bury. Unfortunately, what I buried gets stuck in the heart like old splinters, calloused over but still sharp.

But then I watch a movie or I read a story about someone else's journey, and as I sit safely with my popcorn, something happens. I feel their hurt, and sometimes I find that I have quite mysteriously processed my own hurt. In theater, it's called catharsis. If you've ever found yourself wondering why this dumb movie is making me cry so much, it's not the movie, it's your heart, and it needed that.

In Psalm 51, we pray, "Create in me a clean heart." But when we won't let God in, God gets creative. If the Lord is shepherd of your heart, then consider the Book of Job his sheepdog.

And yet, please know you are always in control of what you're ready or not ready to process. Your heart is safe.
Now we should tell you, this is a long one—42 chapters—and the story comes in several acts. So we'll have an intermission episode after each act to come back here into the lobby and talk it through. It helps to process together.
Now, one little question that you might wonder: if Job is a drama, then is it fiction? Well, some scholars read Job as true history, like the Gospels and history books in the Bible, and others read it as fiction that teaches us truth, like Jesus' parables. But what matters to me is that it is definitely God's Word, and it is quite clearly a drama.

So that is how we'll read it. Well, the theater lights are flickering, and everyone is shuffling in. Show's about to start. Time to eat the popcorn and trust the story. We'll see you in there.

Job 1 | Does Job Fear God for Nothing?

Welcome back, my friends. Job, Chapter One begins now, so take a seat and let the outside world slip away. Remember that this is a story meant to be seen, felt, and wondered over. Right now is that moment where the ancient story becomes present and we are in it.

Verse one:
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. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the east. The story opens with the greatest man in all the east and what a man he is. Job: blameless, upright, fears God, shuns evil, and there is none better.

Okay, I hear your question: blameless. He can't be sinless, right? And to that I say, eat the popcorn. The narrator says he's blameless, upright, fears God, and shuns evil four times over. He's all good. Of course he's human and all humans sin, but blameless means no one can hold any blame against him, and that includes you and me. Ask anyone around Job: he is the best. Trust the story. And the phrase that catches me is that third one: Job fears God. What does that mean exactly? That fear is more than just terror, though that sense of the word is present. This fear is a deep respect with overwhelming awe, and Job has it. And his life is blessed abundantly.

God has rained down grace on this guy. The camera sweeps across his beautiful family, grown kids, endless acres of sheep and camels and oxen and donkeys, and countless servants who love working here.
This is the good life. It's everything we aspire to. It says right here: Job is the greatest.

Verse four:
His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. Honestly, this is my dream: grown kids getting along, laughing, loving life. And sure, someone might be thinking, well, now they're drinking, but Job's two steps ahead of you.

Verse five:
When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom. He knows they're human, but he also knows God has made a covering, so crack of dawn he's up and working on a full burnt sacrifice. And rising up with that morning sun is the amazing smell that the Lord himself calls a sweet aroma.

These kids are covered and sanctified, even if it's just in case every time.
What a dad!
Then quite suddenly the scene changes.

Verse six:
One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

Now, where are we? Must be heaven. God's here and angels are presenting themselves. And what do you know? Satan is right here with them.

Verse seven:
The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."
Wow, a glimpse into heaven and God is talking to Satan. I've got a ton of questions, but let's see what happens.

Verse eight:
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."

Wow, the Lord brought up Job to Satan. I mean, first of all, if Job could hear this: come on! There is literally no greater honor than to hear the Lord speak well of you.

My one great aspiration is to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And here the Lord says that Job is the best he's got. If there was any question about Job's character, God settles it.
If God says he's blameless, he's blameless. Same four things: blameless, upright, fears God, shuns evil. Job is the man.

Verse nine:
"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. Pause story. That is the question. Does Job fear God for nothing? That little question will drive this whole story, so take time to grapple with it.

Job is a blameless man, but Satan doesn't challenge his goodness. He challenges his fear of God. What is it worth? Does it have any value if he hasn't paid for it? Satan explains: "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."
He's got a point. It's pretty easy to respect God when life is this good. Consider what this question is like to God. It's like someone telling you that your best friend is really just a lackey, a fawning parasite who just likes your stuff.

Satan continues: "But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."
Whoa, the gauntlet is thrown down. Satan wants a test. He intends to prove that Job's fear of God is empty, a weak façade. Push him over and watch him crumble.

Verse 12:
The Lord said to Satan, "Very well. Everything he has is in your power. On the man himself, do not lay a finger."
Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. So Satan challenged and the Lord accepted. Now keep firmly in mind: Job is totally unaware of all of this. But the story wants us fully aware, wants us to know just how much the Lord thinks of Job—the very best man he's got—and wants us to know what's on the line. Does Job fear God for nothing?
The scene returns to Job himself. The story is about to hit hard, so I'll refrain from comment.

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

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and all the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."
While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

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 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."

Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 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."

In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. And what a statement that is!

Loss beyond imagining and Job did not sin, didn't blame God. If ever you doubted this man's integrity: wow, come on! And what a response. I entered this world with nothing, and I will leave with nothing. He just lost everything, and he recognizes immediately that everything he had was the Lord's in the first place.

Verse 21 is mind-blowing: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised."

Wow, dwell on that. What kind of faith does it take to fully recognize that God has every right to take what he gave? Read Job One and consider: What do you fear God for?

Looks like the Lord was right about Job, but will Satan concede? We'll find out next time.

Job 2 | Integrity

Welcome back to the Book of Job. As chapter two opens, we're still reeling from Job's wealth gone, animals gone, servants gone, and worst of all, his children. Unimaginable.

Yet as chapter one closed, Job stood before us holding on to just one thing: his integrity. In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. The depth of Job's character is awe-inspiring. No wonder the Lord said that there's no one on earth like him. He lost so much, and yet never blamed God. In fact, he doesn't blame anyone—not himself, not the various attackers or the storm. No one.

I guess that fear of God really changes a man. And remember, it was that same fear of God that Satan challenged, and it looks like it held so far. As we open chapter two, it's important to get our bearings here. What sort of story is this? With this wager, it almost feels like an episode of The Good Place—uncaring cosmic beings placing bets on how mortals will respond to cruel torture.

Though there's no frozen yogurt shops here. That's a shallow view. This is not the Good Place, and we know that God is no dispassionate observer. In fact, it's striking just how much the Lord values Job's integrity.

Perhaps this is more like a survivalist show—Alone or Naked and Afraid—watching what one man becomes when all is stripped away and heaven falls silent. Yet this is not just suffering, and not just survival.

It is a sacred test, a wilderness of the soul where one man's integrity is tested by fire.

So far, Job has passed that test. Will Satan admit defeat? Chapter two, verse one.

"On another day, the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.'

"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.'

I wonder how Job would feel hearing this. "Lord, could you stop bringing me up to Satan?" But honestly, imagine hearing the Lord, creator of the universe, speaking your name. That floors me. And this is Job. What God thinks of him is everything he lives for. This.

I know some would look at this and see Job stuck in some twisted Truman Show or Trading Places, with two old rich guys wagering on his life.
Would Job see it that way? I mean, to hear his name spoken by God and his character vindicated, and to know that his character actually matters to God—that the way he endures this hell isn't just some meaningless striving on this meaningless speck of a planet in an endless, uncaring universe, but actually makes a difference in heaven.

God brought him up after all that. To hear God say again, "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."

Maintaining integrity is no small feat. To hear that from God would mean a lot. Only Job didn't hear it. He doesn't hear any of this, doesn't get any of the details. That would make some sense of his chaos, but then maybe that's what this story is about.

How does someone get through it without knowing the answers? What does it mean to trust God without understanding?
Job is still blameless. And don't miss the end of God's statement: Job was ruined without any reason. Much of the pondering ahead will be around the reason. Yet you and I know from the start: there is no reason. That doesn't mean no purpose, only that no action of Job caused this.
Okay, back in the story, verse four.

"Skin for skin," Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life, but now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

Well, Satan sure can twist the situation. The Lord saw integrity. Satan merely sees self-preservation. He says that Job isn't cursing God because all that stuff he lost wasn't himself. It's outside him.

"A man will give all he has for his own life." That means that he cares about himself more than anything or anyone.

But strike his flesh, and he'll curse you to your face. Notice that Satan's goal is not suffering, but rather to break Job's faithfulness and break his relationship with God.

He makes quite an accusation. Do you think he's right? Verse six.
"The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, then he is in your hands, but you must spare his life.' So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.
"Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes."

The broken pottery and ashes suggest either the remains of his demolished home or the local dump—heaps of ruin and stench, a place for outcasts. And there sits Job, the man who had everything.

It is interesting to read commentaries attempting to diagnose Job's disease based on the symptoms, as if that helps anything. Perhaps it's a coping mechanism. It is hard to look directly at pain, so we avert our attention to diagnosis and distraction, but it doesn't help Job, and scratching with that pottery doesn't help much either.

But there he goes. Verse nine.
"His wife said to him, 'Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die.'"
Pause there. Job's wife is hurting, and hurt people hurt people. But if we could see the look on Job's face…

The one person he has left, the one person he needs to believe in him. Husbands, you know what I mean?
And she tells him to give up on his integrity. Integrity is all he has left. On the other hand, looking into her eyes, she too just lost everything. And there comes a time when a woman can only believe in a man so far.
"Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die."
He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?"

Now this guy—what a response. What a statement. Dwell on that. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? For every time we've challenged God's goodness because trouble struck, what about the good? We made no complaints when God gave us good things. And isn't it the good that makes the loss so bad? Ecclesiastes seven says, 'When times are good, be happy. But when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other.'

And yet again, in verse 10, "In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." Whatever comes after, the Bible makes it repeatedly clear that Job did not sin. If there is any reason for all this, it is not Job's sin.
Here he sits in full integrity and full misery. Verse 11.

"When Job's three friends—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite—heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him.

"When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him. They began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads.
"Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him. They saw how great his suffering was."
Now that is impressive. Before you form any other impression, I want you to see Job's friends sitting there for a week in silence. There is a name for this in Jewish tradition.

It is "sitting Shiva"—seven days to just mourn together. I believe these men are true and dear friends. They traveled far. They stayed long, and I believe they certainly mean well. Notice: they agreed to sympathize and comfort. Read Job two. Reflect on what it means to fear the Lord. Consider how much you value your integrity and how much God values it. And I'll see you again in chapter three.

Job 3 | In Despair

Welcome back to Job Everyone, chapter three. And I'm gonna be real with you: I don't want to be in chapter three. The first two chapters set the story—Job's character, the stakes set between the Lord and Satan, and tragedy after tragedy in rapid succession. Now three friends have gathered to sit with Job in silence.

Do you know how it feels to sit together in deep silence? These men dwell in it for seven long days.

And now we're just here. Something I've observed after tragedy: no one's quite sure how to deal with it now. But here we are in chapter three. As a pastor, I would never choose to preach Job three on a Sunday. I'm a hope dealer. It's my reflex response to bad news. This is darkness and despair. I might attempt to speed through to arrive at hope. Hold your breath through the tunnel, kids. But today, if we're just here with Job, hopeless, but now that we're here, I realize something.

This is the Bible—same Bible that has the crucifixion and resurrection, same one that says God loves me. But something in us feels like someone who fears God isn't supposed to be here, shouldn't feel this, shouldn't go through this, shouldn't say the things that Job is about to say. But here we are in the Bible. Job is a God-fearing man, as good as they get, and he feels it. He says it.

And God kept it for us in the Bible. And to me, that feels like permission to be human and express it. So let Job let it out.

In this chapter and all that are ahead, we're gonna want to correct or comfort or clarify or write theology. Resist the urge and let Job speak. Trust the story. Also, remember to consider God's perspective. Though his presence will feel painfully absent to Job, we have been made well aware of what's at stake for him.

Satan is convinced that Job will curse God, and the Lord accepted the challenge. God's silence will be very difficult for Job, but we know that God and Satan are both watching.

Now, once we dive in, I won't be teaching, but rather helping you connect with Job. His friends will do plenty of correcting, and we'll reflect on all of it at intermission. But right now is Job's time. Verse one.

After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said, "May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said a boy is conceived. That day, may it turn to darkness. May God above not care about it. May no light shine on it. May gloom and utter darkness claim it. Once more, may a cloud settle over it. May blackness overwhelm it.

That night, may thick darkness seize it. May it not be included among the days of the year, nor be entered in any of the months. May that night be barren. May no shout of joy be heard in it."

So Job finally opens his mouth and despair pours out. He curses the day of his own birth. You can almost see his eyes picturing that day and cursing it into darkness. Watch his words: darkness, gloom, utter darkness, blackness, may thick darkness seize it. Grab the wretched day by the neck and choke it. It's as if he hears the shouts of joy that a baby is born, that he is born, and he wants them all to shut up. Just shut up. End it now before the pain hits.

He calls on those who curse days to curse this horror of a day. He goes back to the dark hours before dawn, before he was born, and wants to snuff out the very stars. Stop the sunrise. Don't let it begin—that wretched day.

Verse 11: "Why did I not perish at birth and die as I came from the womb? Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed?

For now I would be lying down in peace. I would be asleep and at rest with kings and rulers of the earth who built for themselves places now lying in ruins."

Job dreams of a fantasy world where he was left for dead at birth. In that alternate universe, all his pain is prevented, and Job is at rest with kings of old. But it's not the kings' glory or splendor he longs for, no—only their death. He knows the vanity of their riches: rulers who built for themselves places now lying in ruins. It all goes to ruin. Suggest skip to the end to rest.

A small aside for movie trivia: you might recognize Job 3:14 as the code name for the villain in the first Mission Impossible movie, which by very strange coincidence I just happened to watch the very day I wrote this script. True story. But back in our text, pay attention to the word "why." Job goes from cursing to questioning. That's an important emotional progression. And the whys keep coming. Verse 16:

"Or why was I not hidden away in the ground, like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day? There the wicked cease from turmoil. There the weary are at rest. Captives also enjoy their ease. They no longer hear the slave driver's shout. The small and the great are there. The slaves are freed from their owners."

All Job can think about is death. Death is rest for the wicked, the weary, the captives, the small and the great—rest. But he can't reach it. And why not? Verse 20:

"Why is light given to those in misery and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?

Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in?"

The whys come to Job with a rhythm that won't be stifled. Why light? Why life? Why would God shine light on my world just to show me this misery? What good can I see? Now he's not blaming God, nor cursing God, or doubting his existence. But he wants to know why. God, he also wants to be done. I picture a counselor asking Job here: "Have you had any suicidal thoughts?" And Job's response: "Better question. Have I had any non-suicidal thoughts?"

I know that's rough, but it's better to acknowledge than avoid. For Job, the grave is the only thing he looks forward to. Verse 24:

"For sighing has become my daily food. My groans pour out like water. What I feared has come upon me. What I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest, but only turmoil."

And as we reflect, you have to wonder: is it okay for a believer to talk that way? To feel that way? Well, here is Job, the most God-fearing man in the world. And he says it and he feels it.

Yet in all his cursing of his own birth, it's worth noting that he does not curse God. I tried to connect with Job here. I've never been through that level of pain, but I've been hurt. I've felt darkness.

If ever you look at someone and think that they don't know hurt, check yourself. This life goes easy on no one, and nobody has a monopoly on pain. Yours may be more or less or different, but we all hurt.

Much of my early hurt I left in the past, processed it, moved on. So to relate, I decided to listen to some of the music that held my pain back then, before I knew anything of Jesus. I used to blow out my car speakers just to drown it or feel it—I don't know, just to do something with it.

For me, this chapter feels like the Guns N' Roses song "Come As You Are." It's got some language, so don't go listen to it if you can't handle language. But coming as slack, I was 19, screaming my lungs out of my car, just trying to deal with life.

But I listened back again, and sure enough, my heart remembered and it hurt. I'm guessing you have songs that hold some of your pain, and they're probably by bands you think most Christians just wouldn't understand: Smiths, Rage Against the Machine, Alice in Chains. Or maybe your lament is more country. And though I offer no endorsement for or against any particular music, I do think that the presence of chapters like this one in the Bible offer some validation, recognition that we each need something to help us process the pain. And art can do that. Job's lament does that. If you put this chapter to music, it would sound like those songs.

Perhaps Job is permission for your feelings to be felt, dark as they may be. Johnny Cash was a fully devoted Christian when he covered the Nine Inch Nails song "Hurt."

Those feelings forever? No. But they are now, and now matters too.

Read Job chapter three, feel his lament, and consider how we can allow space for emotions that we don't understand to be felt without taking over. This is not the end, but it still matters. And we'll see how his friends respond next time.

Job 4 | Breaking the Silence

Welcome back to Through the Word Job chapter four. Today, the ashes are still hot. Smoke curls into the sky from what was once Job's livelihood—oxen, sheep, camels—now smoldering ruins.

The world is eerily silent, as if mourning with Job. And there he sits, broken on the ash, his body covered in boils, his soul pierced with questions. Three friends have come to comfort him, and for seven long days, not a single word is spoken—just silence, awkward, uncomfortable, holy. But then Eliphaz speaks. The first voice to break the silence isn't from heaven; it's from a friend.

And what he says, well, he means well. Eliphaz the Temanite is the oldest, the most respected, the one with wisdom lines etched into his face. He clears his throat and begins carefully. "If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?" This is Job chapter four, and the first volley in a long debate begins.

What follows is not comfort but confrontation. Eliphaz sees Job's suffering and tries to make sense of it. His conclusion: suffering comes from sin. And since Job is suffering, well, you connect the dots. And here's the thing—Eliphaz isn't a villain. He's a friend. He traveled a long distance to sit with Job in his grief. He mourned with him. He didn't speak a word for seven days, but now he does. And his words are going to challenge us. That's the tension of Job. It's not just about suffering; it's about how people interpret suffering. And as we listen to Eliphaz, we are invited to wrestle: What do we say when a friend suffers? What do we believe when it's us?

Job four is a poetic, powerful piece of ancient wisdom literature. It's also a wake-up call for anyone who's tried to make sense of somebody else's suffering. Now, here's our approach to the speeches of Job's friends: we're not going to argue with them—at least not yet. We're going to let them speak. We're going to hear them out because these men don't say foolish things. In fact, most of what they say is quite wise. There's theology here, there's depth. And if you're paying attention, there's a lot to wrestle with. Remember: eat the popcorn. So let's hear Eliphaz out. He begins gently.

"If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking?" Eliphaz is careful here. He knows Job is raw, hurting, so he tests the waters. "Can I say something?" he's asking. "I don't want to hurt you, but I can't remain silent anymore." Then Eliphaz starts with affirmation. He points to Job's character and legacy.

"Think how you've instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumble. You have strengthened faltering knees." That's beautiful, isn't it? Job has been a man of wisdom and compassion. His words have helped others stand again. Eliphaz honors that. He says, "You've been a pillar for others."

"But now trouble comes to you, and you're discouraged. It strikes you, and you're dismayed. Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways be your hope?" It's subtle, but Eliphaz is starting to lay the foundation for his argument. He's asking Job, "Where is the confidence you gave to others? Why is your hope shaken? You told others to trust God. Can you trust him now?"

Then Eliphaz asks a probing question. In verse seven: "Consider now: who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?"

Blameless in verse six and upright in verse seven—these are the exact words God used to describe Job when talking to Satan. Eliphaz knows this about Job, but look at Job's circumstances. Suffering doesn't come out of nowhere. Innocent people don't perish. The upright don't get destroyed. Something must be off, something hidden. So he continues: "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God, they perish at the blast of his anger."

There are no more. Now we're getting into the heart of Eliphaz's theology. It's the law of sowing and reaping: reap what you sow. Do evil? Trouble follows. Eliphaz says this is how the world works. It's what he's observed. But here's the tension: Eliphaz isn't speaking to a hypothetical person; he's speaking to Job, his friend, a friend who's suffering. Looking into Job's face, watching the pain, it slightly hurts. You fast-forward to know that he's wounding his friend. But like a surgeon, he proceeds. If only Job knew, Eliphaz is trying to end his suffering—to end the suffering brought about by confusion, not having the answers. But Eliphaz knows like the resetting of an arm or popping a limb back into joint: this is going to hurt, but it's also going to help.

In verse ten, he presses further: "The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken. The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered." It's a poetic image—lions, symbols of power and pride, cut down, broken, and scattered. In Eliphaz's view, pride leads to a fall, and that fall, he implies, might be what Job is experiencing. He is that lion cut down.

Eliphaz has been holding back the big guns, though. Now we come to something a little curious, something unique in the speeches of Job.

Eliphaz shares a vision—a mysterious spiritual encounter that seems to have deeply impacted him.

Verse twelve: "A word was secretly brought to me. My ears caught a whisper of it. Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people, fear and trembling seized me and made my bones shake." Eliphaz knows Job is not going to receive what he's saying, so he builds the tension of his experience. Let Job experience what he experienced, and then maybe Job will draw a universal truth from it. It's kind of eerie, and the scene feels like something out of a prophetic vision. Eliphaz is shaken, literally. He's wide-eyed and trembling in his story. A ghostly figure approaches. Is it a ghost? Is it an angel? Or something else? We don't know.

"A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end." Stopped. But I couldn't tell what it was. "A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice."

And here comes that voice, a whisper in the dark: "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his maker?"

I don't know what you make of this, but Job is shaken, aren't you? A little shaken, reader. The argument from authority, this apparition, this "I had a vision" business, "I had an angel." Tell me, you have to listen. Job's been backed into a corner here, and he left. As you can see, Job physically tensing up, seeming to back into the wall a little bit. I mean, what do you do with this kind of stuff? And that question Eliphaz leaves hanging: "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his maker?"

Now, that's a heavy question, and it's not wrong. It's a powerful truth. No one is more righteous than God. No human can claim purity before him. The voice continues: "If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth?" Eliphaz, drawing a stark contrast between God's perfection and human frailty. Angels fall, Job. And if angels fall, what hope do you have, Job? Being infallible, what hope do we have, made of dust and clay?

He continues in verse twenty: "Between dawn and dusk, they're broke into pieces, unnoticed. They perish forever. Are not the cords of their tent pulled up so that they die without wisdom?" It's a grim picture. Human life is fragile, temporary, like a tent being dismantled, gone in a moment.

So what is Eliphaz saying? What's his message to Job? He begins gently, honoring Job's past. But then he challenges him. Job, you've been a source of strength for others, but now that suffering has come to you, why do you falter? He presents a theology rooted in justice and order: the innocent do not perish; those who sow evil reap evil. God is just; people suffer for a reason. He then shares a spiritual vision, a whisper in the night, reminding us that no one is righteous before God—not angels, not men, not even the strong like Job. In the presence of God, we are all dust. And so Eliphaz has spoken. He's laid out his case, and it sounds reasonable, even theologically true. But something about it leaves us uneasy because we know Job's story. We know what's happened behind the scenes, what Job doesn't know and what Eliphaz can't possibly know. And that makes us pause. But for now, we let Eliphaz speak. We let his words sit. We'll wrestle with them, and in time we'll weigh them, but not yet.

So take a moment today. Let these words roll around in your heart. Think about the people in your life who are hurting. Think about the way we speak into others' suffering, the desire to make sense of it, to fix it, to apply truth to pain. And sometimes truth needs to wait. Sometimes comfort needs to come before correction. And sometimes we just need to listen.

Well, ask Job chapter four: Eliphaz speaks. And now we pause. We listen, and we wait.

Join us next time for the rest of what Eliphaz has to say in Job chapter five on our journey through the Word.

Job 5 | Born to Trouble

Welcome back to Job chapter five. We've all been there. Someone we love is suffering under a new diagnosis—cancer. Everyone racks their brain to try to make sense of it. How did this happen? Why?

Our minds do a quick analysis of contributing factors: age, lifestyle, genetics. But there's always that one person, the one who has to blame. They ate too much fast food. I told them those chemicals are known to cause cancer. Or I warned him about the cell phone. I once read an article on the internet that cell phones seem to cause cancer, you know, the blamers and the chambers.

They mean well, but well, it's mean. Eliphaz is still speaking. The dust hasn't settled and neither has Eliphaz. Eliphaz is looking to blame, and we wince because some of his words sound mean. And remember, our approach here is to let Eliphaz speak. We're not arguing with him. We're listening, taking in his words and holding space for the discomfort they bring.

He opens like this in verse one:

Call if you will. Who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn? In other words, Job, you can cry out, but is anyone going to answer? Even heaven is silent. Eliphaz is confronting the hopelessness Job feels, but he's doing it through the lens of theology, not empathy.

And now he launches into a broader truth. In verse two: Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. This is the first time Eliphaz takes a harder tone. Resentment, he says, will eat you alive. It's the fool's path. Job, envy? That'll wreck you too.

It might sound harsh, but Eliphaz sees Job's lament in chapter three—cursing the day he was born, questioning God's justice—and he's reading it as bitterness, resentment.

And so he's warning Job: Hey, I heard what you said, and I didn't like what I heard. I'm a friend, and I'm warning you: don't go down that road. And then he shares something from his own experience. In verse three: I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed. His children are far from safety, crushed in court without a defender.

The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among the thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth. It sounds like it's about someone else, but we feel the weight of it landing squarely on Job. A fool with a cursed house, children in danger, crops stolen. Eliphaz might not say Job's name, but the implication is there, and that's the sting.

But Eliphaz doesn't think this is random or meaningless. He has a worldview, and he says it plainly.

Verse six:

For hardship doesn't come from the soil. Trouble doesn't sprout from the ground. Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward. That line—"man is born to trouble"—is one of the most famous verses in the book. It's poetic, memorable, and Eliphaz is saying: suffering doesn't just happen. It's not random.

It doesn't grow like weeds. It comes from somewhere. Suffering has a cause, Job, and people by nature find themselves in trouble. He's painting a world where suffering is connected to behavior, and in that world, Eliphaz offers advice to Job.

Verse eight:

But if I were you, I would appeal to God. I would lay my case before him. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. Now the tone softens again. Eliphaz is urging Job: turn to God, go to him. He's not cruel. He's powerful.

He does wonders. He sends rain. He lifts the lowly. He saves the needy. Listen to this, in verse 11: The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. He thwarts the plans of the crafty so that their hands achieve no success. There's truth here. God does lift the lowly.

He does oppose the crafty. He does bring justice. Eliphaz isn't lying. He's quoting ancient wisdom, and some of it sounds like the Psalms or even the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit. God exalts the humble." But Eliphaz is applying these truths like math equations: if A, then B.

If someone is mourning, they'll be lifted up. If they're crushed, God will heal them. If they turn to him, he'll restore.

In verse 17, he says: Blessed is the one whom God corrects. So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty, for he wounds, but he also binds up. He injures, but his hands also heal. This is one of those verses that people quote without knowing it's from Eliphaz, and it sounds good. It sounds right. In many ways, it is. God disciplines those he loves. He wounds and he heals. But again, the question isn't whether the words are true. The question is whether they apply to Job.

In verse 19, Eliphaz finishes his speech with a poetic promise of restoration: "From six calamities he will rescue you, and in seven no harm will touch you. In famine he will deliver you from death, in battle from the stroke of the sword.

You'll be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes."

Eliphaz paints a picture of the faithful being protected, delivered, safe in calamity, laughing at destruction, not afraid. Then he says: You will know that your tent is secure, and you'll take stock of your property and find nothing missing. You will know that your children will be many and your descendants like the grass of the earth.

And these words would've sounded beautiful if they weren't being spoken to a man who had just buried all ten of his children. That's the tension. The words sound good, but the timing, the application—that's another story.

Eliphaz ends with a confident seal. In verse 27: We have examined this, and it's true. So hear it and apply it to yourself.

There it is, Job. Listen, think about it, apply it to yourself. Eliphaz said his piece. He shared his wisdom, his observations, his theology.

He's spoken with passion and compassion, with intensity and now with certainty. And it's still a little unsettling, isn't it? Because much of what Eliphaz says is theologically sound. God does heal. He does lift up the lowly. God does bring justice and oppose the proud, and these are true things.

We'll see them again and again in scripture. But here's the thing: just because something is true doesn't mean it always applies. Truth isn't just about the what; it's also about the when and the how.

Sometimes even good theology misapplied can do damage. So what do we do with Eliphaz? We listen.

We sit with his words and we let them challenge us, because sometimes we're Eliphaz. Sometimes we try to fix people's pain with answers and quotes and well-meant wisdom.

Sometimes we jump in too early with our own conclusions. But sometimes, like Job, we just need someone to sit with us in the ashes and talk about it. Well, that's Job chapter five. Eliphaz has spoken, and for now we wait for Job's response in chapter six. But I'll see you next time for that on our journey together through the word.

Job 6 | Integrity at Stake

Welcome back to Job, my friends, chapter six. Today, as we find out how Job will respond to Eliphaz, Eliphaz is a friend. He spent a full week sitting in silence to mourn with Job. When Job finally voiced his despair, Eliphaz offered up truth. Now, you might say that truth was harsh, but it came with hope.

He reminded Job of the many times that he had strengthened others when they stumbled. Come on, brother. Remember who you are. Have confidence. Put hope in your blameless ways. Where were the upright ever destroyed? Clearly, Eliphaz knew that Job values his character, and he told him to find strength in it. But he also laid down a little fear of the Lord.

Can a mortal be more righteous than God? He spoke words of hope and justice with an essential reminder: Blessed is the one whom God corrects, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

His words were firm but forceful. And in his final statement, we have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself. Notice that he never accuses Job directly. As I picture them, Eliphaz can't quite look at Job directly. He simply offers up truth and lets it land where it may. But Job is locked right in on Eliphaz, almost trying to force eye contact.

Chapter six, verse one.

Then Job replied, "If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales, it would surely outweigh the sand of the seas. No wonder my words have been impetuous. The arrows of the Almighty are in me. My spirit drinks in their poison. God's terrors are marshaled against me." Job is direct and intense.

After two long chapters of lofty words and lovely metaphors, Job wants to bring Eliphaz down to reality.

He wants to be seen. "If only my anguish could be weighed." He wants a measurement, a set of scales to dump his misery on, to show Eliphaz: Look at the scales. Look at me. This is my reality. You think a little verbal pick-me-up will help my mood? Do you not see God's arrows sticking out of my side, and their poison pouring into my spirit? And you are pressing them in. Come on.

Now, a quick reminder here before Job really digs in: Job is mad. The text here is angry, so you're gonna hear me express some anger—not because I am angry, but because my job here is to help you understand Job, to connect with him. Now, please do not hear this as me or Job being angry with you.

The right way to read each chapter is to connect with the speaker and feel what they're feeling. Job has good reason for frustration. So let him vent. And if you've ever felt the same, maybe this is your chance to vent too.

Okay, back to Job, verse five. "Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass, or an ox bellow when it has fodder?" In other words, you're treating me like an animal who's just complaining for no good reason, like my life is good and fair and I should just be content with that. Job compares his friends' words to tasteless food eaten without salt. In verse seven, "I refuse to touch it. Such food makes me ill." In other words, thanks for the sermon, friend. I found it bland and pointless. Also, I didn't ask for a sermon.

From here, Job's direction shifts as if his gaze moves away from his friends, and he just vents his heart to the world.

Verse eight: "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut off my life." Job wants to die. He's done. He wants God to finish the job and just crush him.

But pay close attention to why. In verse 10: "Then I would still have this consolation, my joy in unrelenting pain—that I had not denied the words of the Holy One." Job is holding just one thing left—his solitary possession, his integrity.

Remember when it said twice in all this, Job did not sin? He didn't blame God, and he didn't curse God. And don't think that was easy. Job is trying with all his might to keep his integrity to the end because he values it, and it's the one and only joy he's got left.

So he pleads with the Lord to end this so he can finish with his character intact.

Now, verse 11 is directed back to his friends. "What strength do I have that I should still hope? What prospects that I should be patient? Do I have the strength of stone? Is my flesh bronze? Do I have any power to help myself? Now that success has been driven from me?"

In other words, stop trying to cheer me up. Don't give me hope. Don't tell me to be patient. Patient for what? I have no future, no prospects. You talk like a maid of steel, an unfeeling machine that can just reset. I have nothing.

In verse 14, he appears to be quoting a proverb against his friend: "Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty." But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams. An intermittent stream is fresh water that's there to refresh you one day and gone the next.

Looking at Job, he likes this picture. It just really fits his friends right now. So he digs in. He wants a vivid picture for his friends to see the way he sees them. Now, back in verse 15, as the streams that overflow when darkened by thawing ice and swollen with melting snow, Job can see it fresh. Snow melt from the mountaintop flowing down in abundance, so refreshing. Then verse 17: "But that stops flowing in the dry season and in the heat vanish from their channels."

I can see Job looking right at Eliphaz for this, as if he's looking right at the dry creek bed, barren and cracked. Then the picture gets bigger. Now caravans of travelers turn their wagons off route just to find that lovely stream in the desert and find nothing. They perish in the wasteland. Verse 19: "The caravans of Tema look for water. The traveling merchants of Sheba look in hope. They are distressed because they had been confident. They arrived there only to be disappointed."

Reading between the lines here, Job is saying all those caravans dying of thirst—that's me. And that dry, worthless creek bed—that's you guys. Verse 21: "Now you too have proved to be of no help. You see something dreadful and are afraid. Have I ever said, 'Give something on my behalf, pay a ransom for me from your wealth, deliver me from the hand of the enemy? Rescue me from the clutches of the ruthless'?"

In other words, I didn't ask for your help. I didn't ask for hope. I didn't ask you to save me, so stop trying. Verse 24: "Teach me, and I will be quiet. Show me where I have been wrong."

That means stop throwing out general truths that insinuate my guilt, and show me specifics. Give me evidence. Verse 25: "How painful are honest words. But what do your arguments prove?

Do you mean to correct what I say and treat my desperate words as wind? You would even cast lots for the fatherless and barter away your friend. Guys, you're selling your own friend for marbles here, waxing eloquent while incidentally tossing my reputation in the fire.

But now be so kind as to look at me. Would I lie to your face? Relent. Do not be unjust. Reconsider, for my integrity is at stake. Is there any wickedness on my lips? Can my mouth not discern malice?"

And we finish the chapter back at the one thing Job can hold fast: his integrity. It impresses me just how much it means to Job. As you read Job's words, consider how much your integrity means to you and the importance of what people say about it. And consider just how careful you are with what you say about others. A little reminder as you read: give Job some space to vent. We'll save the analysis for later, and we'll get the rest of Job's defense next time.

Job 7 | Have I Sinned?

Welcome back to the Book of Job, my friends. A quick warning: this chapter includes references to suicidal thoughts. Now we pick up at chapter seven as Job continues his response to Eliphaz and really his defense. We closed out chapter six with his heartfelt plea: relent. Do not be unjust. Reconsider, for my integrity is at stake. Job knows his own character, and we know his character because God himself declared he is blameless and upright. And that brings up something I'm wrestling with.

How do we relate to someone like Job? He's blameless. But what if I'm not? What if I'm pretty good but not that good? Can I still relate? I thought about that. Even if you're not perfect, I think we all relate to undeserved struggles. I know I've done wrong, but I don't deserve that.

But deeper than that, for someone who follows Jesus, we know that God calls us righteous. Romans four five: our faith is counted as righteousness. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Job made sacrifices, but our one sacrifice is Jesus. So God calls us blameless.

Still, if we're honest, we doubt that. Sometimes we feel unworthy, unsure. Yet that's exactly what makes Job so compelling. He wrestles with the same thing. He knows that he's blameless before God, but this suffering throws it all into question. If I really am forgiven, why this? How does God see me? Really? And if you've ever asked those questions, Job can definitely relate. So let's pick it back up at Job seven one.

Do not mortals have hard service on earth? Are not their days like those of hired laborers? Like a slave longing for the evening shadows, or a hired laborer waiting to be paid. So I have been allotted months of futility.

In his suffering, Job finds a profound connection with all humanity. We all go through it. Bildad distinguishes: good people have it good, bad people have it bad. But Job pushes back. Look around. We are all slaves and laborers. He paints a vivid scene: slaves longing for sunset, day laborers counting the minutes till they get just enough pay to get them through the night. Job feels it all. Verse four.

When I lie down, I think how long before I get up? The night drags on, and I toss and turn until dawn. My body is clothed with worms and scabs. My skin is broken and festering. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and they come to an end without hope.

Time is blurring for Job. Nights won't end, days vanish away. Pain distorts time without purpose or punctuation. It flies by without meaning. Job pictures life like watching a weaver's shuttle swept away by the motion, dizzy and hopeless. He speaks of months when it's only been a week. He's lost in both the slowness and fastness of time.

It is well worth noting here that depression is in the Bible. For those who struggle, it is no small vindication that some of the Bible's greatest heroes are well acquainted with it: Job, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Hannah—you're in good company.

Do you know who it was that said "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow"? He's also described as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Jesus. From here, Job turns his eyes upward to God. Verse seven: Remember, oh God, that my life is but a breath. My eyes will never see happiness again.

I could almost see Job's eyes well up. When you're on the defense, you hold your composure, but the walls come down when you talk to a friend. God is the one person he fully trusts, and Job lets it out. These eyes that have seen so much beauty and joy will never see happiness again, and the eyes that see me won't see me much longer. Verse nine.

A cloud vanishes and is gone. So one who goes down to the grave does not return. He will never come to his house again. His place will know him no more. That strange experience we all know of walking into the home of a friend who will never enter it again—soon that will be Job. Verse eleven.

Therefore, I will not keep silent. I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit. Job rejects the polite silence that often surrounds suffering. What am I waiting for? Verse twelve: Am I the sea or the monster of the deep that you put me under guard? In other words, Lord, why are you treating me like a danger to society? I'm no threat. I'm weak. Verse thirteen: When I think my bed will comfort me, even then you frighten me with dreams and terrify me with visions so that I prefer strangling and death rather than this body of mine. I despise my life. I would not live forever. Let me alone. My days have no meaning.

Job has clearly been wrestling with thoughts of suicide. I think we'd all be surprised to find out just how common it is. Again, great company: at least five Bible heroes express suicidal considerations.

Job is one of God's best, but he doesn't act on it, and that's important. His despair is real but temporary. He doesn't see it, but God does.

I've had the honor of walking several people through dark moments just like these and of seeing them several years later filled with joy and hope they never thought possible. If you are there, hold on and tell someone. Don't walk through it alone.

In verse seventeen, Job wonders to God: What is mankind that you make so much of them, that you give them so much attention? Sound familiar? Psalm eight asks the same question with awe and gratitude.

I'm sure Job once felt the same, but now his question is weary. Why do you care? Why do you examine us every morning and test us every moment? Why won't you leave me alone even for an instant? What are you looking for? Verse twenty.

If I have sinned, what have I done to you? You who see everything we do. Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?
You know that feeling when you know someone's mad at you but you can't for the life of you figure out why? The "if" is not in the Hebrew here, and translations differ on whether this is a confession—"I have sinned"—or a question: "Have I sinned?" But either way, Job's driving point is that he cannot fathom what sin he could have possibly done to deserve this.

And this we can relate to. Okay, Lord, I know I'm not perfect, but this feels personal. What did I do to become your target?

And a Christian can ask the same questions. Lord, I thought I was forgiven. Doesn't your word call me righteous? And I know I still face earthly consequences for the stuff I did, but this is totally different.

For Job, this would all be much simpler if he could just point to a sin that caused it. But he can't. Job knows God to be merciful, yet he cannot reconcile this. Francis Anderson comments that Job's faith does not relieve his agony—it causes it. Verse twenty-one.

Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins? For I will soon lie down in the dust. You will search for me, but I will be no more.
And there Job sits quiet again with all his questions and doubt sitting with him. And we wonder: does Job's doubt change his blameless status with God? What do you think? Doubt is a complex topic, and Job's book gives us plenty of space to talk about it. In fact, it's quite striking. In some ways, it almost feels that doubt is essential here, like a necessary part of the process, like there were certain parameters in the opening wager that must allow room for doubt. Frederick Buechner asked the question this way: Without somehow destroying me in the process, how could God reveal himself in a way that would leave no room for doubt? If there were no room for doubt, there would be no room for me.

Read Job seven and consider how you relate to Job's questions. And if you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, please talk to someone. The suicide hotline in America is 988. And wherever you are, please find the suicide hotline in your area and call. And we'll meet you back here in chapter eight.

Job 1 - 7 | Intermission I - Kris, Peyton, & Friends

Welcome back to Job, everyone. This is the first of our intermissions. My name is Noah, and right about now you're probably wondering two things: Why an intermission, and who am I? Well, I'll let Kris explain the intermission, but as for me, my work here is usually behind the scenes. But for Job, think of me as the intermission host—somewhere between an usher and a stage manager.

Kris and Peyton discuss, but I'll be here to keep them on track and occasionally chime in. So, Kris, you want to explain the intermission? Alright. To understand what we're doing, I want us to picture where we are in the theater. Drama's paused. Theater's still dark, and the curtains come down. But when the house lights come on, our eyes adjust and our senses come back into the present. It's time to stand up, stretch a little bit, and shuffle out into the lobby together. First, take a breath. That was a lot. Break if you need it. But then what? Well, there in the theater lobby, the red carpet's cushy under your feet. You kind of circle up and you start talking about what hit you. And we wanna walk through this with a nice balance of theology, theater, and therapy, 'cause all those are in play here.

So take a deep breath of that popcorn smell. Take a look around. What do we do first? First thing we do is just emote—you let it out. Which lines and events hit you hard? When he said this, when this happened. After the emoting, we articulate—you name the weight. You give accurate words to the tensions that surfaced and why they hit you so hard. Talk it out. And finally, you have to respond. What are we gonna do with those tensions?

And it really comes down to either a reset for what's ahead, a resolve if you're kind of okay with that tension now, or a release if you're just ready to let it go. Now that's a process that we all do naturally, but we wanna walk through it carefully here. So we're gonna follow that three-step process of emote, articulate, and respond. Now, I promise the acronym EAR was entirely by accident, but it kind of fits 'cause we're listening to our emotions here. And I wanna set the expectations right for our responses. First of all, it's individual. You don't choose the tension, but you do choose how you carry it forward. And we also don't wanna release too early. Don't pretend to release tensions when you're really just suppressing. Intermissions are primarily for resets, so that we carry tensions forward with clarity. So expect that, and I'm gonna give us one ground rule: feel first, then fix. If we correct feelings prematurely, we only shame and stiff feelings that we really need to process. Correction comes after processing.

See, drama is meant to stir emotion. It resonates with something inside us—an old memory, a fear, a hard question—and the dramatic tensions pull like strings on the heart. Fixing with easy answers is like cutting the strings early, so the emotion goes right back. That's why we ate the popcorn. We sat with the tension. See, emoting lets the feeling breathe. Articulating gives it language, and our response is kinda like tuning guitar strings. Some tensions settle into harmony, some need more pulling, and some we were never meant to carry. Okay. You ready? Take a breath and let's do this.

All right, we're in the lobby. Kris gave us the structure. Let's do this. We also collected feedback from a pre-release audience to get their emotions. So it's kinda like you guys are here with us too. But first, we emote. What were the big hits? What events and lines from the story resonated for you?

So let's start with the prologue story, chapters one and two. Peyton, we haven't heard from you yet. What's something that stood out to you?
So when God says in chapter two that you convinced me to ruin Job without reason, that kinda made me wonder: Was that the whole story? Was God ruining him without reason, or is the reason itself what we're meant to tease out of the Book of Job?

I was just hit with tragedy. We started this beautiful scene with this good man, blessed by God, beautiful family celebrating together, and then it's just hit after hit of tragedy.

Yeah, there's a lot of shell shock in the story right off the rip. I mean, both of those things that you guys pointed out—they leave you with big questions.
Yeah. And interestingly, it was actually in backing up to the very first line—the word blameless, like from line one. That word kind of stopped me, 'cause it kind of feels like a person's not allowed to be blameless 'cause they can't be sinless. And when I talked to several people, they had the same reaction. Like, wait, stop, hold on. Is he sinless? Is he, like, only Jesus is sinless? And it's just funny that that word got us stuck. Can he truly be blameless?

That was another one that jumped out at me along a similar line—when it said that Job kept his integrity. And I don't exactly know what that means.
So you have ruined without reason, you have tragedy, the word blameless, the whole setting of the scene when Satan approaches God. What is the deal with God just letting Satan go at Job?

We had several people who said the same exact question: What is happening here with Satan?

I think we're kind of supposed to feel that way because Satan's talking to God, God's listening to Satan, and like, what is the dynamic that's supposed to happen? But Satan's question also really stood out.
Does Job fear God for nothing? That fear of God feels like that's an important element. And then I can't miss Job's immediate response: 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. That line just sat with me.

You know, Job chapter three—Job's lament. I know we got a lot of feedback. A lot of people really zoned in on that chapter and the monologues that followed. What hit you guys there?
It's just so dark. And I was really impressed with the feedback from the audience of how much resonance there was with a chapter that I would not choose to teach, but it hit—it hit something that we needed to feel.

I think for me it's the whole structure overall. When God wants to express the deepest emotions that we deal with in scripture, he turns to poetry rather than prose. And I think it's striking because it's so different than what we do. We default to lectures, but God uses lyrics here. And maybe that's why we often turn to music when we're hurting.

Kris mentions that about the different bands. He actually mentioned a lot of my fans, but the films that we watch can touch us more deeply than anything else. And I think creative media like poetry, music, film—they actually pierce past our intellect. That's their power, and truth might actually be able to get through a lot of our defenses that way. Because I don't think that truth is actually just about precepts.

I think most truth has to be experienced. Like, that's a deeply biblical concept. And Job is like that because every one out of one person is going to suffer in their life at some point. And so we have an experience, all of us, that touches the core of who we are as people. And sometimes the precepts that we read in the Bible—they don't fully express what our emotions feel.

And that's the real job of an artist—to push beyond the limits of what words can do, right? Go beyond what words fail to capture. And God is definitely an artist. And I see this: it's like any great work of poetry, like epic poetry. This is a mini epic, but epic poetry is a unique art form and it's really ancient.
And here we have Job, and God just—he goes straight to the soul. I felt things when I went through Job that the only other place I feel him is in the Psalms. And the depth of Job's lament actually provides the permission to express everything that you just talked about—all of those emotions, the poetry itself. We heard a lot of the listeners use the word permission: permission to hurt without shame. And that deep lament in and of itself is not a sin.
It's okay to lament. It's okay to go through those motions and allow the expression of them.

Yeah, that permission's an interesting insight because when we don't give permission to our feelings, we by nature stuff. And I think in church we do that, even if we're not told to, even if it's not the church culture necessarily. There's something like some bit of shame that we even put on ourselves, and we don't allow ourselves to feel real feelings. We stuff feelings and then we're stuck with them, and we don't process. And what I'm looking forward to in the Book of Job is genuinely processing to get through to the other side of those feelings.
Hmm.

I do wanna address, again, the suicidal thoughts from Job. I wanna honor his hurt, but I think we've gotta process those really carefully. It is powerful and permission-giving to recognize that some of our greatest heroes in the Bible did have genuine suicidal thoughts.
We gotta walk through their whole story to see where that goes. Because in those feelings, we also want to let those out so they don't get stuck inside of Us.

What about chapter four? What'd you guys think of the first friend to speak? Well, first I want to acknowledge the Eliphaz in the room because Peyton and I do not pronounce Eliphaz the same, but that's okay.
You are both wrong. It's okay for you both to be wrong.
How do you pronounce it again?

It's probably Al-i-faz.
I say Eliphaz.
I thought I said pha. You said Eliphaz.
No, no, I say pha. You say El-i-a.

We're gonna rewind the tape on that one, but I'm gonna use Al-i-faz now. But beyond that, Eliphaz—what a jerk. I mean, with friends like this. But honestly, I was actually impressed with how many of our listeners responded by recognizing that they have done this to people. They have been the Al-i-faz. And I know I'm guilty because I'm an explainer, so I have this natural tendency to want to explain why things are happening, and that includes suffering. And that's what Al-i-faz is trying to do.

And my one last thing—to get that ghostly apparition, I think that Al-i-faz is kind of pronouncing like it had some wisdom. But what are we supposed to do with that? Like, is that a voice from God? I don't know.

Okay, so let's move on from emote to articulate, and this is where we name the weight for each tension and try to identify why it resonated.
So Kris, let's start with you.

So blameless is the one that I really want—I feel like it's gonna be important. I'm definitely not ready to settle it, but I do wanna reset it carefully for the story coming up. First of all, Job is called blameless in the very first verse, and my gut reaction was how I brushed it aside. But then twice more, God says it again. Then I was talking to my home group and a buddy of mine was like,

Hey, that can't mean sinless. And I didn't really have an answer for him. Does it mean sinless? And all I could come back to was it means he is blameless. And then the story starts, and Eliphaz, and the center of his whole argument is about blaming Job. I think that resonates because it's how we respond to hurt. And reading Job has really helped me see that we can put so much focus and emotional weight into figuring out blame. And I think Al-i-faz is sort of the voice of our inner sense of justice. And sometimes the blame is clear and that's right and good, but in Job's case it isn't. And what good will the blame chasing actually produce? So I'm not settled on this one, but I want to keep watching it.

That's good. Peyton, what about you?
Yeah, just responding to that for a second. I think that it almost is telling you that nothing that his friends blame him for is actually gonna stick.

But as teachers, when we move through this, we approach this like a drama. So what I'm teaching, you might think, man, Peyton's mean, 'cause I'm speaking in the voice of Eliphaz like the phrase from chapter five. Well-meaning people? Well, sometimes they're mean.

But teaching in the genre of a drama, here we're playing a part. I'm trying to get you into the head of Eliphaz, and Kris is trying to get you to think about what Job is feeling. We aren't just dismissing their arguments. It's so tempting to just explain away what these guys are saying. Like, Hey everybody, wait a second. We time out. We know this isn't true. But we're not gonna do that because the scripture doesn't do that here. It doesn't even want us to.

Like, for example, take the insinuation that Job is being punished by God—blame theology. It's the default theology of so many people. So they reflexively resort to blame when they witness suffering. So if blame theology is your go-to, all the complexity of human suffering just evaporates, and the vast range of explanations get flattened into a single oversimplified explanation. Like the saying, when the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Could it be—and just bear with me on this—Job is really outlining a list of things we think but probably shouldn't say.

All right. I wanna hit one more. The fear of God feels like it's really important. Job is blameless, and also in that same list, he fears God. But Satan's question has to be important here because God honored the question. Does Job fear God for nothing? Now again, I'm resetting this one. I need to watch it. And I know we're running outta time, but Peyton, I want to hear what you think about the ghostly apparition in chapter four.

I'm torn on this one because the spirit's question is actually really good: Can a mortal be more righteous than God? And maybe he did see an apparition. I don't know. But should we give extra weight to an argument because an apparition or a voice from God told somebody else what to tell us?

Well, yeah, like the way Al-i-faz uses it, like an added bit of authority to get Job to listen, just seems a bit manipulative. It's like the ultimate trump card. Well, God told me such and such. Nothing like claiming divine revelation to clinch an argument.

I've always liked Charles Spurgeon's response to people who try to add authority by claiming God gave him a message for him: Strange. I've been seeking God all week. Funny. He didn't tell me himself.
I love that quote from Charles Spurgeon. All right, guys, the lobby lights are flickering, so we have just enough time to refill the popcorn because we're gonna eat a lot of it. If you like butter, now's the time. So let's take turns to respond, moving to the next step, but remembering that we're still very early on in the story of Job. Which tensions will you reset, and which are you ready to resolve or release?

Kris, we go to you.
I'm ready to release Al-i-faz's apparition. I don't think somebody else's epiphany from God should force me to believe their conclusion about it. That just leaves me too vulnerable. Everything else I have to reset. It's too early for closure. And the big one that I really wanna watch is the blameless word. Something about that—I feel like it's gonna be important.

Peyton, what about you?

Well, I agree with Kris here. I'm ready to release Eliphaz's apparition as well. But as for resetting, we're only one-sixth through this book. I haven't even heard the arguments yet. And Job has more friends who will attempt to seal their versions of reality as gospel truth.

I'm the kind of person who likes to weigh things for a bit and think outside the box. But the problem is that everyone who's speaking right now seems right, but none of them are saying the same thing, so they can't all be right. So much for easy answers, then. So I think listeners will continue to be placed in the head space of Job, needing to hear the arguments fully before they—or we—can come to any conclusions.

All right. The ushers are shooing us in. I gotta go refill my popcorn. But Noah, we have a lot more emotions to process coming up. I have a deep respect for your skills on emotional processing. So can you give us a tactic, like a micro tool, to help us all respond in the moment when we're in the theater and Job's story hits our story and the emotions hit hard?

And this is a technique I use for myself pretty frequently. So if at any point you feel overwhelmed, pause. Take a moment, step out of the scene, and breathe. Here's a simple practice called box breathing. It helps calm the body and steady the mind. You slowly inhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds, slowly exhale for four seconds, hold again, and then repeat. You can almost visualize the four sides of a box as you do each of those steps. Breathing like this signals to your body that you are safe. It creates a space between the emotion and the reaction. Job is a powerful story, and we wanna walk through it thoughtfully and not be swept away by it, especially by our own emotions.

So take a deep breath, and when you're ready, let's head back into the theater.

Job 8 | Does God Pervert Justice?

Welcome to Through The Word. We'll be in Job chapter eight today, where we meet the second of Job's three friends: Bildad, the Shuhite. He's the shortest speaker in the entire book of Job. Although, fun fact, that's not why people call him the shortest man in the Bible. That's such a dad joke. The Shuhite. Get it? Bildad, Shuhite. Okay. Yeah, but short though his speech may be, his words still pack a punch. Bildad is blunt, where Eliphaz was cautious, poetic, even mysterious. Bildad is straightforward. At his opening line, well, it kind of tells you everything you need to know about his approach.

Verse one: "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blowing wind." Ouch. Bildad's a friend, right? But that's still how he starts. No warmup, no sympathy. Just, Job, you are talking like a storm—loud, chaotic, and empty. It's a verbal slap.

Job had just poured out his heart in chapters six and seven by grieving, venting, crying out to God, and Bildad just steps in and calls it all a bunch of hot air. To him, Job's raw honesty sounds like blasphemy, and he's not having any of it. But then Bildad drops his central question in verse two: "Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?" Now, that's the heartbeat of Bildad's theology. God is just. God is right. He doesn't mess that up. Job ever. And that's a solid foundation—one we find all throughout Scripture. But Bildad builds something sharp on top of it.

He says in verse four: "When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin." Wait, what? Yeah, Bildad just went there. Job's ten children are dead. The house collapsed on them, and Bildad says, well, they must have sinned. That's why they died.

He doesn't say it angrily, and he's not trying to be cruel, but in his mind, he's just explaining how justice works.

But to us reading this thousands of years later, it is such a gut punch because we know something Job doesn't. His children didn't die because of sin. This wasn't divine punishment. It was something bigger, something hidden.

But Bildad doesn't know that. He only knows his framework, and in that framework, suffering has a cause. Justice doesn't fail. So if someone is suffering, there must be a reason. Then he gives Job a formula for restoration in verse five: "But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state." It's a kind of bargain. Seek God, be upright, and he will restore you. This is classic retribution theology—the idea that the righteous prosper and that the wicked suffer.

It's clean, it makes sense, and it feels safe, and Bildad believes it deeply. So he continues in verse seven: "Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be." In other words, Job, you have hit rock bottom, but if you repent, if you clean up whatever's gone wrong, God will lift you up even more than before.

It's almost prosperity gospel, ancient style. The right input will produce the right output. Do good, get good. Repent and watch God bless you. Then Bildad appeals to tradition. In verse eight: "Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow."

Now this is interesting. Bildad's not claiming to have all the answers himself.

He's appealing to the wisdom passed down through the ages, and he sees himself as a student of the sages, repeating what the ancients already proved. And that's what makes this harder to ignore. Bildad isn't just throwing opinions out there. He's quoting traditional wisdom, what everyone knows. He says in verse eleven: "Can papyrus grow tall where there's no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass." The point, he says, is people are like plants. They have roots, and if their roots aren't in God, getting the right nutrients, they wither fast, just like a reed without water.

So he keeps going. Verse thirteen: "Such is the destiny of all who forget God. So perishes the hope of the godless." There it is again. Bildad's moral universe is ordered, structured, and absolute. Forget God and you're doomed. Into story. But here's the thing: Bildad's not all doom and gloom. He genuinely believes Job can bounce back if he'll turn to God. He says in verse twenty: "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of the evildoers." Again, clean, neat, predictable. If you're blameless, God won't reject you. If you're wicked, he won't support you.

And then he ends with this in verse twenty-one: "He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Your enemies will be clothed in shame, and the tents of the wicked will be no more." It's almost hopeful, like Bildad's offering Job a way out. Repent, clean up, do right, and God will restore everything you've lost. So that's Bildad—short, sharp, and certain. He believes in justice. He honors tradition. He believes God runs the world according to a moral order, and he applies that belief to Job's situation with absolute confidence.

But here's the tension. Bildad's theology is mostly sound. God is just. He does reward righteousness and oppose wickedness. That's true. The problem is in the application. Bildad assumes that because Job is suffering, he must have sinned, and because Job's children died, they too must have been guilty. And if Job had his strength, he'd probably punch Bildad right in his short little mouth.

He could almost hear his children protesting from beyond the grave. "Wait, I sin? And I get stuck with the consequence?" Bildad, that's not fair. But Bildad's worldview is always fair. There's no space in Bildad's world for innocent suffering. No room for kids with cancer. No room for mystery, no category for a righteous man like Job sitting in the ashes. So what do we do with Bildad? We wrestle with him, like Job does. We listen. We let him finish and speak his truth, as people like him always do, and we feel the weight of his certainty because sometimes we lean on that same framework. Sometimes we want the world to make sense so badly that we too rush to conclusions.

We apply truth like a formula instead of listening for what's really going on. And we allow for the confusion of suffering and well-intentioned people to mess with us, just like they always do. But above all, for now, we trust not having definitive answers, conclusive arguments. So we wait. That's Job. Bildad has spoken—not with comfort, but not with hate either. He's still a friend trying to make sense of a shattered world and also trying to help his friend pick up the pieces, because for some people, this kind of certainty is how they get through the pain. Well, we'll let that sit and keep on listening. But join us next time for Job chapter nine on our journey through the Word.

Job 9 | If Only?

Welcome back to Job Everyone. We're in chapter nine and still reeling from Bildad's onslaught of a monologue. How will our hero respond? Watch Job carefully. He began chapter seven, speaking to Eliphaz, but midstream he turned and started talking to God.

It was so familiar and natural, and that says a lot about Job's relationship to God. But when Job talked to God, Bildad talked back, jumped in, like he was obligated to defend God. Did God ask him to? And his defense quickly became an offense against Job.

That comment about Job's kids deserving it was brutal.
But to be fair, he was trying to help.
If you seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, God will come through. Notice: if you're upright, but we know Job is upright.

I can almost see Job's eyes staring right through Bildad when he says, "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless." Sure, that's great. I'll just plead my case to God. Why didn't I think of that?

That brings us to Job nine, verse one. "Then Job replied: Indeed, I know that this is true." I can see Job's eyes drop. He surrenders. He's not agreeing with everything Bildad said, just the part about God not rejecting the blameless. That should be right, but that's the issue.

Job thought that applied to him. Verse two is key: "But how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God? They wished to dispute him. They could not answer him one time out of a thousand."

Okay, Bildad, you want me to plead my case to God? Huh? How's that supposed to work? Exactly. I'll just stand in front of his throne and tell him that I'm right.
Do you understand who God is?

In verse four: "His wisdom is profound. His power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. He speaks to the sun and it does not shine. He seals off the light of the stars. He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea."

We were told that Job fears God. Now we see it. Job fears God. Bildad respects God, but he doesn't get it, not like Job. Astronomers use the term "cosmic humility"—that sense of infinite smallness beside the vastness of creation. C.S. Lewis called it the numinous.

Job reminds us: God is no conjurer of cheap tricks. He shakes the earth. He stops the sun. He stretches the heavens, which by the way, the heavens are stretching—discovered last century. He alone treads on the waves of the sea. Now, who does that remind you of?

Job continues: "He is the maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the South.

He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. When he passes by me, I cannot see him. When he goes by, I cannot perceive him. If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?' God does not restrain his anger. Even the cohorts of Rahab cower at his feet. How then can I dispute him? How can I find words to argue with him?"
And that's the heart of it.

Remember who God is, then ask yourself: How can I dispute him? With what words?

In verse 15: "Though I were innocent, I could not answer him. I could only plead with my judge for mercy."
Hypothetically speaking, say I'm a hundred percent innocent. Do I say, "You owe me, Lord"? No, I plead for mercy.

Nobody should ever ask God for what they deserve.
Verse 16: "Even if I summoned him and he responded, I do not believe he would give me a hearing. He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason. He would not let me catch my breath, but would overwhelm me with misery."

It's hard to hear, but I get it. Job now sees God as his adversary, like God is against him in a contest. He cannot win. It may not be right, but it sure feels like reality.
Verse 19: "If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty. If it is a matter of justice, who can challenge him?"

Bildad, on what grounds or in what contest do you think that I can beat God?
Verse 20: "Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me. If I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty. Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself. I despise my own life."
Job's not giving up on his innocence, but next to God, what good is it doing him? Blameless isn't enough.

This part fascinates me. So many people wrestle over Job being blameless. He's human. We know he's sinned. Yes, and Job knows it too. He knows he's blameless in the sense that no one can hold a charge against him. But that's still not good enough for God.
And that's a hard truth: no human goodness will ever be good enough for God.

So in verse 22, he gives up: "It is all the same. That is why I say, 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'" Pay attention. This is Job's conclusion, and it's dark. Job worked his whole life to be blameless, not wicked, and God destroys both.
Now, I know some of you want to correct Job, but hold off. Let him talk. His friends will argue later, and God will defend himself when he's ready. But for now, God lets Job feel what he feels.

"When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent. When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?"

Job is breaking under the tension between two truths: God is good. Our world is not. And someone is responsible. If it is not he, then who is it?

Job doesn't curse God. He doesn't deny God, but he does blame God.
You can see the shock in his friends' eyes. Maybe you are shocked, but slow down. Has God given up on Job? Job may be wrong about God, but God is letting him speak.

Job returns again to the swiftness of time, life slipping by. He floats the idea of just smiling through it all. But in verse 28: "I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent since I am already found guilty. Why should I struggle in vain?"

Job is exhausted. His last treasure—his character—is at stake, and no one cares. Can't win in God's court. Can't win in man's.
Do you know the feeling of presumed guilt from religious people? Why bother?

He imagines himself judged for cleanliness, washed spotless with soap, then thrown into a slime pit by the judges themselves. Pointless.
Verse 32: "He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court."

Job returns again to Bildad's absurd suggestion: plead my case where, how? Will I show up and talk to God? Mano a mano? "Hey God, let's work this out." But then Job's imagination takes hold. How would this work? "If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, someone to remove God's rod from me so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him. As it now stands with me, I cannot."

If only. What a dream to talk to someone who gets me, but also fully represents God. Like I could speak to God, but somehow a real and compassionate person. A mediator who knows what it's like to be weak and mortal, but also be God. If only.

Stop here and picture what Job pictures. This glorious idea wrought from desperation might just be the vein of gold in the dark mind of Job's story. Now, if you rush in to correct Job, you could miss it and walk away just like his friends. If you let him hurt, let him feel desperate to somehow talk to God without being crushed. To find someone who gets you, someone acquainted with sorrow, who understands how hard life is.

If you can feel that with Job, you just might get what this whole book is about. And if you happen to know Jesus, it just might hit you—and I mean hit you deep. What an absolute staggering gift we have in Jesus.
Read Job nine, and I'll meet you back here next time.

Job 10 | I Loathe My Very Life

Welcome again to the Book of Job, everyone. We're at chapter 10, and the opening line gives you a good sense of what we're in for: "I loathe my very life." Haven't seen that one on any Christian coffee mugs lately. But here it is in the Bible, spoken by one of its greatest heroes, a statement of such brutal honesty and wretched emotion that you can't help but fall back a bit.

So my question: why did God save it? Why does he want us to read it? It's painful even to watch Job go through it.

I usually avoid feelings like this, but maybe that's the first lesson here. There comes a time to stop avoiding, to stop holding it in.

Now I can say with confidence that I am not holding back feelings like Job's. I do not loathe my life. I have struggles, lost my mom recently, my daughter's fighting cancer, and all the stress that life just throws at you.
But on the whole, I'm actually quite content.

But life is not always that way. And we all hit some serious lows. I've been there. Here in chapter 10, Job is as low as it gets. He does not bottle it up. Back in verse one: "I loathe my very life; therefore, I will give free reign to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul."

Ancient Hebrew culture had a place for lament—raw, unfiltered cries from the heart. It was a form of worship, a way to be fully honest with God.

Now, that's not always the right thing to do. Certainly, there's a right time and a wrong time. Job waited, and this is the time. So once again, we're going to let him.

Before we dive in, I want to tell you, I so want to pull out of this and offer you some hope, some reprieve from the grief—to jump forward in the Bible, to find purpose in the pain and eternal perspective: the cross, the resurrection, Romans eight, 1 Corinthians 15, glory.

In my darkest moments, I don't think I even had room to hear those—like grief packed out the whole space.

And each time, there came a critical moment when the vent finally blew. I beat my chest and screamed it out at the world.
And sure enough, my heart found some space. Now, thankfully, I did not scream at anyone. Timing matters.

But sometimes you have to let out the despair before you can even think about letting in the hope. My friend Mike works in recovery. He calls it the downward up.

Some of you will say, "Rejoice in the Lord always"—true. But joy is not the absence of sorrow; it's the presence of grace. The opposite of joy is not sadness, but emptiness. For the joyful, both happiness and sorrow are full, sacred experiences. For the joyless, both are hollow.

Back in chapter nine, Job considered just painting on a smile. He rejected it; he will feel his sorrows. And in chapter 10, so will we. Let's pick it up at verse two.

"I say to God, 'Do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me.'" In Job's world, a court case was a public affair at the city gate, and a person's reputation and innocence were debated publicly.
Job is being debated, but he wants to know the charges. He's pronounced guilty, but of what? He feels like Han Solo after torture: "They never even asked me any questions. Defend myself against what? Repent of what?"
Notice that Job is once again addressing God. Verse three: "Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked?" Job feels like this is all just cruel sport for God. How can this possibly please you, Lord, to crush me and smile at the wicked?

Now, I know you wanna correct him, but let his friends cover that. Right now, Job looks at the wicked, looks at himself, and sees what he sees.
Verse four: "Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees? Are your days like those of a mortal, or your years like those of a strong man, that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin?"

Job is desperate to figure out, "God, here—are you looking at me with human eyes? Are you some vigilante tough guy out for vengeance and hunting me down before your time runs out? Is that why you must search out my faults and probe after my sin?"

For Job, this all feels like a manhunt for his sin, and he doesn't even know what sin. Verse seven.

"Though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand..." Notice that every time Job contemplates whether this is about some sin, he comes back around to remember he's not guilty.

And Job knows that God knows that. And God knows that Job knows. He knows. Does Job know that? On second thought, nevermind. Job stated that no one can rescue him from God's hand—it's like saying, "If God is against me, who can be for me?"

But just as he sees God's hand against him, he realizes this picture can't be right: "Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?" Job is like any believer.

He loves knowing that God made him fearfully and wonderfully made, formed him in the womb. That line about dust comes right out of Genesis.
How amazing that God made us from the earth's dust.

But now Job feels like dust to dust is just a long, cool road back to the start. "Did you make me just to destroy me?" Verse ten: "Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?" Alright, I'm gonna acknowledge the purple elephant and point out that cheese curdling is maybe the weirdest picture I've ever heard for human formation, but his point here is clear: the way that we were formed is a wonder. God did that for us.

In verse 11: "Did you not clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinew? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence, watched over my spirit."

Now, that's the God we know. Job knows. He hasn't forgotten. Of course he hasn't. The problem is it feels like God has forgotten, or like all God's kindnesses were just a cruel trick. In verse 13.

"This is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind: If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished." It all feels like God set him up to fail, like a hunter releasing a deer just to shoot him down.

Job concedes: "If I am guilty, woe to me! Sure, I'll accept just punishment. But even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction.

"If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me. You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me. Your forces come against me
wave upon wave."

The imagery is intense—hit by crushing waves with no chance to stand up. Job is drowning. So he lifts the white flag and asks just one more time. Why? Verse 18: "Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. If only I had never come into being or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave. Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy
before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness, to the land of deepest night of utter darkness and disorder,
where even the light is like darkness."

And that's it. I tried to warn you it would be dark.
I don't think verse 22 is making it onto a crochet pillowcase anytime soon. But I will say if you've got that kind of darkness in you, better to let it out than keep it in. And here I am again wanting so badly to skip ahead to hope.

But here we close. Don't worry—we'll get there eventually. Right now, Job's gotta let it out. And maybe you've got some too. The Lord can handle it.
The one who formed you in the womb can still handle all your hurt. And we'll see you back here next time.

Job 11 | Less Than You Deserve

Welcome back to Through The Word and welcome to Job chapter 11. Today we meet Zophar, the third of Job's friends, and the most direct by far. This is his first speech. While Eliphaz started with tact and Bildad appealed to tradition, Zophar doesn't ease in. He comes in swinging, and the first words out of his mouth are a full-on correction.

He opens like this in verse one: "Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? Will your idle talk reduce others to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock?" Zophar has heard enough. Remember, Job had just finished pouring out his heart again in chapters nine and ten. He's crying out to God, wishing he could bring his case before him, lamenting that there's no mediator between him and God. He's grieving, venting, and Zophar responds with, "You have said too much." He accuses Job of being a mocker, a talker, someone using words to cover guilt. And then he goes further in verse four: "You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.' Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you."

Zophar says, "You think you're innocent. You think your beliefs are flawless. I wish God would show up and shut that down." In strong language, Zophar is clearly fired up. He's angry. To him, Job's confidence in his integrity sounds like arrogance, and there's no way he's going to let that slide. But then comes one of Zophar's most memorable lines in verse six:
"Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin." In other words, Job, you are not suffering more than you deserve. You are suffering less than you deserve. God's been merciful.

You should be grateful he hasn't punished you more. That is a heavy accusation, and again, we have to pause here because Zophar believes he's defending God's honor.

He sees Job's words as bordering on blasphemy. So he punches hard. He wants to put Job back in his place, and he uses theology to do it. But here's the thing: Zophar's theology isn't wild. A lot of what he's saying here is true, and some of it even sounds like the Apostle Paul in Romans. Listen to this in verse seven:
"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above. What can you do? They are deeper than the depths below. What can you know?" That's beautiful, right? A rich poetic reminder that God is beyond us, above us, higher, deeper, wiser. He goes on: "Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea."

Zophar is exalting the vastness of God's wisdom, and that part's good theology. It's worshipful, humbling. But then he turns back to judgment in verse ten: "If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? Surely he recognizes deceivers. And when he sees evil, does he not take note?"

Zophar asks a warning, Job. Here: If God brings a case against you, who could defend you? If he judges, he's right, Job, every single time. And there's truth here, but the application is the issue. Zophar assumes guilt. He doesn't ask questions. He doesn't consider mystery. He sees Job's suffering and concludes there must be hidden sin. And now he's telling Job, "Admit it, and maybe you'll find mercy."

Verse thirteen: "Yet, if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then free of fault, you will lift up your face. You will stand firm and without fear."

That is the formula again: repent, clean house, come back to God. He'll restore you. Zophar isn't offering that as speculation. He's confident, certain. He presents it like a guaranteed result, a push-button response. And he paints a picture in verse sixteen of what Job's life could be: "You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as water's gone by. Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning."

It's poetic, hopeful, a vision of restoration, a second chance. He ends with this, verse eighteen: "You'll be secure because there is hope. You'll look about you and take your rest in safety. You'll lie down with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor." This is the bright future Zophar offers if Job will repent. But then one final jab in verse twenty: "But the eyes of the wicked will fail. An escape will elude them. Their hope will become a dying gasp." Well, that's chapter eleven with Zophar. And that's how he ends—not with comfort, not with compassion, but with a stark warning: Don't stay on this path. The wicked have no future, Job.

So what do we do? Zophar is the harshest of the friends. He declares the wisdom of God as beyond human reach, and yet applies that very wisdom with absolute confidence, as if he fully understands it. So again, we let him speak because Zophar's words are not nonsense. They're not completely hollow. They contain truth—a great deal of it. And yet, if that's true, why did they leave us so unsettled?

Because here is a man trying to defend the honor of God, but in doing so, he crushes a man already prostrate in the ashes. And that's something worth pausing over. Sometimes when people suffer, our instinct is to fix it, to correct, to diagnose, to restore order in our heads, even if it brings more disorder in the other person's heart. We can be such fans of justice that we forget compassion: "Hey, this is God. Deal with it. If you don't like it, well, that's your problem."

And Jesus once told the Pharisees, "Go find out what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Jesus doesn't explain what he means by that. He sends them off to wrestle. And so that's how we leave it with Zophar: What about mourning with those who mourn? I often wonder if James got that from Job. And like Zophar, we may think we're speaking for God. But there's a time to speak and a time just to be there and to be quiet. In fact, Job's friends were actually the most comforting when they were the most silent, when they were just a comforting presence there to remind him, "You're not in this alone, Job." But Zophar wants Job to repent, to admit fault and to return to God. He wants to tie Job's story up in a neat bow, but Job's story isn't neat. It's messy, it's mysterious, and it's bigger than what Zophar can see. So that's where we leave it.

Hey, wait a second. I just realized I'm only talking to the friends' parts in Job. How come I got all the stinky parts in this play? I bet Langham is gonna play God as well. Dang it. How did this happen again? All right, sorry. That's my trial, not Job's.

Well, Zophar has spoken. He's finished his first speech, and he'll speak again. But for now, we let his words linger. We hold the tension and we wait.
Oh, that's Job 11. Join us next time for chapter 12 on our journey Through The Word.

Job 12 | Underestimated

Welcome back to Job, my friends. We arrive at chapter 12 today, where Job responds to rebuke from yet another helpful friend. That makes three: Eliphaz, Bildad, and now Zophar—each one more sure than the last that Job's suffering must be his own fault.

How will Job respond? Well, put yourself in his shoes. Have you ever been drastically underestimated? Like someone gives you white belt advice when you're already a black belt?

Some years ago, a young, rather unpromising quarterback made the NFL draft in the sixth round, 199th overall. Scouting reports said he was skinny, can't move, and not a strong arm. And he got a whole lot of sage advice on how to make it.

You gotta wonder how those scouts feel now after Tom Brady won more games and more Super Bowls than anyone in history. But hey, they didn't know who they were talking to. That's the thing. Job is established. His friends should know who they're talking to. That's like giving Tom Brady rookie tips after his seventh ring.

God himself said, "There is no one on earth like Job." I know his friends didn't hear that, but that kind of spiritual maturity should be obvious to everyone. But that's the thing about spiritual maturity. It doesn't show up in stats. So when someone struggles, it's easy to assume they failed.

Job's friends see him struggling, and they assume Job needs a back-to-basics course on getting right with God. So Zophar talks to Job the way Luke talked to Yoda when he came looking for a great warrior. "Great Warrior wars." Not make one great.

So what does make one great? Chapter one literally calls Job "the greatest man among all the people of the east." The devil was quick to denigrate. It was all too easy for Job when endlessly blessed and protected. But now we have a very different look at greatness through pain and loss.
How is his greatness holding up? And how will he respond? Chapter 12, verse one.

"Then Job replied, 'Doubtless, you are the only people who matter, and wisdom will die with you. But I have a mind as well as you. I am not inferior to you. Who does not know all these things?'"

The sarcasm is coming on thick now.
I can just see Job waving his arms in mock gratitude. "Wow, thanks guys. I had no idea that God is great and I should stop sinning. Brilliant.
Man, when you guys die, where is anyone gonna find wisdom anymore? You are amazing."

Now in Zophar's defense, he was trying to help. Read chapter 11 on its own, and Zophar sounds awesome.

"God's mysteries are higher than the heavens and deeper than the sea."
That's Isaiah-level wisdom. God's ways are higher, and he even offered hope.

"If you devote your heart to God, stretch out your hands, put away your sin, and guard your tent from evil, your life will shine again."
That sounds encouraging: God is awesome, so seek him. Stop sitting and be blessed. I'm encouraged.

Job is not. He already knows this stuff. It's God 101, and it's not helping. Great words, terrible timing. Verse four.

"I have become a laughing stock to my friends, though I called on God and he answered—a mere laughing stock. The righteous and blameless."
Job feels mocked, though he knows God. He has history with God. He is blameless, and he knows it, but now he's a joke. Verse five.
"Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune, as the fate of those whose feet are slipping."

Now that one hits hard. Job calls out the spiritual armchair quarterbacks. It's easy to give advice until the ground gives way underneath you. All of Job's friends are so convinced that blessing comes to the faithful and misfortune only comes to the wicked.

Recall Zophar's advice: call out to God and guard his tent from evil, so his life will be safe and secure. Job offers a reality check in verse six.
"The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure. Those God has in his hand."

Look around, Zophar. See those tents? Those tents are safe. And guess who lives there? Wicked marauders. And guess what else?

They're in God's hands, and he hasn't crushed them. Now Job knows this is obvious, but his friends won't see it. So he calls witnesses. Verse seven.

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you. Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?"

Nature gets it. Bad people go unpunished, and God is still in control.
Now, Job isn't accusing God of injustice. He's simply confessing that God's ways are beyond our understanding. Yet behind every mystery, God's character holds fast. He is just, wise, and good.

But Job does challenge the shallow theology of those who assume that all suffering must be God's justice and all blessings must be God's approval.
Job insists that these two truths are evident: the wicked are safe in their tents, and God is still in control. Verse ten.
"In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."
Now sit with that for a second. Every breath, every life—you, me, even the sparrows—held in his hand.

So what does that mean when our world doesn't make sense?
We teach kids, "He's got the whole world in his hands." It's true, but we know that one day they'll figure out that what we see doesn't always line up.
And we hope that when that day comes, we'll have better answers.

Verse 11.
"Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food?"

I love that imagery. Like your tongue tests food, your ear should test words. Don't eat rotten food, and don't accept shallow theology. Taste it. Test it. Verse 12.
"Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"

Come on, guys. We're too old for this. Grow up, look around, and get wisdom. Verse 13.
"To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his. What he tears down cannot be rebuilt. Those he imprisons cannot be released. If he holds back the waters, there is drought. If he lets them loose, they devastate the land. To him belong strength and insight. Both the deceived and the deceiver are his."

Job's friends offered a rather shallow theology of suffering. Job counters with a much deeper theology of sovereignty. God's power is absolute, and no one overrides him—not your wisdom, not your power, and certainly not your formula.
He's not questioning God's justice. He's acknowledging God's freedom to overrule.

See, Zophar offered grand wisdom on the unfathomable greatness of God, but followed it with a surefire formula to secure God's blessing. Let's be honest: we want the formula. We want control.
But Job pushes back. How big is your God if you can force his hand with a formula?

God blesses the good and punishes the bad. Great. But it does not apply in reverse.

Blessings are not proof of doing good, and suffering is not proof of doing bad. Now watch this part carefully. Job delivers a haunting, poetic parallel to Zophar's claims. Zophar offered four simple steps: four "if you dos" followed by eight "then you wills."

Job counters with four "if hes" that cannot be undone, followed by eight definitive "He does" statements in which every power and wisdom of mankind is overthrown and overruled by God.
If he tears down, if he imprisons, if he holds back the waters, if he lets them loose—when God acts, it happens.

You think humans have power? Watch what God does to rulers and judges and kings and priests. Verse 17.
"He leads rulers away stripped and makes fools of judges. He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. He leads priests away stripped and overthrows officials long established. He silences the lips of trusted advisors and takes away the discernment of elders.
He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty. He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into light.

He makes nations great and destroys them. He enlarges nations and disperses them. He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason. He makes them wander in a trackless waste. They grope in darkness with no light. He makes them stagger like drunkards."

And here we break.
Job has pushed back. You underestimated me, and you underestimated God.
It's a tough place to finish. Life would be simpler if Zophar's formula just worked.

But real faith isn't built on formulas. It's forged in the tension when life doesn't make sense and you still hold on.
Can your faith hold steady when your world doesn't?
Read Job 12. Consider the facts, and I'll see you next time.

Job 13 | Can I Talk to Your Boss?

Welcome back to Job, everyone. We are nearing the close of our first cycle of speeches, and Chapter 13 continues Job's third response to his friends—this one to Zophar. And Job has had enough of their condescension, their childish theology, underestimating Job and underestimating God.

Let's pick up the action now at verse one. "My eyes have seen all this. My ears have heard and understood it. What you know, I also know. I am not inferior to you, but I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God."

And that verse gets to the heart of how Job's feeling about all this. Do you know the feeling when you're talking to a customer service rep who you know is misrepresenting their company?

I once had an airline rep insist they do not fly to my airport, though I had a flight number and ticket on their website. "Can I please talk to your boss?" In Job 13, Job has reached the end of his patience with these self-appointed God representatives and all their condescending counsel.
And he's ready to talk to the boss. "I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God."

But first, he'll tell them exactly what he thinks. Verse four: "You, however, smear me with lies. You are worthless physicians, all of you. If only you would be altogether silent—for you, that would be wisdom."

What a poignant phrase: worthless physicians. And the biblical smack talk in Job just keeps getting better. Politeness is gone. For you, silence is your best wisdom, and he's right. So often, silence is the best wisdom. Just be there and be quiet. Some situations do not need words.

Verse six: "Hear now my argument. Listen to the pleas of my lips. Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf? Will you speak deceitfully for him?"
Job cuts straight to it: You misrepresent God. God didn't ask you to defend him, but you appointed yourselves, and you are speaking wickedly and deceitfully for him. How? By bearing false witness against the suffering. They are blaming Job for his own suffering.

That's called victim blaming, and doing it in the name of the Lord. Now pay attention here, because we are all prone to this. Remember, the Bible's not here to correct them but us. Victim blaming starts with oversimplified theology. God blesses the good, punishes the bad. True, but incomplete.

Then suffering comes, and we need someone to blame. If it's an accident or a natural disaster, the only two options to blame are God and the victim. Can't blame God, so it must be the victim. In our little formula, they must be the bad person who deserves blame for—well, we don't know, but something. Look at verse eight.

"Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God?" Job accuses his friends of showing partiality to God. They showed up, saw what looked like a cosmic battle between God and Job, and quickly decided, "We are on God's side. Wouldn't you?" But hold on. What if it isn't God versus Job? And what if God doesn't need your help?

A little life tip: If taking God's side puts you in a place where you are against the suffering and downcast, you probably misread the situation. Christians, remember: the Bible is here to correct us.

Partiality is also a legal word. Job feels like he's on trial, and his friends joined the prosecution. So in verse nine, he flips the courtroom. "Would it turn out well if he examined you? Could you deceive him as you might deceive a mortal? He would surely call you to account. If you secretly showed partiality, would not his splendor terrify you? Would not the dread of him fall on you?" So Job turns the tables on his friends to make them feel some of that same scrutiny. You can dish out God's judgment, but can you take it?

Interesting that Paul does the very same thing to all of us religious people in Romans two. First, he lays out a clear case against the godless and wicked in Romans one, so that all of the religious folks are ready to pass judgment. Then he turns right to the religious and tells them they are just as guilty.
It is God's court, and he does not need our help convicting the guilty. We are all guilty before God, and we all need mercy.

Back here in Job, verse 12: "Your maxims are proverbs of ashes. Your defenses are defenses of clay." The digs so good. And what a picture: proverbs of ashes. All your mighty words and wisdom burn up when examined; they crumble like clay. Job is feeling bold.

Verse 13:
"Keep silent and let me speak, and let come to me what may. Why do I put myself in jeopardy and take my own life in my hands?" Pause here.

Watch this moment carefully. Job is putting himself in jeopardy and taking his life in his hands.

How? By arguing his case before God. Eliphaz and Bildad pronounced his guilt. Zophar accused him of mocking God. Job denies all charges, but come what may, he wants to plead his case, though he knows it could cost his life. Like an accused man rejecting the plea bargain and insisting on court, he knows the risk.

This is God's court, and Job is a God-fearing man, but he'll take the risk. Watch verse 15:
"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him. I will surely defend my ways to his face."

Remember that verse? This is Job's crescendo. This is Job putting everything on the line—heart and soul, guts and glory, all that is worth living and dying for in his life, laid up on the altar. Job takes his stand on faith. Though he slay me, he knows God can and has every right. The Lord gives; the Lord takes away. But even if God does kill him, he will hope in him. That's worship in the dark. It's obedience without guarantees, and it's one powerful insight on the fear of God. Remember: it was Job's fear of God that Satan challenged. He claimed Job would curse God when the blessings left. Well, here Job is, hoping in God, even if it costs his life. Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him. And in verse 16: "Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him. Listen carefully to what I say. Let my words ring in your ears.

"Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die."

Job isn't afraid of justice, but a guilty verdict with no judge and no charges isn't justice. And right here, something shifts. Job stops talking to his friends, lifts his eyes higher, and slips once again into prayer. Verse 20:
"Only grant me these two things, God, and then I will not hide from you. Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. "Then summon me, and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply to me. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?"

Notice the repetition of hiding. I won't hide, Lord. Why are you hiding?
Let's bring it all into the open. Show me my sins. We were friends, Lord. What happened? Verse 25:
"Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? For you write down bitter things against me and make me reap the sins of my youth."
Job feels like God is chasing him down for sins he committed as a kid. He feels shackled and marked for judgment, and he just can't understand why. And there we close again.

So what do we do with that? For one, we can be more aware of victim blaming, especially in God's name. I think we've all been unfairly blamed, and we've all unfairly blamed others and ourselves.

So here's the challenge: The next time you see suffering, be slow to blame and quick to compassion. Some things don't need blame.

Sometimes bad things happen. It's no one's fault, and God is still in control. So stop victim blaming yourself and others.

Second, recognize the depth of faith required to trust God when suffering has no blame.

There's a fantastic line in The Screwtape Letters where C.S. Lewis has a senior demon warn a junior demon of exactly when a Christian is most dangerous.

"The Devil's cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring but still intending to do God's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of God seems to have vanished and asks why he has been forsaken—and still obeys."

Read Job 13. Hold fast, stay faithful, be dangerous. I'll see you next time.

Job 14 | The Dream?

Welcome back to the Book of Job, everyone. I have to tell you before we begin that studying through chapter 14 was a rather emotional experience for me. We're closing out the first cycle, act one, in this drama. All three friends have spoken.

Each of them laid out clear advice for how Job can get right with God and get his life back. A rather thoughtless suggestion, considering his kids just died. But Job has made no mention of getting his life back. He is far more interested in holding his integrity and establishing his innocence.
So if Job doesn't want his life back, what does he want? Moving into chapter 14, Job is no longer defending, but now reflecting on life and slipping into conversation with God so seamlessly. It's as if his ponderings in prayer are one.

And as he does, we get a shining glimpse of what he wants: his dream. And reading it for me was like—it's like, have you ever watched a movie about some predecessors of ours, about their hardship and heartache, all their struggle just to make it through, and about their desperate dream and fight for a better world?

And as you watch it, it hits you hard. I live my whole life in their dream, all they hoped for, all they sweated, wept, and bled for. I have it. It may not be perfect, but it's present. I live it every day. Movies like Harriet, Saving Private Ryan, Selma—with stories like that, sometimes my first inclination is a sense of guilt, like I should feel bad for having what they didn't or for not appreciating it.

But then I realized they didn't struggle so that we would feel guilty. They sacrificed so we would live, and deep gratitude sets in. And obligation to enjoy it, make the most of it, and fight to share it. It's a feeling like George Bailey at the end of It's a Wonderful Life, finding Zuzu's petals in your pocket.
And funny enough, that is how Job 14 hit me today. It'll make more sense as we read.

Now we're just one chapter away from intermission, when we'll step out to discuss. For now, let's stay engaged and really hear Job. His struggle has him deep in reflection. Let's join him at verse one.

Mortals born of woman are few days and full of trouble. They spring up like flowers and wither away like fleeting shadows. They do not endure.
Mortals—ominous term for human beings, but we are mortal, fleeting, of few days, and full of trouble. That's life.

Job sees days slipping away, and he recognizes the feeling. It's the same feeling you get when you notice a flower withering and just yesterday it was stunning, a graceful wonder. When you first notice that the shadows are growing long, once you see it, they won't be there much longer. And just as Job sees his own days in those shadows, he slips right into asking God at verse three:

Do you fix your eye on them? Will you bring them before you for judgment?
Job wonders if those days that slip by so fast are actually under God's watch. Does he care? Will those fleeting days show up again on judgment day? That's a staggering thought.

Are all those mindless, unspectacular, just-get-through-the-motions days showing up there at God's judgment like they actually matter that much?

And it looks like the thought of judgment scares Job a bit. Verse four:
Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one. Job is wrestling here over God's judgment. If God really judges us for every little thing on every little day, what hope is there? How can we possibly take this impure and sinful flesh and make a pure and sinless life out of it, even for a day? We can't. No one can.

Job presses in with God in verse five:
A person's days are determined. You have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. So look away from him and let him alone till he has put in his time like a hired laborer.

Job is begging for a little mercy here. Come on, Lord, be reasonable. You set boundaries on our lives that we cannot cross. I am racing in a broken-down car I cannot fix in a race I cannot win. So just look away. Leave a poor man alone. Let him work his lot and die in peace.

It's tough to read. We all find comfort knowing his eye is on the sparrow. Job wants God to let the poor sparrow alone. But why does he feel that way? He feels it because for him, God's eye upon him is all judgment—searching out his every sin, examining every fleeting day, and punishing him mercilessly. At least, it sure feels like that.

Now, I know you wanna tell him that it's not like that, that God's not like that. But hold off. Let him get it out.

Verse seven:
At least there is hope for a tree. If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail.

Job surely owned a great many trees. I love trees. They're just wonders. I have one tree in my yard that was unfortunately planted in a rather inconvenient location, blocking a pathway. We have cut it to the stump many times, but every rainy season brings it right back.

Job considers the tree's rebirth. It's so easy for them. But when a man dies, different story. Verse ten:
But a man dies and is laid low. He breathes his last and is no more, as the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry. So he lies down and does not rise till the heavens are no more. People will not awake or be roused from their sleep.

And with the image of that resilient little reborn tree stirring in his heart, Job dreams. Verse thirteen:
If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed. If only you would set me a time and then remember me.
For just a moment, Job's imagination is nearly lost in bliss. If only death wasn't an end but a pause. If only the grave wasn't an endless darkness but just a hiding place for a time. And if only God would set that time, and when all the junk and struggle and hurt of this world are past and all of God's purpose is accomplished, he would remember me—not lost forever, not forgotten to history.

But Job struggles with it. Is it possible? Verse fourteen:

If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service, I will wait for my renewal to come.

Could it really be? Could we live again? Oh, if only that were so. All these meaningless days of hard work would actually mean something, would have something to hope for, something worth waiting for. For renewal, I can wait for renewal.

Verse fifteen:
You will call and I will answer you. You will long for the creature your hands have made.

Now there's a verse. All of Job's pent-up heartache, all his broken misery and longing for death to end it, have finally made way for the end that he really wants: renewal, to rise again, to hear God's voice call out to him, longing for the creature that his hands have made.

Job's friends wanted to see him get his life back. Job just wants his God back, his relationship, to know he's loved and longed for. For Job, that is life. Verse sixteen:
Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.

Now that is a dream worth dreaming: to arrive at a place with God where he counts your steps but not your sin, where his eye upon you is all grace and care and concern and no judgment. Sins sealed away, gone, covered. To walk with him without fear, forgiven. If only.

And this is where I get choked up. Do we understand what we have? Do we fathom the dream, the glory that we live in every day? Every fleeting day of comings and goings, and God counting our steps and not our sin, and knowing a God who longs for the creature that his hands have made, for you? Do you ever pull Zuzu's petals out of your pocket and realize all you have and all it cost him and that he thinks you're worth it?

For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross.
And though I desperately want the movie to just end here, to hear Job shouting, "Merry Christmas, Mister Potter! Merry Christmas, Emporium. Merry Christmas, you wonderful old building!"

For Job, it was all a dream, and it quickly passes. Verse eighteen:
But as a mountain erodes and crumbles, and as a rock is moved from its place, as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy a person's hope. You overpower them once for all, and they are gone. You change their countenance and send them away. If their children are honored, they do not know it. If their offspring are brought low, they do not see it. They feel only the pain of their own bodies and mourn only for themselves. And back in darkness we close again. So what about you? Do you realize what we have? And what will you do with it? Read Job 14, and I'll see you at intermission.

Ah, youth is wasted on the young.

Job 8 - 14 | Intermission II - Kris, Peyton, & Friends

Welcome back to Job, everyone. Today we arrive at our second intermission. Noah here with you again, your intermission host, and thanks for joining us in the theater lobby. As a refresher, this time is all about space to intentionally process this journey.

If you remember from intermission one, we provided the acronym EAR for the process of listening to our own emotions: emote, articulate, respond. So let's do this. First, we begin with emote—what resonated, stood out, and maybe even shocked you guys from chapters eight through 14 of Job.

There's a lot here to emote. There's a lot of big feelings, okay? Chapter 14, right before we walked out of the theater, I gotta say, I made myself cry listening back. Zuzu's petals—Zuzu's petals killed me. Again, also. But going all the way back to chapter eight, I would like to say that Peyton is a jerk. Just kidding. Bildad and Zophar are the jerks, but Peyton did way too good a job of playing the villains here. Some of our listeners used the repeated phrase "no room for grace." That really resonated back then. But I think the thing that was most painful about what Peyton delivered so powerfully was how right Bildad and Zophar were, while still cruelly wrong in their delivery. But they're defending God's justice and they're offering a promise of God's restoration. And Peyton said something that really hit home: Sometimes we want to make the world make sense so badly that we rush to conclusions, and those can hurt.

Peyton, what did you think?

You know, I've always thought that if I were in movies I would make an excellent super villain. And but you know, there's something that strikes me as I listen to Job's friends, and I'm guessing you all feel it too. And that's that they're not villains. It's not like they're trying to be cruel. In fact, everything they're saying sounds right. Like it's the kind of theology you might hear in a sermon or reading a devotional. You might even say it to a friend yourself. And yet these things are devastating, and there's a kind of meanness that can creep into Christianity—like the kind that quote scripture but misses the moment. It's technically right, but pastorally wrong, even dangerous because of how much damage they inflict.

Yeah. Job's friends are a masterclass in that. They see us suffering and they immediately try to explain it, diagnose it, or fix it. In doing that, they completely miss him. Not sitting in the mystery, they're not sharing in his grief, and they don't leave room for God to speak. But they rush in with answers when what was really needed was just presence. And if I'm honest, it's really hard for me to sit here and let them talk without jumping in and correcting them. As the person doing the audio guides, everything in me wants to say, "No, that's not it." But part of the discipline here—not only in teaching it, but also in hearing it—is letting their words and letting us feel the weight of what it's like to be on the receiving end of this kind of counsel.

Because here's the truth: we've all had friends like this, and if we're honest, we've been this friend at times. As a shepherd, part of my calling is to protect people—not just from wolves out there, but from people like this—well-meaning voices that wound instead of heal. It lacks the tenderness of Jesus. And remember, Jesus never handled suffering people this way. He didn't stand at a distance and analyze, but he drew near.

He touched lepers and wept with mourners, and he asked questions. He carried burdens. Friends remind us that you can have all the right lines and still completely miss the heart of God.

I actually do want to say something to that, Peyton. Uh, that brought to mind as you were going through it. I always forget that there's this context that the friends sat with Job for seven days. And yet they sat with him for seven days, which is more than anybody typically sits with anyone when they're going through something. And they still got it wrong in the long run.

All right. While we're emoting, I want to emote on one particular comment. Uh, Peyton a couple of times mentioned cancer, and some of our listeners were either hit the wrong way or really resonated with that, depending on their own experience. That would actually hit home for me. Uh, my sister-in-law's battle with cancer was fraught with well-meaning Christians. The start of this series for me coincided with my daughter's cancer diagnosis, and we had to navigate some well-meaning but hurtful responses. So it was actually, uh, it was tough to hear from Peyton, but it's actually really important for us to talk through. How do we respond? What is the right way to respond when, uh, when people are either trying to fix us or we're trying to fix them?

So for me, Job chapter nine really stood out as something you said, Chris, when it came to Job's conclusion of all that was happening around him, where he says, "How God destroys both the blameless and the wicked." Uh, immediately after you taught that I wanted to jump in and correct Job. I had like this growing urge that this is just not the full picture.

And you caught me, uh, because further on as you went through the guide, you encouraged everyone who was listening to refrain from wanting to jump in and correct Job.

Yeah, I think I was refraining myself as much as anyone else. And it was really because entering into this, we set ourselves to present the drama. To do that, one of the respondents came back and said in that chapter where I was wanting to just offer hope—where I wanted to jump and offer hope—and she responded that she was so glad that we didn't, because she needed to dwell there. And that that sentiment was echoed by so many: "I need to spend some time here and not skip to the hope." And that's tough for a pastor. That's hard for me to do. But it was so necessary.

Right after Job nine, we get to Job 10, where a lot of listeners pointed out your definition of joy, Chris. Um, and how you kind of framed that. Can you expand a little bit to what you said there?

I don't know if I can expand, but it was actually really powerful for me as I spent some real time wordsmithing that. And that's a really helpful process for me when I'm teaching. It's one of the most, uh, like self-fulfilling processes I go through—like, how am I gonna articulate what this is?

And I was really struggling over what is the nature of joy. And I often do definitions. I help define a word by considering its opposite. And when I thought about the opposite of joy, the Bible often talks about the fullness of our joy. And so the opposite is an emptiness—not a sadness or sorrow. I think joy can feel sad. Joy can feel like the fullness of all the emotions. So joy is more of a fullness and a presence of God's grace.

Hmm. That stuck with me in a really powerful way. I'm a youth leader and I've used that definition in the last three months alone, probably 10 times.
Hmm.

Joy becomes accessible again for the depressed student or the student who has anxiety, for the students who are in the middle of addiction even. Or I've had students lose friends to suicide, and giving them a context where joy is not an emotional, like holy happiness, but instead it's this accessible completeness that the presence of Jesus brings in their life—this presence of grace—it turns joy. It almost redeems joy for them. They're like, "I can have this in the middle of my sorrow."

That's so good. Yeah. It gives you a pathway back when you understand that joy is not a happiness in the face of terrible things.
Yeah.

Nonsense to the grieving mind and heart. Yet joy is just a recognizing God's presence. You have a pathway back there; you can get there. I can feel that that's something I can access. I can choose to rejoice in the Lord in a moment of deep sorrow.

All right, guys, we're gonna move on from emote. We're gonna move into articulate now. Peyton, let's go ahead and start with you.

Yeah, so the tension I keep coming back to is the utter defenselessness of Job. And he's trying to make sense of the pain that's torn through every layer of his life. His friends choose that moment to kick him while he's down. That's what makes our words so painful.

Job's not arguing from strength, wrestling from the ground, knocked flat on his back. And he's trying to fight them off while they're still standing. He's on the floor. And that's not a fair fight. He's trying to sort out not only his own feelings about God, and those feelings—let's be honest—they're pretty raw. He feels exposed, confused, and even betrayed by God. And instead of like buddies coming around him and protecting that vulnerability, they exploit it by pouring coal on the fire. They take a bruised soul, and it's like they just push a finger into that bruise, just press right on it. That's why Chris's Zuzu's petals image fits so well here because in "It's a Wonderful Life," Zuzu's petals are something precious and they can be crushed without a second thought. And Job is like that here. It's like he's holding onto the last trembling petals of trust that he has for God, and he's trying desperately not to lose it. His friends handle him like a problem to solve instead of a person they need to shepherd. And when someone's hanging on by a thread, you don't dissect their theology in that moment. Like, pick another time. Instead, you cup your hands around what's left and you help them to guard what faith they have.

Yeah, I think of Jesus, who a bruised reed he would not break.
Jesus is gentle with, uh, those who are holding on to faith. Yeah, the stories that people shared—I spent some time reading from, uh, some of our listeners, and the stories they shared were stories of friendly fire. Uh, something that I usually call church hurt. Something I really appreciated, however, were those who recognized when they were the Bildad or the Zophar. The gospel is the expression of God's kindness that leads to repentance. If that is delivered with cruelty, then you gotta recheck the formula.

And to add a little bit of articulation to, uh, to the cancer issue: uh, the feedback from my religious friends—two things that hurt the most were one, when non-doctors, non-medical professionals attempted to either blame or fix. They're very well-meaning, but it was not helpful.

And two, we had a guest preacher in the pulpit who proclaimed from the pulpit that Christians with cancer don't experience anxiety. And he used it as this shining example of how great it is to be a Christian. Now, he being up in the pulpit had no clue that my daughter sitting next to me—a lifelong, devoted and faithful believer—has both cancer and anxiety. And he just proceeded to dump shame on her for feeling any anxiety as a believer. I can also happily report that the vast majority of friends, Christian and otherwise, responded without formulas or fixes, but just with simple compassion and concern. And that all by itself was really powerful.

So there's a lot here to process. So we're gonna move forward to respond. Remember, we take each of these emotions and either resolve it because we're content with the answer, reset it to carry that question or theme back into the theater, or release it as something that doesn't have to hold us anymore.

So, Peyton, how about you?
Well, first, let's talk about the resolve. I'm gonna resolve permission to vent, to be real, and I think Job gives us that. C.S. Lewis said this: "I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God; it changes me." It's really good for me.
The resolve this time is gonna take the form of responsibility. I'm gonna add another R, but it really is a resolution for me.

Uh, because as mad as I was at the guest preacher for unintentionally shaming my daughter for her anxiety, I have been in the pulpit and on the mic for 26 years. And I know that I also am guilty. Now, I have always tried my best to emphasize grace, but I know I've gotten it wrong. It was unintended, but it was there—shame, but guilt. And looking back, I know I'm responsible and I'm sorry. And for all of you who have received shame from a pulpit and will likely never get a direct apology, I hope that my apology provides at least a little bit of healing.

So for me, I'm going to resolve my doubt that joy is something that I can experience during hard times. Uh, Chris, when I heard that definition of joy that you wordsmithed for the first time, it unlocked an aspect of grace for me that I think I refused due to a lot of past burdens of sufferings and church hurt. Uh, I literally felt a physical weight come off of my shoulders as I felt the word joy being redeemed for me. Uh, so that was, that was incredibly powerful. All right, guys, that's some good resolve. Let's move on to reset. Peyton, what do you wanna reset?

You know, I need to reset the question of whose theology is more right. Like, that's still an open question. Reading Job is kind of like listening to dueling banjos—like, who's playing the right note here or the superior chord? But that's the genius of Job: we're not supposed to know yet. We're meant to be as confused and caught in the middle as Job is when he first hears it. You know, like when you're suffering and people bring in their weird theories as to why you're experiencing it—like, this was caused by too many microplastics in your system, or you must have unforgiveness towards someone. And all of these things might be true—uh, whether contributing factor or cause—but who in the heck knows?

We often have no earthly clue of heaven's activities no more than Job does. So I'm left with the question, "Who's right?" Like, they can't all be right, even though they all sound so right.
Again, most of our feelings need resetting. This drama is far from done. So at this stage in the game, we are carrying most of this back into the theater again.

He says to God, "So you destroy a person's hope." That's where we ended. That's how Job sees God as the hope destroyer. So we can't walk back into the theater thinking we've got this solved. It still hurts. There is still more to process. And the two themes that I want to keep an eye on are blame and control. These are really intriguing to me. Job is blameless, but what happened was beyond his control, and these seem to be key throughout the story—the desire to blame, the struggle for control.

And that connects right back to those contributing factors and causes. Those are all potentially real, and for a medical professional, they are key to diagnosis and prevention. But it can still be a cruel response to someone in pain because whether it's microplastics or unforgiveness or whatever it may be, blaming the cause does not relieve the hurt. And in Job's story, inventing a cause creates more hurt. Truth is, we often point the finger at something that they did in a selfish way to make us feel better for not doing those things—to feel safer, to feel in control: "Good thing I didn't do that."
That was so good, Chris. Guys, the lights are starting to flicker. Let's move on to release. Peyton.

So I feel like I need to release people who are being mean.

If people are being mean and delivering the message like Job's friends were, you could pretty much disregard it. Some Christians talk about speaking the truth in love, like it's saying hard things, but if they say it in a harsh way, you can reject the message. Just release it.
For me, I'm gonna release—for the sake of my daughter—release the shame that is added by well-meaning Christians and hold onto the compassion that was given. And I also wanna share with many of our listeners who resonated with chapter 14, along with me, a heart to move from guilt to gratitude. We have what Job dreamed of. We have Jesus; we have eternal life. We have the mediator, the God who counts our steps and not our sins. And we are not called to live in guilt for that, but in gratitude.

And with that, the lights are dimming in the lobby. It's time to head back in. So before we return to our seats, we want to give you guys another regulation practice to help respond and regulate when Job's story hits home in a difficult way for you. Last time we learned box breathing. And this time we're learning to pray. Prayer is great all the time, but prayer at a moment of overwhelming emotions can actually be challenging. Yet we see Job do exactly that so many times—he immediately and seamlessly turns to God, not later, but in the moment.

So how do we do that? Well, stop for a moment and just talk to God. A couple important notes: First, prayer is not fixing. It's about bringing your feelings to God—raw and honest and real. He can handle it.

That's a really good insight. Prayer is not a way of taking control away from God. Prayer is participation. God invites us to play an active role in what he's doing.

It's not like we command God like a genie, but we do connect with God as our father. Back on family road trips, when my kids were little, sometimes one kid would get car sick, and a little trick to help them was to let them hold the steering wheel while I'm driving. Now, they didn't take control away from me, but that connection to the path we were on helps the body feel aligned. Prayer does that too. We don't steer for God, but we do become connected in a very real way to his plan.

Connected is a good word because prayer also connects us with Jesus and with others. In the book of Philippians, Paul describes the fellowship of suffering. Prayer is a powerful way to enter into that fellowship. And prayer resets our perspective. It helps us to see our story from God's perspective, full view, and reminds us of the reality of joy. Thanks for joining us on the intermission.

Job 15 | Who Do You Think You Are?

Welcome back to Through the Word Job chapter 15. Eliphaz is back for round two, and this time he's not holding back. The gentle tone from chapter four is gone. What we get now is frustration, confrontation, and a deepening divide between Eliphaz and Job. This is his second speech, but the tone has shifted big time.

In chapter four, Eliphaz was cautious, gentle. He even opened with a compliment: you've encouraged many. And he walked Job toward his theology slowly, but not anymore.

Like Debbie Downer, Eliphaz is going to point out that every cloud is packed full of rain. Now he's frustrated, maybe even offended. Job has responded to all three friends now—not just defending himself, but challenging them. Job has said things about God that sounded irreverent, dangerous, even.

And Eliphaz isn't gonna let that slide. So he opens like this in verse two: "What a wise person answer with empty notions or fill their belly with hot east wind?" Translation: Job, you're full of hot air. Eliphaz says you claim to be wise, but you're talking nonsense—wind and noise, nothing helpful. And he's just getting started, by the way.

Speaking of wise people, he continues, "Would they argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value? But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God." That is a serious charge. Eliphaz has a saying:

Job, your words don't just sound foolish. They're damaging. You're dragging others down with you. You're undermining their worship. You're making it harder for people around you to trust God. Why?

Because Job dared to question how God ran his life. Like a one-two punch, Eliphaz levels an even stronger accusation in response: "Your sin prompts your mouth. You adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine. Your own lips testify against you." Now we're in courtroom language: you're testifying against yourself. Eliphaz says every word you say can and is being used against you, because your words right now betray your guilt.

And again, remember the pattern: the friends aren't accusing Job of anything specific. They don't know about any secret sin. They just see suffering, hear Job defending himself, and draw their own conclusion. He must be guilty. Two plus two equals five.

And to show Job the error of his ways, Eliphaz attacks his status. He challenges Job's place in the order of things. Verse seven: "Are you the first man ever born? Were you brought forth before the hills? Do you listen in on God's counsel? Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?" In other words, Job, who do you think you are? You act like you got divine insight, like you're the only one who can see the truth. But Job, you're not special. You're not wiser than the three of us. He goes on in verse nine: "What do you know that we do not know? What insights do you have that we do not have?"

This is peer pressure theology, Job. Everyone knows how this works. The elders, the wise men, the traditions—they all agree you are the outlier here. Eliphaz appeals to age and experience: "The gray-haired and the aged are on our side, many even older than your father." In the ancient world, age meant wisdom. Longevity meant credibility, and Eliphaz is stacking the deck. You're not just disagreeing with me, Job. You're rejecting generations of wisdom.

Then he brings in the comfort card. In verse 11: "Are God's consolations not enough for you? Words spoken gently to you?" It's a subtle dig. Eliphaz tried to be gentle in the beginning, so it's like he's saying, we've already offered you some comfort, Job, and God's offered comfort, but it's not enough for you. You want something else, something more. And then he asks in verse 12: "Why has your heart carried you away? And why do your eyes flash, that you vent your rage against God and pour such words from your mouth?" Now he's calling Job out emotionally. You're not even reasoning anymore, he says. Get ahold of yourself, man. You're angry. Your heart's taken over. You're lashing out at God. It's a classic moment when someone spiritualizes your pain, explains your grief away, tells you your sorrow is rebellion.

And then once again, Eliphaz reaches for theology as the bludgeoning tool. In verse 14: "What are mortals that they could be pure, or those born of women, that they could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water?" Sound familiar? It's almost the same thought he shared in chapter four: no one is righteous before God. Not angels, not men. Everyone is flawed. Nobody, Joe, can stand before him clean. So why do you think you are any different?

And again, it's true. Romans will echo these same themes: "For all have sinned. There is no one righteous, not even one." Let's just pause for a second and remember: Job wasn't saying he was sinless. He was saying he didn't understand why he was suffering the way he was, if he had been walking with God. But Eliphaz isn't applying this to the human condition in general. He's applying this specifically to Job. You suffer, therefore you must be corrupt. God doesn't even trust angels. So Job, why would he trust you?

Then comes a long section of proverbial wisdom. Eliphaz lays out what he's seen and heard in the big, wide world. He gives his own experience in verse 17: "I will tell you, listen to me. What I have seen, I will also declare, what the wise have declared, hiding nothing, received from their ancestors." It's a big setup. This isn't just my opinion, Job. This is collective wisdom, time-tested truth. I've seen it too. And here's what the truth looks like: "All his days, the wicked man suffers torment. The ruthless man through all the years stored up for him." It's the logical fallacy, by the way, called an argument from experience. Me and everyone else knows this. It's hard to argue against. Why am I the only one that thinks different here?

Eliphaz describes the fate of the wicked: lives full of dread, fear, anguish, tormented even in prosperity. They fear ruin. But of course we know that's not what happened to Job, and Eliphaz doesn't really know either. But often people who talk with such confidence talk like they do know, even when they don't. He continues in verse 25: "Distress and anguish will fill him with terror. Troubles overwhelm him like a king poised to attack," and he keeps building one image after another: judgment, darkness, fire, futility. Wmp, wmp. Eliphaz is Debbie Downer. He shakes his fist to God and votes himself against the almighty, defiantly charging against him with a thick, strong shield. To Eliphaz, this is Job: a man defying his God, shaking his fist at him, proud and being torn apart as a result.

Verse 27: "Though his face is covered with fat and his waist bulges with flesh, he will inhabit ruined towns and houses where no one lives." Translation: even if the wicked man seems to prosper, he'll fall. His wealth will disappear—Job, like yours. His legacy will crumble. Then in verse 30, Eliphaz ends with this bleak warning: "He will not escape the darkness. A flame will wither his shoots, and by the breath of God's mouth, he will go away.

For the company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of those who love bribes. They will conceive trouble and give birth to evil. Their womb fashions deceit." That's how Eliphaz wraps it up. No encouragement, no invitation to repentance this time, just a warning: Job, this is what happens to the wicked, and this is the way you're headed.

So what do we do with Eliphaz? His theology is deep. His words are poetic and mannered. His conviction is strong. But his conclusions—they're all assumption. He sees Job's pain and draws a straight line from suffering to sin. No room for mystery, no space for the righteous to ever suffer. And once he lands on that conclusion, every word Job speaks becomes evidence of guilt. Every protest: defiance.

So we let Eliphaz speak for the time being, and like Job, we sit and we weigh his words. Because these friends don't just speak nonsense. Their words are full of truth. But truth applied without compassion, without context, and without patience becomes a weapon, a bludgeon, and a burden.

Well, that's Job 15: Eliphaz returns, not with comfort, but confrontation. And Job? Oh, he's gonna answer in Job chapter 16. Join us next time on our journey through the Word.

Job 16 | My Witness is in Heaven

Welcome back to Job, everyone. We're at chapter 16—round two of the speeches has begun, and Job is ready to respond to Eliphaz a second time. As you listen to the speeches, it's beginning to feel a whole lot like Job is on trial.

If you lived back then, this whole thing would look exactly like a trial. Just one problem: no charges.

The self-appointed district attorneys keep making the same case: bad things happened to you, so you must be guilty. But guilty of what? Lots of evidence, no crime. In chapter 15, Eliphaz told Job that his useless words undermine devotion to God and that he's venting his rage against God.

Then Eliphaz unleashed a tirade about how the wicked suffered torment and despair, losing all their wealth because they shake their fist at God.

Once again, it's solid truth, badly applied. The wicked will reap what they sow, but Job is not wicked. How will he respond? Job 16, verse one.

Then Job replied: "I have heard many things like these. You are miserable comforters, all of you. Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?"

Or if I could paraphrase: guys, you're terrible at this. "What ails you?" means what's bugging you that keeps making you so mean? And I love the phrase "miserable comforters." Job reminds them of why they showed up back in chapter two. They agreed together to sympathize and comfort him.

We all have those people in our lives—you know the ones. They offer to help, and you start calculating how much time and stress their help will cost. Job is done with it. So in verse four: "I also could speak like you. If you were in my place, I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you."

He wants to trade places and give them a taste of their own so-called medicine. And then, in verse five, Job wouldn't do that: "But my mouth would encourage you. Comfort from my lips would bring you relief." In one line, Job reminds his friends what real help should look like.

Encourage—literally, give someone courage, make them feel brave to face this, to get through it. Comfort, not like a soft pillow. The Bible word means to come alongside to help—like when you see someone collapsed on the ground and you sit down beside them. When they're ready, you offer a strong hand to lift them up. And the goal is relief: make the pain less. In verse seven, Job once again slips away from talking to his friends and back to talking to God.

"Surely, God, you have worn me out. You have devastated my entire household. You have shriveled me up, and it has become a witness. My gauntness rises up and testifies against me."

Notice the words "witness" and "testifies." Job feels the trial inside. No matter how much he defends himself, he recognizes a louder testimony that will not stop testifying against him.

Job is gaunt. Have you ever seen a person too small for their bones? It shocks you, and it is oh, so difficult not to draw conclusions.

We all love that beautiful verse in 1 Samuel that says, "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart," and we want to do the same. But we're bad at it, and we won't get better until we admit it.

If you look at Job, it is so difficult not to judge. But most of us don't realize just how wrong that is until it happens to us.

Job has enjoyed the great benefit of being judged by his good appearance for a long time. But now he can almost hear his appearance shouting to everyone just what a sinner he must be to deserve this.

He doesn't deserve it, but it happened, and he feels like God did it. Verse nine: "God assails me and tears me in his anger and gnashes his teeth at me. My opponent fastens his piercing eyes on me." Pay attention to the language. All of the words emphasize opposition.

God is against him. Everything is against him. In verse 10: "People open their mouths and jeer at me. They strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me. God has turned me over to the ungodly and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. All was well with me, but he shattered me.

He seized me by the neck and crushed me. He has made me his target. His archers surround me without pity. He pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground."

Job's imagery is vivid. He can see it all surrounding him, closing in on him. The attack is relentless, and no wonder—he sees it. The attacks in chapters one and two were relentless. Trauma like that stays with you. In verse 14: "Again and again, he bursts upon me. He rushes at me like a warrior. I have sewn sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust.

My face is red with weeping; dark shadows ring my eyes. Yet my hands have been free of violence, and my prayer is pure." Just as Job sees his own face—dark rings on the eyes and red from weeping—he stands again in his own defense.

I am innocent. The testimony is a lie. Don't listen to my appearance. Listen to my life. My hands are clean, my prayer is pure. Job wants it known. Job calls upon the earth itself to vindicate him.

Verse 18: "Earth, do not cover my blood. May my cry never be laid to rest."

Job fears that when he dies, his defense will be forgotten, buried in the dirt. This appearance, these accusations will be how he's remembered. "Earth, don't cover my blood. Remember me." Job needs a witness. He needs a testimony that shouts louder and stands longer than this wretched appearance.

He called to the earth, but the earth is not enough. His eyes lift higher. Verse 19: "Even now, my witness is in heaven. My advocate is on high." Watch Job carefully, and you will see a faith that runs deeper in the soul than most of us will ever experience. Even now, right here in the midst of his lament and desperation, even now: "My witness is in heaven." Though God slay him, yet he still trusts. And though none can hear it, Job knows God's testimony is for him.

It may be quieter, but it is higher. Higher than his appearance, higher than the smug cruelty of judgmental friends, higher than all accusation and doubt. His advocate is on high. Job appeals to a higher court.

Now, verse 20 is tricky. The ancient language reads two ways. Some translations say, "My friends treat me with scorn"—true enough. But the other translation intrigues me: "My intercessor is my friend. As my eyes pour out tears to God..." That floors me. My intercessor—that witness in heaven who stands up to all the bullies and accusations and comes to my defense—he's my friend. He knows me. He cares.

In ancient courts, a witness testifies to what is true about you, while an intercessor stands beside you, pleading your case to the judge. And can you see Job's eyes pouring out tears to God, desperate to know and determined to believe that his witness is in heaven and his intercessor defends him?

Verse 21: "On behalf of a man, he pleads with God as one pleads for a friend. How amazing would that be? You know how great it is when accusations come against you and everyone turns on you, but a true friend stands up for you. Imagine someone who stood up for you before God.

The truest friend, someone who values your reputation and integrity, someone who knows you better than the mocks and hypocrites, someone risking everything just for you—a friend.

Once again, if you know Jesus, you probably want to shout to Job, to tell him we have that. We have the intercessor. But two things: one, Job can't hear you. Job knows... I'm not entirely clear how well he understood then, though I'm amazed at the depth of Christian theology here.

I know that he knows now, and just imagine how deeply Job appreciates what we have in Jesus.

Do we appreciate it? Do we get it? What a wonder it is to know that Jesus pleads our defense to God the way a man pleads with a friend. Interesting—the Hebrew words for the friend who pleads are literally "Son of Man." That's an Old Testament term for a human and a title for the Messiah.

It reminds us that Jesus knows what it's like to be one of us. Read Job 16, and as you see Job in all his misery, consider which voice you hear: his appearance testifying, his friends mocking, or his witness on high.

Listen close, because one day when your name is called in heaven's courtroom, that's the voice you'll need most of all.

Job 17 | My Sprit is Broken

Welcome back to Job, everyone. Chapter 17 begins with a broken spirit. We pick up the journey right back in the ashes of despair. We're partway through Job's second defense against Eliphaz—fourth defense overall. Chapter 16 had Job worn out, shattered, and crushed by God. Even still, looking up to the courts of heaven, Job held out: "My advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend. On behalf of a man, he pleads with God."

That paradox of emotion continues here as we feel Job's utter devastation, tempered by flashes of resilience, grounded in one last hope: God will vindicate.

Let's dive in at verse one.

"My spirit is broken. My days are cut short. The grave awaits me." Do you know the weight of a broken spirit? I have a very distinct memory, a moment of utter spiritual exhaustion. I sat down in the church pew, and my spirit fell right through it and just laid there. Ever felt like that? Our spirit renews us, drives us forward. Not for Job, not anymore. He has nothing left to give and nothing left to live.

A side note: one older translation says, "My breath is corrupt." So you decide which is worse—broken spirit or bad breath. Sorry, humor is still my coping mechanism. But spirit and breath are the same Hebrew word, which highlights the challenge of translation here. The language is old, and it's poetry, making many phrases extra difficult.

On the other hand, the Bible is by far the most studied and analyzed text in history, and those who translate take on their work with sacred trust.

And we have multiple translations and many commentaries to help. Finding the meaning is challenging but quite possible. Nonetheless, there will be some passages for which we simply cannot know the meaning with certainty, and that's okay.

After all, Job isn't about certainty; it's much more about trusting God through the unknowns and pondering over what Job might mean is still quite valuable. Okay, side note done. Back in verse one: "My spirit is broken. My days are cut short. The grave awaits me." The once-bright future Job imagined is gone. Now he sees only the grave ahead. In verse two: "Surely mockers surround me. My eyes must dwell on their hostility." Mockers are exhausting, and Job feels surrounded, trapped. His friends don't mean to mock, but that's how it feels. Verse three:

"Give me, oh God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?" Now this verse really intrigues me once again. Job is using the language of a trial. Precise interpretation is tricky because we don't know with certainty the customs of ancient trials, but it appears that Job wants a pledge or bond.

This likely refers to a custom of two people entering into some kind of arbitration to settle a dispute, giving a pledge—something valuable that bound them to abide by the judge's decision. Kind of similar to posting bail. Job wants to settle things with God.

Recall chapter nine, where he wished for a mediator. He longs to be right with God again. Let's do this already, but what can he pledge? What bond would be enough for God when a man's life is on the line?

Job pleads with God: "Give me the pledge." Some translations say, "Be my bond." Job realizes only God can pay the price God demands, and only God is price enough.

Picture it: the great judge stepping down from his bench to pay the full price. But who else in this world could ante up a payment that God would accept? Give me a pledge. Be thou my bond. Back in verse three: "Who else will put up security for me?" Or more literally, "Who else will strike hands for me?" Who's gonna step up to God and shake his hand on my behalf? I need you, God.

Although the translation is tricky, I really think we have another gospel breadcrumb here. And once again, Job's desperation has brought a realization that is gold for us. Because this reality isn't just for Job, it's for all of us. Think about it. What pledge could you possibly offer God? Who's gonna help you pay that debt? When reality sets in and you fully recognize that only God could possibly pay a pledge large enough to settle your account with God, you're stepping right up to the edge of the gospel. For Job, these mockers surrounding him certainly won't save him. His only hope for vindication is in God himself. Now, verse four:

"You have closed their minds to understanding. Therefore, you will not let them triumph." Job looks at the ignorance of his friends and decides that God must be allowing this—even closing their minds—but he surely won't let them win. Truth must win out in the end.

Then Job follows with what appears to be an old saying, and he says it most pointedly against them. Verse five: "If anyone denounces their friends for reward, the eyes of their children will fail."

Now that's cutting, and let that phrase hit you squarely. If anyone denounces their friends, sells them out for reward—like a reward is worth more than a friend. Now the friends are still convinced that they're standing for truth and being the true friend who confronts guilt, but Job feels betrayed, and he's fighting back. Verse six:

"God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit. My eyes have grown dim with grief. My whole frame is but a shadow." I can almost see the world through Job's eyes: sitting in ashes, hearing his name as a curse, spit running down his cheek, eyes dimmed with grief, barely able to open, closing out the pain of the world, his own frame losing substance. Just a shadow now. But in verse eight, the fight inside stirs once again.

"The upright are appalled at this. The innocent are aroused against the ungodly." The verb tense here is imperfect. Job imagines how the upright will respond when they hear his story. They'll be shocked that someone so blameless and honorable as Job would go through this, and then they'll be stirred up and angry with the ungodly hypocrite.

It is right to feel your heart stirred up against the judgmental hypocrisy of the self-righteous. Job felt it. Jesus felt it. I feel it often. And verse nine is defiant resilience: "Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger."

Job takes his stand with the innocent and beats his chest against the empty accusations of the faithless. The righteous will hold fast. We will grow stronger. I can see the fierceness in his eyes as he pushes back against every accusation. And verse ten: "But come on, all of you, try again. I will not find a wise man among you."

Moving forward, the final verses here were tough for me. They are about hope. The translations break up the sentences in different ways. Now I'm a hope dealer, always looking for God's light in a dark tunnel, and one translation seemed to offer it: "In the face of darkness, light is near." And maybe Job meant it for a moment, but most translations and commentaries show him lost in darkness. He speaks of hope as a lost cause. His friends keep trying to offer hope, but Job sees it all as futile. Hope? Hope for what? Read with me at verse 11:

"My days have passed, and my plans are shattered. Yet the desires of my heart turn night into day." In the face of the darkness, light is near. "If the only home I hope for is the grave, if I spread out my bed in the realm of darkness, if I say to corruption, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'My mother or my sister,' where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me? Will it go down to the gates of death? Will we descend together into the dust?"

In other words, why offer a dying man hope? Will this hope follow me down into death? Will it join me in the dust? Job's light is flickering out. And once again, we close on a low note. I so want to follow those gospel breadcrumbs to Jesus, but Job's not there yet, and we won't force it. So what do we do? Just what Job told us: be appalled.

It's a heartbreaking story happening to a blameless man. Rouse your heart against the hypocrites who judge the afflicted, and always remember that the first hypocrite to confront is the one in the mirror. And for the righteous: hold fast. If your hands are clean, grow stronger, knowing that only God can pay the price he demands. And trust that he will.

Read Job 17, and we'll see you next time.

Job 18 | The Lamp Snuffed Out

Welcome to Job chapter 18, where Bildad speaks again, and this time he's not mincing words. I can remember driving late one night on a mountain road in New Zealand. Everyone in the truck was asleep. I was starting to nod off as well, and as I drifted to the wrong side of the road, there was a Mack truck coming right towards us.

At first, the only other person awake in the backseat spoke gently, "Peyton, excuse me, Peyton." But when that failed to snap me into danger, she yelled, "P-down!" We swerved and missed the head-on collision, and I learned the value of someone shouting me awake to keep me from heading into danger.

This is Bildad's signature style: skip all the niceties, don't waste time, and scream the dangers to Job to save his faith and possibly his soul from destruction. Well, back in chapter eight, Bildad opened his first speech with a jab, calling Job's response "a bluing wind." Bildad was blunt, but he tried to point Job towards hope, repentance, restoration, a future. But here in chapter 18, that glimmer of hope is gone. Bildad is irritated, tired of Job's resistance, tired of hearing him claim his innocence, and he opens this speech with a shot at Job's attitude. Verse two: "When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk." It's basically, "Enough already, Job. Get your head on straight."

And then he accuses Job of pride in verse three: "Why are we regarded as cattle and considered stupid in your sight?" Bildad feels insulted. Job's rebuttals have stung. His cries for justice, his challenges to their wisdom—it's gotten personal. Bildad feels like Job sees them as ignorant, like dumb animals. And now he's lashing back.

He paints a picture of Job as raging and out of control in verse four: "You who tear yourself to pieces in anger, is the earth to be abandoned for your sake, or must the rocks be moved from their place?" He's mocking Job's demand for justice, as if Job thinks the universe should be rearranged just to suit him. It's sarcasm aimed to humble Job. Then Bildad launches into a long, vivid description of what happens to the wicked. It's not just theological; it's poetic, detailed, and intense, and it's a bit long. So bear with me, and if you think it's a bit much after reading it, imagine what it felt like to Job to be on the receiving end of it.

Here's how it starts in verse five: "The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out. The flame of his fire stops burning." That's the opening image: darkness. The light of the wicked goes out. No more fire, no more warmth, and no more life. Talk about kicking a man when he's down. But then he moves to their downfall. Verse six: "The light in his tent becomes dark. The lamp beside him goes out. The vigor of his step is weakened; his own schemes throw him down." Bildad says the wicked is undone by his own plans, as if Job brought all this upon himself, the very path he walks on is a trap, and his downfall inevitable.

In verse eight: "His feet thrust him into a net. He wanders into its mesh. A trap seizes him by the heel, and a snare holds him fast." It's the language, by the way, of poetic justice. The wicked man builds his own ruin, and the world rises up to finish the job. Then the avalanche of accusation begins. Verse twelve: "Calamity is hungry for him. Disaster is ready for him. When he falls, it eats away part of his skin. Death's firstborn devours his limbs." It's graphic, and it's gross. And of course, Job is laying there with his skin rotting off. It's a picture of physical, social, and personal collapse. Everything falls apart, just like it has for Job—his health, his home, his family, his legacy.

But then comes one of the most haunting lines of the chapter in verse nineteen: "He has no offspring or descendants among his people. No survivor where he once lived. People of the west are appalled at his fate. Those of the East are seized with horror." In other words, when this man dies, no one remembers him with honor. If anything, he has infamy for being the most cursed man on the earth. He leaves nothing behind—just fear, just ruin, his legacy obliterated.

And remember, all of Job's children just died. I mean, how do you even say something like that to a friend who's just sustained such a terrible loss? But remember, they're not trying to hurt him. They're trying to save him—at least his faith. If they can make sense of God when Job can't, perhaps in the face of all of his suffering, Job's faith will be restored again.

And here's how Bildad closes it in verse twenty-one: "Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man. Such is the place of one who does not know God." That's it. It's not advice. It's not an invitation to repent. It's a warning, or maybe more than a warning. Maybe it's an accusation. Without ever directly saying the name "Job"—"This is you"—but the shoe fits. Because this chapter sounds personal. Bildad never says "Job." But the implications are clear. He sees Job's suffering and concludes this is what happens to those who don't know God. And that's the sting, because once again, the theology itself isn't completely crazy. It's true.

Wickedness leads to ruin. It's also true that pride comes before a fall. The Bible teaches that. Proverbs echoes it, so does the Psalms. But here's what we're sitting with in this chapter: Bildad isn't just speaking general truths. He's applying them to a grieving man who's lost his world.

Bildad sees the ashes, the sores, the pain, and concludes this is the end of the wicked. You must be one of them.

In some ways, Bildad is saying what many people think but don't say. When tragedy strikes, when someone's life falls apart, it's tempting to look for a reason, a cause, a crack in the armor. After all, we want the world to be fair and predictable. A world that's fair and predictable is a lot less scary than a world where the righteous and innocent suffer. So, like Job's friends, we often try to connect the dots, sometimes when there aren't any. But Job's story doesn't fit into Bildad's box, and neither do a lot of my stories and yours.

So, like Job, hear the weight of Bildad's words today. Listen to the truth he recites and sit with the discomfort of how Bildad uses them. Because sometimes right words used in the wrong way do more damage than silence. Imagine these words being said to you by a friend. How would you feel, and what would you answer? Well, that's Job 18. Bildad returns not to comfort but to condemn. He offers no hope this time, just a vivid portrait of judgment and an unspoken assumption that Job belongs in it.

Join us next time for Job chapter 19 on the Journey through the Word.

Job 19 | My Redeemer Lives

Welcome back, everyone. Job 19, and Get Ready. We return to the drama as Bildad has just completed another blistering rebuke. Bildad spelled out the fate of the wicked in vivid detail: terrors, disaster, burning sulfur, no descendants. It's a harsh warning.

Like the ghost of Christmas Future, Bildad stepped in as a full-on Grim Reaper to warn wicked old Ebenezer before it's too late.

One problem: Job isn't Ebenezer Scrooge. And all that imagery of God's wrath sounded awfully familiar. Where had Bildad seen it? Oh, I remember. It's right in front of him. He's describing Job.
Bildad may have removed the name to protect the guilty, but it's a bit obvious. Thanks, friend. Thanks a lot. Sorry. I find myself increasingly empathetic to Job and frustrated with his friends.

Maybe it's just me, but I'm starting to picture the scene in Airplane when the woman freaks out and a line of helpful passengers fill the aisle to shake some sense into her. "Get ahold of yourself, Job," I think. Bildad is the guy with the wrench.

As someone with an overactive sense of empathy, it's hard to take yet. Job fires back. He may be ready to throw in the towel on life, but he will not surrender his integrity. Job recognizes their thinly veiled accusations.

And remember, this all started with an accusation from the Great Accuser himself: "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

Job doesn't know that, but we do, and we watch carefully as Job's every response answers that question. Job's respect for God is far from empty, and we can only surmise that evidence is quite valuable to God.
At least we hope it is, because apart from that, we have to wonder: Does Job suffer for nothing? Whatever significance this has in heaven, what is Job to make of it here, and what are we to learn from walking through it with him? It's been a rough road, though I will admit there have been some killer revelations along the way.

Job's longing for a mediator in chapter 9 in 14, his deep desire for God to count his steps but not his sins, and even deeper in 16, his confidence that "even now my witness is in heaven, my advocate is on high."
Notice the progression. A mediator is a helpful neutral party, but an advocate fights for you.

And in 17, we had that profound request for God to give him the pledge he demands: "Be thou my bond."
This all comes centuries before Jesus and long before the gospel.
But notice: tribulation brings revelation, and going through it with Job gives us a new perspective.

Watch this. If we don't endure the depth of Job's tribulation, we will not experience the grandeur of his revelation. It's tempting to skip to the goods, but trust me, they're shallow without context. It's like: have you ever watched an epic football match—I mean, epic—and your friend just watches a couple highlights? Like that's the whole thing.

Or have you watched a deeply impacting movie while your friend just quotes one good line from the trailer? It's not the same.

And that's why we're here, in 19 chapters deep, at verse one:
"Then Job replied, 'How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me. Shamelessly you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone.'"

That last pushback is good insight into what blameless means. Whatever sin Job may or may not have committed against God, he certainly hasn't wronged Bildad. So why does Bildad feel so compelled to speak, and why do we? God doesn't need our defense.
Verse 5:
"If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me."

Job feels like his friends see him down as an opportunity to step up, even if they step right on him. So he wants them to know who knocked him down: God has wronged me. Now, that gives me pause. Not sure what to make of it, but he feels it, and God lets him feel it.

Of course, we would like to scream at Job to tell him that this is Satan's doing, but he can't hear us. God could correct Job, but for now he's silent. He allows Job's process, yet his silence is maddening to Job.

So for a moment, let's be silent as well and listen to Job, verse 7:
"Though I cry 'Violence!' I get no response. Though I call for help, there is no justice. He has blocked my way so I cannot pass. He has shrouded my paths in darkness. He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head. He tears me down on every side till I'm gone. He uproots my hope like a tree. His anger burns against me. He counts me among his enemies. His troops advance in force. They build a siege ramp against me and then camp around my tent.

"He has alienated my family from me. My acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My relatives have gone away. My closest friends have forgotten me. My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner. They look upon me as on a stranger.

"I summon my servant, but he does not answer though I beg him with my own mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife. I am loathsome to my own family. Even the little boys scorn me. When I appear, they ridicule me. All my intimate friends detest me. Those I love have turned against me. I am nothing but skin and bones. I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth."

I can see Job sunken into the ground like a man beaten, defeated body and soul equally in tatters. And in verse 21, he lifts his eyes to plead:
"Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?
"Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead or engraved in rock forever."

Are you listening? Job has reached the bottom of the pit, and the few who showed up either won't hear or can't hear. But if only someone would, if only this were written on a scroll, better yet, inscribed in rock and saved forever. Because there in the pit, with every bit of hope beaten out of him, Job finds something: a conviction, a truth that he knows so deep in his soul that the mocks can't touch it and the trials can't beat it.
Because tribulation brings revelation.

What's the revelation? Listen close. You may have heard this before, but not like this. You need to hear this in the fullness of Job's pain and lament, to see the fierceness in Job's eyes as hot tears make a line through the ashes and scars on his face.

This is the revelation. This is Job's conviction. Verse 25:
"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end, he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I, myself, will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another."
How my heart yearns within me. Job longed for a mediator. He counted on an advocate and a pledge on his behalf, but this is so much deeper. He wants a Redeemer. Check that: he has a Redeemer.

I know, with confidence, that my Redeemer lives—living, breathing, caring lives.
Now, that word "Redeemer" is crucial. The Hebrew is "Goel"—one who restores, avenges, sets things right.

It appears first in Genesis 48 as old Jacob blesses Joseph after he thought for years that his son was dead. He calls on the one who redeemed them both from all that trial to bless his son.

Then in Exodus 6, God sends word to a people enslaved: "I will redeem."
And in the laws of Leviticus, the same word is given to the kinsman redeemer. When a family heritage is nearly lost to disaster or folly, a redeemer comes to rescue their legacy. Recall that Boaz was Redeemer to Ruth.
More interesting: the same Hebrew word "Goel" is also used for the avenger of blood, the one responsible for justice on behalf of a murdered family member.

To redeem is to restore and set right, be it by grace, justice, or both.
And perhaps most interesting of all, the same word was used just once by Job himself in his very first lament, chapter 3. In Job's heart-wrenching cry for the day he was born to be reclaimed by gloom and utter darkness. The Hebrew word is "redeemed."

At the outset of his pain, the only redemption Job could imagine was to bury his whole life in the grave before it even began.

Now, after all that lament has been poured out before God, somewhere, Job knows his Redeemer lives. His avenger and vindicator.
And that in the end—that means the final word, the end of days—he will stand on the earth, here in reality, in victory over all that is broken and unjust in this world. The word for "earth" can also mean "grave." Job sees him standing victorious over death, over his death.

And after his skin has been destroyed, which is well on the way already, yet in his flesh he will see God. What a claim. What a confidence. He knows he'll have a new flesh, a new body, one that can stand and look right at God.
How does he know all this? This is serious New Testament revelation: Redeemer, resurrection, with my own eyes. "I, and not another." I don't know how Job knows, but he knows.

I know it from New Testament scripture, but I don't think I've ever experienced it like Job, and us with him. Job's heart yearns for it.
Tribulation brings revelation. No kidding.

Job closes out with a warning to his friends. Rather than hound him in his distress, they should take a hint and fear their own judgment.
But what about us? I suggest we dwell here for a while. Let it steep, let it settle.

One thing to wonder about: how were Job's words saved? How is it that this phenomenal revelation made it all the way to you and me to encourage hearts for countless generations?

Malachi 3:16 offers an intriguing insight. Perhaps it applies here, and perhaps it applies to us too:
"Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name."

[End of audio content]

Can you fly this plane? Surely you can't be serious.

I am serious, and don't call me Shirley.

Job 20 | Joy For a Moment

Welcome back to Through The Word Job chapter 20. Today Zophar is back, and he's got one more thing to say. Let's see where we are so far. Oh wait, we already told you we were doing that the whole time before, so let's just jump right in into round two. This one is Zophar's final shot in his second and final speech with Job. Zophar comes in hot.

There's no buildup, no warmup. Just straight fire. If the first round was a warning, this one is a verdict. No softened tone, no careful words. Zophar is done playing nice. In his famous book, The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "The loneliest moment in someone's life is when they're watching their whole world fall apart, and all they can do is stare blankly."

It's not the shattering itself that breaks you. It's the silence that follows—the quiet space where you realize there's nothing left to salvage. And in that moment, you know you'll never be the same again. You'll build something new perhaps, but it will never be what you lost. Job has been sitting in that space, and in the previous chapter, in that silence, that place where no one can understand him, he answers his friends who seem to have it all figured out. Job complains about the brutality of their words, saying, "How long would you torment me with words?" We're tempted to think when we read the words of Job's friends: with friends like that, who needs enemies?

But think for a second about how Zophar feels here. Zophar feels like he's getting attacked. After all, in the previous chapter, all Job does is complain about how he's being talked to.

So Zophar is trying to help Job, but he sees Job wallowing in self-pity. Now Job feels sorry for himself because his friends are there trying to help him.

Well, Zophar opens with a confession—not about himself, but about how offended he is. In verse one: "My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer because I am greatly disturbed. I hear a rebuke that dishonors me, and my understanding inspires me to reply." Translation: I'm ticked. Zophar says, "You've insulted me, Job. I can't stay quiet anymore. This isn't just about theology now; it's personal. Job's words have stung, and Zophar's ego has taken a hit, so he's firing back with a lecture dressed in poetry.

Now, if you've been tracking the friends' speeches, you'll notice something. They're not adjusting. They're not listening. Job pushes back, cries out, pleads his innocence, and they double down—louder, sharper, more confident. And Zophar, he doubles down hard. Here's his central idea right up front in verse four: "Surely you know how it has been of old, ever since mankind was placed on the earth, that the mirth of the wicked is brief. The joy of the godless lasts but a moment." This is Zophar's thesis: wickedness, Job, does not last. Even if you were allowed to laugh for a minute, Job, as a wicked man, it has been short-lived. The wicked's joy burns fast and dies faster.

Zophar is setting the tone for what's coming—a deep dive into the rise and fall of the wicked, and not with balance, not with any kind of nuance, but with a full-throated certainty. He continues in verse seven: "Though the pride of the godless person reaches to the heavens and his head touches the clouds, he will perish forever like his own dung." Yeah, that's what he said. Zophar, with the potty mouth, pulls out the imagery here. The wicked climb high, but they're gonna fall.

And not just fall—they're gonna be flushed away, forever forgotten, unmourned. It's graphic, true, it's intense, but it's also intentional. And make no mistake, he's looking at Job; he's looking him in the eye. He's not just talking hypotheticals; he is talking about Job, not by name, but by implication. The timing, the tone, it's clear who he means.

So he continues in verse eight: "Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he? Like a dream he flies away. No more to be found, banished like a vision of the night.'" He's saying that the wicked are like a bad dream—gone by morning, no legacy, no statue, no remembrance.

But then comes another round of poetic justice about the wicked. In verse 15: "He will spit out the riches he swallowed. God will make his stomach vomit them up." Zophar is painting a vivid picture. The wicked man devours wealth like a glutton, swallows it down, gulping it whole, but God makes him regurgitate it all back up. No satisfaction, no keeping what he's taken.

And now we get a list. The wicked man hides evil under his tongue, loves the taste, and refuses to let it go, but it turns sour in his stomach, becoming poison, rotting him from the inside. Zophar describes a man who hoards wealth, crushes the poor, devours everything in sight, but it catches up with him. God intervenes. And it may be that people with wealth today, you just think they must be evil because they have a lot. Job, after all, was a very blessed man financially, but he was also very righteous. Zophar here is hitting below the belt. He is hitting Job in the pocketbook. "God knows you were a greedy glutton. He saw what the rest of us couldn't see, but now Job, he's taking it all away."

Listen to verse 20: "Surely he'll have no respite from his craving. He cannot save himself by his treasure. Nothing is left for him to devour. His prosperity will not endure. In the midst of his plenty, distress will overtake him. The full force of misery will come upon him. When he's filled his belly, God will vent his burning anger against him and rain down his blows upon him. Though he flees from an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow will pierce him. He pulls it out of his back, the gleaming point out of his liver. Tears will come over him. Total darkness lies in wait for his treasures. A fire unfanned will consume him and devour whatever is left in his tent."

In other words, a rich wicked man might build an empire, but it won't last. The riches he stole will end up in someone else's hands. The stuff he took won't stay with him. He doesn't get to enjoy it, for justice always has the final word. The graphic picture of pulling an arrow out of his own back as he's fleeing is a terrifying one. No matter what Job does, he can't get away from the judgment of God. Even nature itself will rise up to judge him. In verse 27: "The heavens will expose his guilt. The earth will rise up against him." It's like creation itself is vomiting him out. Even the dirt cries, "This man does not belong here."

That's the world Zophar believes in—where evil gets exposed, where God sets the record straight. The sun exposes his dead corpse, peeling back flesh, exposing bones, everything laid out for all to see, his decay a symbol of his guilt.

Zophar's verdict is in verse 29: "This is the portion from God for the wicked, the heritage appointed to them by God." That's it. No more ifs, no more maybes, no turn and be restored, Job—just a declaration. This is what's happening to the wicked. Full stop.

So what do we do with Zophar? Well, first, let's admit a lot of what he says is true. I mean, it's biblical. It's echoed all over Proverbs, Psalms, and the Prophets. God does bring the proud low. He does oppose the wicked. He will bring justice. But once again, Zophar isn't applying this in general; he's dropping it like a hammer on Job, who still was in the very act of scraping his skin with broken pottery, still grieving ten fresh graves, still sitting in silence, waiting for God to speak.

And that's where Zophar gets it wrong. Terribly wrong. He speaks truth, but without mercy, without humility, without the wisdom to say, "All right, Job, maybe I don't see everything." He talks like he knows the whole story, like his theology has no blind spots. But it does.

Truth without mercy leaves scars. And you see, Zophar is caught up in his own feelings here. His own brokenness is tainting the truth of God. His emotional reactivity from being offended and insulted by Job is causing him to speak the truth in anger, not love. He's hurt now, and it's distorting not only what he's saying but how he's saying it.

After all, untempered truth is like salt. Nobody ever shoves a spoonful of salt in their mouth. Instead, salt is used sparingly as a seasoning. That's why Paul said, "Let your speech be full of grace, seasoned with salt." That's the real tension of Job. Not that the friends are speaking lies, but that they're applying truths to the wrong situation, and they're also letting their emotions, pride, and frustration get the best of them. And that's a warning to all of us.

Because we all have a theology. We all have truth we hold onto, but if we're not careful, we'll use it like a sword when we should be using it as a balm.

We'll speak before we've listened. We'll quote scripture instead of showing compassion. We'll assume that suffering is a sign of guilt when it might be something far deeper, more mysterious, even more holy than we can see.

Well, that's Job 20. Zophar has made his final case. No more appeals, no more corrections, just judgment and certainty. But Zophar won't have the final word. Join us for Job's response next time in Job 21 on Through The Word.

Job 21 | When the Wicked Prosper

Welcome back to Job, my friends. Chapter 21. Today, as Job challenges us with some harsh reality: sometimes the wicked prosper. What do we make of it when a bad person is living the good life?

Job is responding to yet another cutting rebuke, this one from Zophar. Job has gone two full rounds with his three friends, and the hits keep coming. All of them intelligent, devout men, all speaking with eloquence and authority.
But for Job, it all feels like they just want him to feel guilty for the bad things he didn't do.

Okay, so now I'm picturing Job in another scene from Airplane. I know it's an old Boomer movie, and I'm not even a Boomer, but there's this scene where Captain Kramer enters the airport to save the day, fighting a swarm of religious nuts with leaflets and flowers.

"Will you accept this? Shove donations for Gut Punch Reverend Moon Scientology Elbow Body Slam."

Yes, I'm interrupting Job with Airplane again. Humor is my coping mechanism. We covered that. But don't miss this: we all deal with well-meaning religious people pushing easy answers to hard questions.

What's amazing is that the Bible gets that Job deals with it and defends them off. No easy answers. He wrestles the hard questions. Now, some of their answers are biblically sound. "God is just." I want the world to work that way.

When I look at the evil perpetrated by the wicked, I want to say he will perish forever like his own dung. Justice. And Zophar delivered it with that confident "I did my own research" energy that we all want to believe.

But for Job, it hit like a Michael Scott motivational speech: confident, bold, and totally missing the point. Job looks around at his world, and the research doesn't add up. What happens in his world? Chapter 21, verse one: "Then Job replied: 'Listen carefully to my words. Let this be the consolation you give me. Bear with me while I speak, and after I have spoken, mock on.'"

"Hey, since you are clearly not here to comfort me, just do this one thing: listen. When I'm done, mock on." Verse four: "Is my complaint directed to a human being? Why should I not be impatient?"

Job is saying, "Guys, you're stepping into this like it's me versus some other guy who needs defending.
"He's not some guy. He's God, and he doesn't need defending. He's not on trial. He doesn't need to be justified." Verse five: "Look at me and be appalled. Clap your hand over your mouth."

They're still not engaging with Job's reality. They're still speaking generally about justice and consequences, like this is all some philosophical exercise. Job says, "Look at me. My situation is appalling. Feel it. When you see something this shocking, you clap your hand over your mouth."
Take the hint from your hand and shut it.

Stop philosophizing and deal with reality. Verse six: "When I think about this, I am terrified. Trembling seizes my body." Job is dealing with reality. He can't escape it.

And not just his own reality, but the reality of those wicked people that Zophar is so convinced will perish like their own dung, their tents consumed by fire. Job points outward to the real wicked people: safe and secure, and they're unburnt tents. If Zophar is right, what's with that? In verse seven:
"Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. Their homes are safe and free from fear. The rod of God is not on them. Their bulls never fail to breed. Their little ones dance about."

Job offers a bitter reality check. "Hey, fact-checker, get in here. Zophar here claims that the wicked have joy. But for a moment, what's the real story out there? Oh, so they're old and powerful, fat and happy. Kids safe, homes safe, healthy animals, dancing children.

"Well, that's odd, isn't it, Zophar?" Verse 12: "They sing to the music of tambourine and lyre. They make merry to the sound of the pipe. They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace.
"Wow. We got all the way to the end of their story, and it's still prosperity and peace.

"What do you make of that?
"Now, does that always happen? No. But it definitely happens. So how does that fit with Zophar's clean-cut theology of righteous cause and effect? And listen to what the wicked say.

Verse 14: "Yet they say to God, 'Leave us alone. We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?'"
Now, that is at best ungrateful and at worst blasphemy. They spurn the Almighty, their creator. And watch carefully their reasoning: "What would we gain by praying?"

Think back to Satan's challenge about Job. He claimed that Job only served God for the gain it brought him—protection, blessing, prosperity. But here the wicked are saying, "I have those things. So what will I gain by serving him?" Notice they prove their wickedness by ingratitude. In verse 16: "But their prosperity is not in their own hands.

"So I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked. Watch this carefully. Job sees through the façade. He's not fooled. The wicked think they made themselves prosper with all their clever schemes. They think they control it, but their prosperity is not in their hands.

So Job steps away. I'm not with them. I don't buy their philosophy. I don't play by their rules.

Job's not tempted to join, but he does wonder why God doesn't act. Verse 17: "Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out? How often does calamity come upon them? The fate God allots in his anger.
"How often are they like straw before the wind, like chaff swept away by a gale?"

Zophar said it's a sure thing, but when? Where are the stats?

Now, some will say, "Oh, they'll get theirs, even if God has to punish their kids." Verse 19: "It is said, 'God stores up the punishment of the wicked for their children. Let him repay the wicked so that they themselves will experience it. Let their own eyes see their destruction. Let them drink the cup of the wrath of the Almighty.'

"For what do they care about the families they leave behind when their allotted months come to an end?" Job wants to see the justice Zophar is so sure of. So why doesn't God just deliver it?

But then, in verse 22: "Can anyone teach knowledge to God since he judges even the highest?" Watch here. Remember that all of this started with a question about Job's fear of God.

But here, just as Job gets very close to telling God how to do his job, he checks himself. "God is judge, not me. He knows, not I."
And yet Job looks all the way to the end of the story and just struggles to make sense of it. Verse 23: "One person dies in full vigor, completely secure and at ease, well-nourished in body, bones rich with marrow.

"Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having enjoyed anything good. Side by side they lie in the dust, and worms cover them both.
"Two bodies dead in the grave. Two stories fully told and totally unfair. Where is justice? When is justice?

"Now, you may have an answer, but let Job wrestle with it. His question is valid.

And then Job turns it back on Zophar.
"I know full well what you are thinking, the schemes by which you would wrong me."

Job sees their scheme to prove his guilt, but he challenges it. A key piece of their evidence is that the tents of the wicked are destroyed. And of course, Job's tent is also destroyed. So do the math.

But Job says, "Produce the evidence. Show me their tents."
Job says, "Ask the travelers far and wide. They all have stories of wicked people spared from calamity. Nobody denounces them. Nobody repays their evil." In verse 32: "They are carried to the grave, and watch is kept over their tombs.

"Look around our world. How many evil dictators ruled into old age, and monuments and parades declare their glory? How many drug lords and mob bosses live and die in luxury? So what do we make of it? Joe bends by asking his friends to stop consoling him with nonsense.

But Job brought up some tough realities. We could rest at ease in our comfortable theology, as Zophar does. But Job forces us to look. The Bible forces us to look. Sometimes—a lot of times—the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. We know God is just, but what do we make of this reality? And the Bible presses us to grapple with Satan's challenge.

If all actions, righteous or wicked, came with immediate consequences, good or bad, and everyone just responded to those consequences, what would Satan say to God?

"They're all in it for themselves. They don't love you. Not a single one has proven it. You never gave them the chance."

The devil is a liar, but he does make a point.

Think about it. How do you know who your true friends are? And how much does it matter to you? Dwell on that. Read Job 21, and we'll meet you next time out in the lobby for intermission number two.

Job 15-21 | Intermission III - Kris, Peyton, & Friends

Hello friends, and welcome back to Job Intermission Three. Today, thanks again for joining the conversation. We just finished journeying through chapters 15 through 21 of Job, and man, what an intense dialogue. Just like before, we're gonna take a little break from the story to process and listen to our own emotions, and we do that by using our acronym E.A.R.

Emote, articulate, and respond. So let's dive right into emote. Kris, why don't you start us off? What stood out to you in this portion of Job?

First, I'd like to emote my feelings about the acronym E.A.R. It sounds funnier every time we say it, but it works. It works. Emote. Okay, the emotional stakes have risen significantly in this act. There are some big feelings, and they are venting those feelings with some serious sarcasm. Some of it's funny, and a lot of it is just cruel. Eliphaz opened the whole thing by calling Job a hot east wind. Joe pushed back by calling his friends miserable comforters. Zophar hit a new low as he described the fate of the godless who will perish forever like their own dung. The emotions are on full vent, and honestly, it's kind of fun, and it makes great drama. Peyton, what struck you?

Man, what really stood out to me is what a punch-up this is. I mean, these guys are going at it at this point, and I think one of the things that really hit me was this is a dialogue. Like, this is not a monologue. We read one chapter a day, maybe in our devotions or whatever it is. We miss the back and forth that happens here. But like, these guys are arguing.

The dialogue really came through for me when I listened back to our guides and I listened to the last seven in a row, all in one long walk that I took. It's like watching a tennis match, and the stakes are high. But for me, the other emote was, man, the gospel breadcrumbs—they are phenomenal. Back in chapter 16, verse 19: "Even now, my witness is in heaven. My advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend." And just relating to Job in that and feeling his confidence in the midst of misery. His intercessor is a friend of his, and I, I don't know. I don't think I've ever felt the power of that truth. Then in chapter 17: "Give me, oh God, the pledge you demand." And I don't think I'd ever connected with that verse that way before. Then 19 was the big one: "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end, he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh, I will see God." Woo. That was good.

I agree with you. I mean, Job is talking like a wounded friend who won't let go of the friendship. He's clinging to what he knows, and I, it actually choked me up a bit because he's saying, "I don't understand what's happening right now, but I know him." And somehow for Job, that was enough to keep him holding on.

And I wanna throw in one more. As we emote, I'm still holding on to this theme of blaming the blameless—the blame story. I'm watching it. I don't fully understand it. I want to know where this is going. There's a whole lot of blame throwing on here. I don't know if you guys ever saw Mystery Men, Dr. Heller. Of course.

Classic.

Blame thrower. I love the blame thrower. But I don't know what to do with that. Here they are throwing blame powerfully, but why? And they won't explain. They just won't explain to Job why. What is the crime? But they have to blame, and it's gotta be important.

All right guys, let's move on to articulate. Remember, this is where we name the weight for each of the tensions and talk about why it resonated.
The sarcasm is interesting to me because it really kind of draws out of me: why do we use sarcasm? Sarcasm is a common tool, but why the digs? Why do we do that in the heat of an argument? And I really think it's because they are opening up. Like Job had said back in chapter 10, "I will give full vent to my feelings." I think that's why we have so many chapters here, 'cause there's a lot of emotion, a lot to let go.

And I think there's some lessons for us to gain from right ways and wrong ways to let some of those feelings go.

And man, letting him feel that you, you let yourself ask some questions that you really need to ask and get it out with God.
And God doesn't just stomp on it with an answer. He lets the vent, he allows it to get out and process in full.

Yeah. I think what really jumped out at me with hearing the emotion in their responses was there are times where their ego has been stabbed, and then the emotions keep rising. The sarcasm, the jabs, the digs, the passive-aggressive behavior—like, it really came alive.
Oh yeah, and they're taking it personal. They're taking it very personally, and they really didn't need to.

And then every pushback becomes so personal to them. Here's what really amazed me: in allowing the sarcasm and allowing some of the venting of anger and frustration, the feelings kind of poured out on the page. And when I leaned into that, the gospel breadcrumbs really came alive with them. I've read those before. I've read Job before, and I've studied, I've analyzed Job before—I should say I knew the truth in those, I knew there were hints towards Jesus, but they never sank this deep. And I thought through why that was, and I realized that I hadn't let them, because I always had my guard up.

You know, that's how we go about life. We keep our emotional guard up, and for me, my emotional guard is usually either deflecting with humor or just kind of blocking with intellect. I read Job, I analyze it, figure out who's right, who's wrong, find the truth. And I knew those verses pointed to Jesus, but I never brought my pain. Not my own pain. Because I wouldn't really, truly let Job feel his pain, and so I never got to the place where I had to bring my own pain to the page, to the experience. And funny enough, part of processing the jabs and sarcasm and feeling the emotion in the room is what really kind of brought some of that out of me, 'cause part of me was like, okay, you wanna bring it?

Let's bring it. And opening up my emotions to frustration and anger actually opened a path for my heart to feel the depth of the gospel itself. Now, I'm not saying vent all your anger all the time. That's actually a really bad idea. But what I am saying is that the drama in Job has a power in that it gives us a safe place to feel, and that's what drama is for. That's why this book was written this way. Even as we wrestle with God's apparent absence, we bring those feelings back to God here in his word, where it's safe to wrestle with God, you know? Like Jacob wrestled it out with God—he didn't even realize quite that it was God.

But when all of his frustration hits a point in his life and he finds a stranger to wrestle out with, it's God that he is wrestling with. And I think that's what we're doing in Job.

That was the second thing that stood out to me: just how much Job trusts God, Job's relationship with God. It reminded me of a close friendship. You know how it is when a friend deeply hurts you and you don't understand it, and it kind of shakes you, but something deeper in that friendship keeps you from walking away. And that's what Job does here. He says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Like, I felt that, Kris. And when he said, "I know that my redeemer lives," there's so much that Job doesn't know. Like, he doesn't know hardly anything. He definitely doesn't know what we know as the reader. He doesn't know what's happening behind the scenes.

He doesn't have the answers, but he knows God. He's walked with God all his life. And so it's kind of like him saying, "I don't understand the silence and I don't understand my suffering, but I know who God is. I know who he's always been to me." And so what jumped out at me was how much he was willing to give God the benefit of the doubt, even in the midst of his suffering. He really was holding on to that one thing while everything else was falling apart.

Yeah, it's really the conflict of his emotions that drives him back to the depth of his convictions. And that's powerful. When he says, "My intercessor is my friend," I was trying to think through how to paint that. And I thought of just when everyone is against you and you have one real friend that just stands at your side—is for you and speaks for you. And he just knows nobody is standing there with him physically, but he knows, "My intercessor is in heaven. He is my friend. He stands for me." He has that in God.

Even as he feels like God is the one who's tearing him apart, he still comes back to that depth of conviction: "I know he stands with me. I know my redeemer lives," and it's so powerful.

I also wanna articulate something that really helped me in thinking through Job this week, and it comes back to the blameless question. It's the difference between cause, responsibility, and blame. Now, we often use these words interchangeably, but they're not the same. And confusing them can lead us to some wrong conclusions.

Cause is physical. It's about what actually produced the outcome—simple cause and effect, whether intentional or accidental. This happened because of that. Cause answers the question: what led to this?

Responsibility is relational and practical. It's about ownership. This happened under my watch or within my ability to address, so I will step in and make it right. Responsibility doesn't always mean I caused the problem. Sometimes I bypass cause and take responsibility simply because I can act to help. It answers the question: what will I do about this?
Blame is moral. It assigns guilt. Blame says you are at fault, and often carries the weight of judgment or condemnation. Blame answers the question: who deserves to be held guilty for this?

And here's where we get into trouble. We assume that if someone is the cause, they must bear the blame, or that if someone takes responsibility, they must be admitting guilt. But those aren't the same. And in a book like Job, that distinction changes everything.

Job's friends make no distinctions. To them, everything is blame. And in their theology, blame works like a physical law—pure cause and effect. For us, when tragedy strikes and your thoughts start circling, trying to figure out what happened, it's crucial to know which question you're actually asking. In conversations, clarify it and recognize this: when everyone avoids blame, no one takes responsibility. Even more, when you can release blame, you make room for something better.

My mom was an amazing woman. One of the most impressive things I ever witnessed was this: when mistakes by her doctors led to serious pain and even sped her death, she understood the cause. She asked for responsibility, but she never blamed. No anger, no bitterness. It was astounding. It's not that there was no blame, but she just left that to God, and that changed her life and mine. Now, what that means for us in Job, I don't quite know yet, but I know that that distinction will help.

As much as I hate to do this, we actually have to end the articulate section. But the lobby lights are flickering, so we have to move on to the final section: respond. Which tensions will you reset, and which are ready to be resolved or released?

Kris, how about you?
I'm gonna start with responsibility. The only way to really make sure that we don't act like Job's friends is to take full responsibility for the times that we have acted like Job's friends. Now, I'm not saying we've acted as badly as they have. They are pretty bad. But I wanna consider how it is that they got that bad. They got this way from their stubborn refusal to ever see or admit that they are wrong at all.

No matter how much Job pushes back, they won't concede anything. And I think that if we refuse to see the Eliphaz in the mirror, we will become that. And if we don't see it, it will get worse. So we have to take responsibility. I recognize when I've done this. I wanna stop. I want to give comfort.

Peyton, what about you?
I'm gonna resolve Job's knowledge of God as the anchor in the storm because, again, that stuck with me in a way it never has. But this time I went with Job there. Like I went with him into the heart of the confusion and pain. I would say for the first time I actually felt what he's feeling. And I remember a time where I felt like I had followed God as close as I possibly could, and yet the day was lost. The battle didn't go my way, and at the end of it, I just felt so betrayed and abandoned by God. And I held on—not like Job did—but, you know, I mean, I was angry at God. I was bitter. I went through a really dark time.

But this book took me back there. It's like two decades ago now, but it was like getting a postcard in the mail that should have gotten to me then but didn't arrive, and I just found it. Like, let's say, you know, I'm cleaning out a loved one's house and I'm like, "Oh, this got returned to them. Gosh, years ago they sent me this postcard. It told me how much they loved me. Man, if this had reached me, it would've changed everything. Our relationship would've changed everything." And I just felt like Job was holding onto something that I needed back then. And if I had gotten this postcard and gone through Job, I would've handled my situation differently. I would have known this is normal—sometimes to go through this absolute pain and confusion and not have God give you the answers, but still just hold on.

Okay, I'm gonna get through this. I just know that he always takes care of me. I know that sometimes things get dark, but God is still the God he's always been.

Actually, something just like that really just happened for me. I was going through my mom's stuff after she passed a couple years ago, and in there was a letter from my dad—it was the divorce letter, when he had given in to her long pushing and signed the divorce papers. And it was bitter. It was a lot of a side of my dad that he never kind of vented and revealed openly to us. It was loving. And there was a prayer in there for me and for my brother. And I don't think I could have processed all that, you know, as I was a teenage kid, but post-processing years later is powerful. And I think for our experience in Job, bringing to the text and to the story some of our old hurts is an important and powerful part of this experience. There are some things that we never, we maybe couldn't process back then that we need to now. And in some ways, Job can act like a letter from God, a story from God, to process some things that we simply couldn't when it happened.

And I'm gonna reset the blame thing 'cause I know we're not done with this. I don't know for sure where it's going, but I know it's important. And also, we're gonna reset the gospel breadcrumbs. They're not done. Every time we've gotten one of those gospel breadcrumbs, he's also dipped back into deep darkness right away. We have to let him go there and keep bringing these things back up and walking through them. I'm holding those breadcrumbs. I know my redeemer lives. I know God will provide the bail money he will post for me. I know that my intercessor is my friend, but that hasn't fixed everything for me yet. I'm gonna hold those as the pain continues, as we walk back into the theater and back into the story.

And guys, it is that time. But before we head back in, as you guys both pointed out, there is a ton of dialogue in these chapters. Now, I've found in my own experience that one of the most valuable tools when processing hard emotions is to just simply talk about it—talk about it with a person that you trust. And funny enough, that's exactly what we get to do in these intermissions. We get to talk about the emotions that we experience. So Kris, I have always admired your ground rules for creating a safe place in small groups. Would you mind sharing that with us so we can add it to our regulation toolbox? How do you have a healthy conversation?
So my three rules of engagement for a good conversation are pretty straightforward, but really helpful: speak with grace, listen with humility, and no shaming.

Speak with grace means be generous with your words—better than they deserve. Encourage, build up, assume the best in others.
Listen with humility means hear them with ears that know that you are every bit as human as they are. Strive to relate. Believe the truth of their pain, even if their logic is flawed.
And very important: no shaming. Shame happens when words make us feel small and want to hide. So use your words to make them feel heard, valued, and safe.

And that's it. I hope that we've given you a good example of it. And that'll close it out for us, guys. We will see you back here in chapter 22.

Job 22 | The Gloves Cut Off

Welcome back to Through The Word. Today we will be in Job chapter 22. Eliphaz is back one last time, stepping it up for round three, and by this point, he's had it. After two speeches filled with theological confidence and sharp rebuke, Eliphaz now returns with his most intense and personal accusation.

The gloves are off. If you remember his first speech in chapter four, Eliphaz came in like a gentle surgeon—cutting but careful. His second round in chapter 15 was more aggressive. But here in chapter 22, Eliphaz drops the scalpel and swings a sledgehammer. And in fairness, he's returning a blow. Job just gave him a beating in the previous chapter. He asks how they can teach about God when they themselves are mortals and probably have sin of their own that they're not cottoned onto yet. So he says, "How can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood." Well, them's fighting words.

This time, Eliphaz doesn't just imply Job is guilty in response. Now he accuses him directly. But before we get to that, he opens with something interesting—a theological warmup in verse one: "Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise person benefit him?" It's a philosophical question, and the implied answer is no.

God does not need us. Even if we're wise or righteous, he's not gaining something. He's God—all-sufficient, all-powerful. So in verse three, Eliphaz says, "What pleasure would he give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless?" He's now laying out a view of God that's high and transcendent, but also detached—almost cold.

He's arguing that Job's claims of innocence don't really matter to God because, after all, God isn't impressed by human goodness.

Now, that sounds really lofty. It makes God sound awesome. But there's something off in the tone. It's starting to feel less like theology and more like weaponized doctrine—like he's using the truth to shut Job down, not to lift God up.

And then comes the sharp turn. Eliphaz stops beating around the bush in verse four and starts naming crimes, queuing up the sarcasm: "Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you? Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless?"

Whoa, this is new. Before, the friends hinted that Job must have sinned—there must be something somewhere—but they never said what he did. Now, my friends, there are sins of commission—sins we commit, things we do—but there are also sins of omission, the sins we leave out.

Well, Eliphaz lists out the sins of omission—things that Job should have done but didn't. He tells us that this triggers the wrath of God, and there is a trigger warning for us here. It gets kind of brutal.

Starting in verse six: "You demanded security from your relatives for no reason. You stripped people of their clothing, leaving them naked. You gave no water to the weary, and you withheld food from the hungry." He's accusing Job of injustice, of oppressing the poor, taking advantage of the powerless. And he's not done.

Verse nine: "You sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless." These are the kinds of sins that the prophets like Isaiah and Amos railed against—neglecting the orphan, oppressing the widow, turning a blind eye to the poor.

But here's the thing: none of it is true. We know that the first chapter told us Job was blameless. God himself calls him upright to Satan. He didn't exploit people. In fact, in later chapters, Job will defend his generosity in detail.
So what's Eliphaz doing here? Well, he sees suffering and he just kind of backfills it with assumption. If Job is suffering this much and we can't put a finger on what he did, it must be something he didn't do. All right, maybe I'm accreting to that, and if Job's punishment is that severe, whatever he didn't do must have been really bad. It's backwards theology. He's working from effect to cause: you are suffering, so let's invent some sin that fits.

But Eliphaz doesn't see it that way. He sees justice. He says in verse 10: "That is why snares are all around you. Why sudden peril terrifies you? Why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you." He's drawing a straight line between Job's suffering and divine judgment: "You're suffering because you sinned, Job. That's just how it works."

Then Eliphaz pivots again. He zooms out and starts describing God's power and omniscience—that means all-knowing. "Is not God in the heights of heaven and see how lofty are the highest stars? Yet you say, 'What does God know? Does he judge through such darkness?'" Now he's putting words in Job's mouth. Job never claimed God couldn't see, but Eliphaz accuses Job of acting like God is blind, like judgment doesn't apply to him.

And then after jab, jab, jab, verse 15: a knockout punch. "Will you keep to the old path that the wicked of old have trod?"

What's this old path Eliphaz is referring to? Well, it's the one where people ignore God. They prosper for a while and refuse to give him thanks, and then get swept away. That's the path he claims Job is on. He even calls out Job by association:

"They said to God, 'Leave us alone. What can the Almighty do to us?' Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things." In other words, the wicked prospered but rejected God, and now Eliphaz is hinting, "Sound familiar, Job? 'Cause it's you."

But then, just when it seems like Eliphaz is done, he takes a turn out of nowhere. We get something different—a tone shift. He offers Job a way out. Verse 21: "Submit to God and be at peace with him. In this way, prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart."

It's almost gentle. Almost pastoral. After all the accusations, Eliphaz extends a hand. "Come back to God, man. Make peace. Listen, like you used to—you've listened to God before, but you're not listening now. Change tracks. Listen. Repent."

He keeps going. In verse 23: "If you return to the Almighty, you'll be restored. If you remove wickedness far from your tent..." Again, it's the retribution formula: confess, repent, be restored.

But then Eliphaz paints a hopeful picture of what Job's future could look like if he did repent. Verse 26: "Surely then you'll find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God. You'll pray to him.

He will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows. What you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways."
It's beautiful. It really is. But it's also built on a flawed assumption—that Job is guilty and just needs to come clean. The pain is his punishment. All he needs to do is say the right words, and the blessing machine will turn back on. That's where the tension lies.

Because here is a man speaking theological truth about God's justice, God's power, even God's grace. And yet these truths are misapplied. Again, they become accusations instead of comfort, pressure instead of peace.
Eliphaz ends like this, verse 29: "When people are brought low and you say, 'Lift them up,' then he will save the downcast. He will deliver even one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands."
It almost sounds noble. "God will even rescue others because of your righteousness, Job." But there's a twist. Because in Eliphaz's world, that is the problem. Job thinks he's righteous. He thinks his hands are clean, and Eliphaz can't accept that.

So this entire speech becomes a subtle paradox: Eliphaz calls Job to become what Job already is. He tells a blameless man he needs to repent. He tells an upright man to return to God, and he has no idea how wrong he is.
That's what happens when we fill in the blanks, when we don't allow God's silence to leave us without answers, and we craft our own.

Well, that's Job 22. Today, Eliphaz finishes his third and final speech, not with mystery, not with wonder, but with moral clarity.

His theology has no gray space, no room for innocent suffering—just crime and punishment, guilt and consequence. But Job's story refuses to fit that mold, and that is why we keep listening.

Join us next time to hear Job's response on our journey through the Word.

Job 23 | Where to Find Him

Welcome back, friends. Job 23 brings us right back into the trial at hand. Have you ever been there on trial? Not in a courtroom, but in a conversation—every eye on you. The air thickened, heavy with accusations. Your heart pounding like a gavel drop. In this court, guilt is presumed. Innocence is yours to prove. Job has been on the defense for seven speeches, and now he's into the third round of accusations.

The latest speech from Eliphaz took a sharp turn to direct accusation. Job asked them to specify the charges, so Eliphaz specified. Job, your sins are endless. You refused water to the weary, food to the hungry. You hurt the widows and the fatherless, and all the while thought God couldn't see. Eliphaz went big. Full Tom Cruise mode. I want the truth. You can't handle the truth. But Job did not order the code red. He didn't do any of that stuff. They presume that his troubles prove his guilt. How would you respond? How will Job respond? Chapter 23, verse one.

Then Job replied, "Even today, my complaint is bitter. His hand is heavy. In spite of my groaning, if only I knew where to find him. If only I could go to his dwelling. I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me and consider what he would say to me."
Job desperately wants to find God, to stand before him and plead his case, to listen to what God would say.

Did anyone else notice that Job completely ignores Eliphaz? All those damning charges? He doesn't even acknowledge them. Why?

I think that Job has figured out that no amount of arguing is going to change these guys. They simply cannot get past the appearance of things. And for them, Job's appearance says guilty.
But Job knows that God is different. He knows that God's court is true and just. God sees the full truth. If only he could find God, go to him, pour out his case to God, and then listen. Back at verse five: "I would find out what he would answer me and consider what he would say to me. Would he vigorously oppose me? No, he would not press charges against me."

It is striking here that Job wants to see his judgment day. That's not the case for a lot of people. If ever you've had a court date set for you, the anticipation is often not comforting. But Job wants his day in court because he knows he will be vindicated. It's worth considering: How do you feel about Judgment Day? And what is the basis for that feeling?

Some commentators see Job here as getting arrogant, so convinced of his own righteousness. I don't know about that. We know from God's own testimony that Job is blameless. We also know from Scripture that everyone is a guilty sinner before God. Romans 3: "All have sinned. There is none good, not even one." So why does Job believe that God won't press charges? Why doesn't Job fear Judgment Day? Is he counting on his self-righteousness to win the day, or on God's mercy? What do you think?

Job pictures God's judgment and sees God not pressing charges against him. In verse seven: "There the upright can establish their innocence before him. And there I would be delivered forever from my judge." Job wants his name cleared for good. And isn't that an amazing thought?

If you have had a court day, if you know what it means to have a record, the idea of being cleared forever is quite something.

It's not entirely clear why, and I don't think Job fully understands why, but Job is convinced that his judgment before God will bring deliverance. And yet, where to find him? Verse eight: "But if I go to the east, he is not there. If I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him. When he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him."
Well, if that isn't the classic problem with God. Search and search—east, west, north, south—nothing.
Watch carefully where Job goes with this. Verse ten: "But he knows the way that I take. When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold."
c
Now, that is some powerful insight into the nature of real faith. Job can't find God anywhere, yet he knows that God sees him everywhere. Do you know that for Job, his awareness of God being there is crucial to his character? And it's also the reason Job knows he'll be vindicated. God knows everything.
Back in verse ten: "When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps. I have kept to his way without turning aside."
Some see self-righteousness here, but Job doesn't brag about his works. He simply says that he follows God closely. I don't think that's earning righteousness. I think it's trusting God for his righteousness. That's our calling: follow Jesus. You say this is Old Testament. The Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 is full of Old Testament saints who walked by faith, and God counted their faith as righteousness.

And look at verse twelve: "I have not departed from the commands of his lips. I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread."

Now there's a statement. I treasure God's word more than I need food. And doesn't Jesus echo that? "Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." And I can't help but wonder how much of the Bible Job had, or how he sought God's words.
And then the struggle. Verse thirteen: "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases."

Even as Job's trust in God finds fresh strength, he runs right back into the same wall. We can't change God. A more literal translation says, "But he is one. Who can change him?" God is God. We are not. We can trust him, but we can't force God's hand to our will. God's plan, not mine.
And for Job, it looks quite clear that God's plan, at least for now, is against him. Verse fourteen: "He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him. When I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint. The Almighty has terrified me."

Job is caught between that deep trust—that seeing God will mean his vindication—and the fear that the Almighty has more terror in store for him. And in one last word of resilience, verse seventeen: "Yet I am not silenced by the darkness, by the thick darkness that covers my face."

Now, there is resilient faith. "I am not silenced." More literally, "I am not destroyed or cut off." The word indicates something severed from its source. For Job, the darkness does not win. Though night obstructs his view, it cannot silence his voice. Though darkness veils his path, it cannot sever his faith. He is too deeply connected to the light.

And I find that a fitting end to a challenging chapter. Job 23 doesn't offer us direct illumination or clear-cut answers. So what do we do with it? We wrestle with it. We let it challenge us. We can't change God's plan, but we can follow God even through the dark. We can love God's word, that is a light unto our path, and trust the God who sees us everywhere, even when we can't find him anywhere.

Do you know that? Does your life show that you know it? And we can contemplate our own judgment day. It will come. And what do you make of Job's confidence about that day? Is he counting on his own goodness, or on God's?

This isn't self-righteousness—it's faith. Job longs for a mediator, an advocate, a redeemer. Job knows that he's not the one who redeems, but he trusts in the one who does. And that faith affects how he lives. It's the very reason that he has lived upright and blameless.
Jesus tells us in John 3 that everyone who does evil hates the light and fears exposure. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that everyone can see that their works were done in God. This is faith: to wrestle with God's silence yet trust his omniscience, to lament his absence yet live in full awareness of his presence.

I can't find him, but he knows the way that I take. Job knows, and I'm convinced that kind of faith is the very reason Job lives upright and blameless. How about you? How do you respond to God's light? Read Job 23. Consider your feelings about judgment day, and I'll see you back here next time.

Job 24 | When Will God Judge?

Welcome back to Job chapter 24. It is raw, difficult, and hits a nerve for me personally. Look around our world: oppression, corruption, cruelty, human trafficking.

And I too ask the question that opens the chapter. Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?

Good questions. So let's remember how we got here. Job is talking and he's partway through his eighth monologue, responding to Eliphaz's third round of accusations. But as I see Job, his eyes are looking past his friends. Now, Eliphaz launched a vitriol of direct accusations, accused Job of great wickedness and endless sin.

Yet Job looked to God's judgment seat. But where to find God? Now, notice the contrast. Job looks forward to his judgment for vindication, but Job's friends are convinced that this is Job's judgment in their mind. This only happens to wicked people because God judges the wicked.

Job pushed back. We've seen plenty of wicked living in luxury and dying with no sign of God's judgment. Job still believes God's judgment will come. He just wishes he knew when. Again, in verse one: Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days? It'd be nice, wouldn't it, if God set a clear date? Then we could all mark our calendars with giant permanent marker: judgment day.

Then no more wondering, or maybe a reckoning every decade to keep people in line. Seems like this not knowing just lets all the people run wild. And as his friends presume his wicked actions, Job looks out to see what the wicked really are doing. Verse two: There are those who move boundary stones. They pasture flocks. They have stolen. They drive away the orphan's donkey and take the widow's ox in pledge.

Have you ever found yourself angry at some injustice, but helpless to make a difference? You can feel the anger in his words. These people harm the most vulnerable. These stories and worse are repeated today in too many places. Moving a boundary stone is stealing property. The orphan's donkey—his livelihood—driven away. The widow's ox that she needs, taken in pledge for a debt she can't repay. Gone.

Now God's law protects the vulnerable, but there are those who care little for God's law. As the wicked gain power, in verse four, the poor go into hiding, and in verse five, like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor go about their labor of foraging food. The wasteland provides food for their children. They gather fodder in the fields and glean in the vineyards of the wicked. The contrast in that picture is striking. A wicked man owns whole fields and vineyards, and the poor family, impoverished by his greed, can only pick leftovers from them. Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked. They have nothing to cover themselves in the cold.

They are drenched by mountain rains and hug the rocks for lack of shelter. The fatherless child is snatched from the breast. The infant of the poor is seized for a debt. Lacking clothes, they go about naked. They carry the sheaves but still go hungry. They crush olives among the terraces.

They tread the wine presses yet suffer thirst. These underpaid workers labor for luxuries they'll never taste. Now, society doesn't have to be that way. Good laws protect the poor, but greed and corruption undermine those laws and leave the poor defenseless.

Verse 12: The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. Now watch this. All that pain and anguish inflicted by the wicked, and the very souls of the wounded crying out. And Job says, but God charges no one with wrongdoing. That's the crux of the whole thing. So much hurt, and the Lord knows who's to blame. He has laws to prevent this stuff, but he doesn't press charges. Why not? Job knows God to be just, but why isn't his justice enforced now? Somebody should do something. Why not God?

Now pay attention here to the light and the dark and those who live by it. Job looks off into the distance once again, and in verse 13, there are those who rebel against the light, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths. I find that a profound phrase: "They rebel against the light." They're not lost. They're defiant, hiding from the light because they love their darkness. Darkness is their cover.

Verse 14: When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up, kills the poor and needy, and in the night steals forth like a thief. The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk. He thinks, "No one will see me," and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, thieves break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in. They want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, midnight is their morning. They make friends with the terrors of darkness. The imagery is dark and veiled.

Murderer, adulterer, and thieves all find home in the darkness and freedom to kill, steal, and destroy. They walk in a world like the upside down, where darkness is home and light is the enemy.

Then quite suddenly something changes in Job's face as a sense of knowing fills his eyes. Verse 18: Yet they are foam on the surface of the water. Their portion of the land is cursed so that no one goes to the vineyards. As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so the grave snatches away those who have sinned.

The womb forgets them. The worm feasts on them. The wicked are no longer remembered but are broken like a tree. So Job does believe in judgment. He's convinced of it, and he describes it with imagery that is stark and sudden: foam disappearing from water like nothing, snow melting in the heat, snatched away, forgotten. Oh, justice will come. Why? Because in verse 21, "They prey on the barren and childless woman, and to the widow they show no kindness. But God drags away the mighty by his power. Though they become established, they have no assurance of life."

Now watch the contrast carefully. Job describes a judgment quite similar to what Eliphaz and Bildad did, but Job recognizes one crucial element: timing. God waits. Watch verse 23: "He may let them rest in a feeling of security, but his eyes are on their ways. For a little while, they are exalted, and then they are gone. They're brought low and gathered up like all others. They're cut off like heads of grain."

"If this is not so, who can prove me false and reduce my words to nothing?" And with that, Job closes again.

He is just as assured of God's justice as any of his friends, with one little difference that makes a big difference: timing. God waits. Job can't understand why, but he knows that's how God is. But why does God wait? Perhaps there are clues right in front of us.

Notice how that little difference in theology affects the four men. The three friends step up with confident assurance that God's justice is swift and definite, and that precise conviction has them convinced that their dear, righteous friend is chock full of wicked sin. And look throughout history: most religions believe in some form of karma or judgment, but that very idea has often excused a callousness toward the poor. Why help if this is God's justice? Recall the premise of this whole story. Satan challenged Job's fear of God, insisting that Job's only real motivation is consequences.

It's not faith; it's just cause and effect. But look at Job now. He has all the consequences he doesn't deserve, and the wicked have none of the consequences they do deserve yet. Job still walks in integrity, totally confused yet totally convinced that God will judge and God will redeem. That's faith.
So what do you think? Why doesn't the Almighty set a clear time for judgment, and how does that weight affect the way you live?

And what does your response say about you? Read Job 24, and I'll meet you back here next time.

Job 25 | The Last Word

Let me start over. I'm gonna do this all over. Welcome back to Job chapter 25, and let's take a deep breath and step back into the ashes with Job. Begin, I promise no more Bildad jokes today. See what I did there? Bildad jokes. That was kind of one today. A voice rises one last time from the circle of friends.

Bildad speaks, and it's the final time, not just for him, but for all of the friends. And what he says here is short—a mere six verses. But don't let that fool you, because sometimes the sharpest blades are the shortest. And this is like the closing line of a courtroom argument, the last nail in the theological coffin. One more swing of the hammer from Job's friends, and then silence.

After three rounds of speeches, three cycles of rebuke theology and accusation, Bildad ends not with a bang, but with a bitter echo. He's not offering new insight here, not even new accusations, just one final summary of what he and the others have believed all along. In these six verses, there's still theology, still tension, and that's where we enter in Job chapter 25. Look at verse two. "Dominion and awe belong to God. He establishes order in the heights of heaven." That's beautiful. Bildad opens by lifting our eyes to the throne of God, where God alone reigns, full of dominion and awe. Even the heavens obey him. The stars follow his order. Everything in all creation bows before him. And if this were a Psalm, we'd be nodding. Dominion, yes. Awe, yeah. Order, of course. Yes. Amen.

But then he asks, "Can his forces be numbered? On whom does his light not rise?" Verse three. In other words, God is everywhere. His essence is countless. His light reaches every corner of creation.

Nothing escapes his gaze. Again, truth, glorious truth, but why does it not feel glorious? Why do I read this, and it feels like I'm supposed to be excited, but I'm kind of not? Well, here comes the pivot, and we've seen this before. In verse four: "How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?" Sound familiar? Eliphaz said nearly the same thing in chapter four, and again in chapter 15. Zophar echoed something similar. It's become the backbone of their theology. No one is righteous before God. No one is pure.

All humans are flawed, fragile, and finite, and honestly, they're not wrong. Scripture affirms this. Romans 3:10: "There is no one righteous, no, not even one." Ecclesiastes 7:20: "There is no one on earth who is righteous, who never sins."

So the theology here is solid, but again, it's not the theology that's the problem. It's the application. Because Bildad uses this truth like a hammer. Job is suffering. Therefore, Job must not be righteous. Why? Well, because no one is. You can see the logic. So he takes that sledgehammer, lifts it up over his shoulders, and swings as hard as he can.

In verse six: "If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot, a human being, who's only a worm?" That's it. Worm theology. That's how Bildad exits—not with comfort, not even with compassion, not with a warning, just this: Job, you're a worm. It's meant to humble Job, to draw the line between God's glory and human filth. And in a sense, there is truth here. We can reach into that filth and pick out a diamond. Compared to God's holiness, we all fall short, every single one of us.

But consider this: Bildad's final words to a grieving, suffering man are to call him a maggot. That's not comfort. That's condemnation cloaked in piety.

And so Bildad leaves the story. He entered back in chapter eight with hard truth, but also a sliver of hope: "If you seek God, you'll be restored." But now? Hope is gone. He's not pointing Job toward healing. He's pointing a finger at Job's filth. He's not offering a path forward. He's closing the case of condemnation. God is holy. You are not. Therefore, to me and all your friends, Job, your suffering makes sense.

But here's the problem: Bildad isn't wrong about God's greatness or majesty. He's not wrong about human frailty either, but he is very wrong about Job. He assumes Job must be guilty because Job is suffering. But he doesn't know what we know. He hasn't seen the heavenly courtroom that we saw in chapters one and two. He doesn't know this is a test, not a punishment. So Bildad applies right theology to the wrong man, and that is where it all breaks down.

So what do we do with this short, sharp-edged chapter? We sit with it. We let the sharpness of his words cut us like they cut Job. We listen to it, and we learn from the contrast. Because what Bildad says is still said today by some. "Hey, you got yourself in this mess." When we look to Christians sometimes for compassion, instead we see judgment. When the AIDS epidemic hit back in the eighties, the church didn't lend a hand or try to ease the suffering.

Instead, we quoted scripture at hurting people. We told them it's because you're gay. We recite theology often to those in pain, and sometimes, like Bildad, we get it right on paper but all wrong in person.

So let Job 25 be a reminder. Truth needs timing. It needs tone. More than anything, it needs love. And it probably goes without saying that it also needs humility, because when we speak for God, we better make sure we're not just echoing our own assumptions.

So Bildad fades into silence, like our words often do too, when they're not mixed with compassion, when they don't give people hope. Six verses. One last theological mic drop. So now the stage is set. Job will speak again, but so will someone else—someone new, someone with a different tone and a different heart. And I won't speak again until we meet him, until we meet again later in this book.

Godspeed on your journey through Job, on your journey through the word.

Job 26 | Whisper & Thunder

Welcome back to The Story of Job. As we turn the page to chapter 26, I want you to see the scene before us with clarity and to feel the weight of it. Look into the faces of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Feel the heaviness of the air between Job and his would-be helpers. As I considered this scene and searched for some way to describe what I feel here, my mind rolled back many years to the moments just before my first real lightning storm.

We had just moved from Southern California to deep Mississippi. I stepped out onto our big screened-in porch, and the air hit me thick as molasses. It was quiet, haunting. The sky was preparing, rumbling.

Now, back here in Job Chapter 26—this is by no means the storm. As we look at the scene before us, we can feel something coming.

We just heard from Bildad, and he finished with a mic drop. In fact, all three of Job's dear friends are done talking. That was it. The third round of monologues opened with Eliphaz finally laying out direct charges against Job: great wickedness and endless sin. That is why you suffer, but submit to God and you'll be at peace. Yet we know that Job is blameless. So Job ignored the empty accusations and longed to appeal to God. If only God would set a time for judgment.

In 25, Bildad stepped up one last time with all the gravitas he could muster to declare that all dominion and awe belong to God. So how can mortal be righteous before him?

Now look at Bildad's face—full of intensity, eyes piercing through Job. "Listen, Job, we laid out wisdom, truth. Are you gonna accept it or not?" Their final speech. Will it work?

Now follow his gaze to see Job's face. What is he thinking? Will he finally concede? Will he accept God's greatness and finally admit that he is not so high and righteous as he thinks he is? Can't quite read his look, but in verse one, he speaks. "Then Job replied, 'How you have helped the powerless, how you have saved the arm that is feeble. What advice you have offered to one without wisdom, and what great insight you have displayed! Who has helped you utter these words, and whose spirit spoke from your mouth?'"

So I don't think it worked. Have you ever listened to a person and at first you think they're being serious, then you start to pick up a little sarcasm, and then you realize they are the living embodiment of the phrase—dripping with sarcasm? That's Job. And don't miss why. Job is good, and he's suffering deeply. After three rounds of speeches, his friends end with "God is great and you are a sinful maggot."

"Wow, thanks a lot, man. You guys helped. You guys saved me, feeble old me. I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't showed up. I don't have that wisdom stuff, but you guys—golly—that's some advice. That's some serious insight. God is great. Never would've thought of that one. Where'd you get that from? Are you all some kind of oracle?"

Job's sarcasm reminds me of that "A Few Good Men" scene where Tom Cruise ends a long, sarcastic monologue with, "Thank you for playing." Should we or should we not follow the advice of the galactically stupid?

Now mind you, the advice in that scene was right, and here in Job, Bildad is right. God is great. Does it help Job for Bildad to restate the obvious? God is great. Now what?

Now as I see this playing out in front of us, there is a long and pregnant pause between verse four and verse five. And the look on Job's face and the tone in his voice go from bitter sarcasm to deep gravitas. For the rest of the chapter, Job will paint a series of pictures that are meant to stir deep wonder at creation's mysteries. The translation and interpretation of some phrases is challenging here, but don't let that distract your focus. The emphasis is awe. Bildad says dominion and awe belong to God. He doesn't know the faintest whisper of God's dominion and awe.

Verse five: "The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them. The realm of the dead is naked before God; destruction lies uncovered."

So the first wonder of creation is the realm of the dead. There is no greater mystery in this life than the grand question of death. That reference to those beneath the waters has stirred up a good deal of imagination and argument among commentators about an actual location for the dead, somewhere inside the earth. I really don't think Job is being specific about anything, nor does he claim to actually know any details about the afterlife. He uses two Hebrew words for the place of the dead: Sheol and Abaddon.

The two words come up several times in the Old Testament, but the details are always obscure. And Job's point is the mystery of it. We don't know, and yet it is all in full view and totally uncovered before God. That's the point.

Job's friends keep telling him what they know, like they know God is great. "You're so smart, huh? What do you know about death? About where the dead go?" And religious people still do this. We talk about God and heaven and hell like we understand the whole story. Really explain it with details? Yes, the Bible gives some initial whispers, but we don't know squat.

Then from death, we move to skies and space. If ever anything should humble you, consider the vast wonder of skies above and the endless mystery of space.

Verse seven: "He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing."
Now that verse put me in awe. "Suspends the earth over nothing"—that is a precisely accurate description of exactly what we know from modern science. Earth hangs over nothing, empty space. And verse 10 will describe the earth as a circle.

For a deeper dive into all the questions around science in the Bible, check out our plan called "Science in the Bible."
For now, Job isn't trying to impress us with his knowledge. He wants us in awe of God's work. As children, we wondered about it, but then a teacher explained gravity and Newton's equations predicted the orbits. So I guess we understand that now, but do we? Do you know how the earth even knows that the sun is there? Einstein explained a theory of general relativity that has the sun's mass warping space like a fabric, rolling the earth toward it like a marble. Okay, so I guess we explained that too, but hold on. You think we understand it? Not even close.

The more science explains, the grander the mystery gets. Astronauts understand the science, but when an astronaut first sees the earth hanging there in endless space, no words can capture the awe.
Verse eight: "He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight."

Now that's a wonder. A single rain cloud can carry over a million pounds of water, all floating. How tiny droplets ride air currents until coalescence gathers them into rain. It's a stunning design, and that's barely the surface of it.
Verse nine: "He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness."

Now Job has us looking up to the moon and out to the sea's horizon. A literal translation here describes a circle inscribed at the boundary of light and dark. View earth from space, and that's precisely right. Now be amazed that Job knew that, but be more amazed that God does that.

Verses 11 to 13 describe the mighty works of God in terms that are both awe-inspiring and a little hard to interpret. "His rebuke quakes the pillars of the heavens. His power churns the sea. His breath makes the skies fair."
Some believe these are all details of the creation story. Others see great battles. References to Rahab and a gliding serpent are extra tricky, with some wild but intriguing interpretations.

But the point here is not understanding the details. It is awestruck wonder at all that we don't understand.

The final verse captures it well: "And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?"
And for me, that contrast between whisper and thunder is the great power of this chapter. Bildad and friends are so convinced that they have God figured out, and we can be just as convinced. We know the Bible, we know science. We have equations and explanations for everything. But do we consider death? Look to the skies, step outside our world and look back, dumbfounded at the beauty and grandeur. And all of that, the very limits of human understanding, barely scratch the surface. They are a faint whisper of him.

And as I read the final verse, I remember again stepping out into the eerie, quiet, and thick Mississippi air. I called my wife and kids out to join me. As we sat on that porch with only a screen to separate us—lightning carries up to a billion volts in one flash. It super heats the air, five times hotter than the sun. And that heat expands the air so quickly it creates a sonic boom, what we call thunder. That night, the lightning lit up the night in every direction like daylight. The thunder engulfed us.

If you think that bit of science explains God's wonders, that's not even a whisper. Who then can understand the thunder of his power?

Job 27 | Irreconcilable Paradox

Welcome back to Job Everyone, Chapter 27. Do you know what it's like to live in an irreconcilable paradox? Two truths, each one just as clear and incontrovertible as the other, set before you. And you can't, for the life of you, make the two fit into the same reality. Yet there they are.

We have started in on Job's final monologue. This one is a lot—six chapters. The last chapter, he vented a good deal of frustration and sarcasm at Bildad for his not-so-helpful reminder of God's greatness. Then Job opened up into absolute wide-eyed wonder at just how great our God's works are. And even that is just a whisper compared to the thunder of God's actual power.

Now, as we watch Job here, he can't help but notice he is not where he started. Well, the situation is generally unchanged, but Job is not. He's not healed. Heart and body are both still quite broken. Watch his focus—he's processing, progressing. That jump from bitter sarcasm to majestic wonder is significant. He's less reactive and more reflective.

Yet as he reflects, he is still faced with these two paradoxical truths. God is incomprehensibly great—that's true. And yet the disaster that is Job's life in this moment is also clearly and inarguably true. Now Job's friends have offered up a simple solution to the conundrum: accept the blame. Clearly, this must be your fault. And they even offer a way out. Just admit guilt, like a prosecuting attorney offering a plea deal. Just plead guilty and the judge will let you off on time served. But you must plead guilty. Tempting offer, except that he's innocent. We know that, and Job knows that.

But would you take the offer? That brings us to Job 27, at verse one: "And Job continued his discourse. As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty who has made my life bitter as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked, and my tongue will not utter lies. I will never admit that you are in the right till I die. I will not deny my integrity."

Job is adamant. He will not plead guilty for sins he did not commit. He may be denied justice, but he will not deny his integrity. And look closely at verse two. It's a sort of oath he's taking, and he grounds that oath to be true on the very truth that God lives. But watch his words: "As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice." He places both truths together in his oath. I know that God lives, and I know just as well he made my life bitter. Now, we may argue that it was the devil who actually did it, but Job doesn't know those details. More importantly, Job doesn't have to know those details in order to know what's right.

Bildad is saying God is great, so he couldn't possibly have done you wrong. Job is saying God is so great that we can't tell him what he can or cannot do. But as for me, I will do right by him. And that means tell the truth. The truth is I'm innocent. In verse six: "I will maintain my innocence and never let go of it. My conscience will not reproach me as long as I live."

Job's in a tricky fix here. If he just confessed to some sin, he would likely get a lot of mercy and compassion from the friends in front of him. Just confess, Job, and we'll help you on your road to redemption. We're here for you. It would go well for him with them.

If he just feared man, that could be an easy way out. But it would be a lie. It would violate his righteousness before God. It's godless, and Job fears God more.

And for the rest of the chapter, Job contemplates the way of the godless. He considers that road as a way of explaining, "There is no way I am taking even the first step down that path." Verse seven: "May my enemy be like the wicked, my adversary like the unjust. For what hope have the godless when they are cut off, when God takes away their life? Does God listen to their cry? When distress comes upon them, will they find delight in the Almighty? Will they call on God at all times?"

Job takes a good look down the road, along the path of the wicked and godless, and he wants no part of it. He's not looking any longer at that part of the road where the wicked sleep safe in their homes or when they're buried in old age. He's looking further down. When God takes away their life, what hope then? Call on God, cry out for his help? Too late. There's no relationship there. Reminds me of the chilling passage where Jesus explains, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers.'" And evil doer is exactly what Job is determined not to be.

Jesus was speaking of the religious hypocrites, but Job is feeling pressed to become a twisted version of a hypocrite—one who admits to doing wrong when he hasn't. So Job returns to the heart of the discussion: God's power. Bildad claims to understand. He doesn't understand. Verse 11: "I will teach you about the power of God, the ways of the Almighty. I will not conceal it.

You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk? Here is the fate God allots to the wicked, the heritage a ruthless man receives from the Almighty. However many his children, their fate is the sword. His offspring will never have enough to eat. The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not weep for them. Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up, the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver."

Pause a moment. Does any of this sound familiar? Job is declaring the fate God allots to the wicked, and if you pay attention, pretty much every verse was already stated in one way or another by his friends. In verse 14, where the wicked man's children will not have enough to eat, Eliphaz said that in chapter five. Heaping up silver and clothing in verse 16—just to give it back—Zophar nailed that one in chapter 20. And terrors overtaking him like a flood in verse 20, that's classic Bildad from chapter 18.

So what's going on? Is Job suddenly agreeing with his friends? It's not entirely clear. Some scholars read Job as being ironic, pushing their own theology back in their faces. I don't know about that. Regardless, it underscores what we've seen all along. Job's friends are largely stating right theology but making the wrong application. Yet Job here has wisdom enough not to ignore the rightness in their theology simply because they applied it wrong. That takes discernment, and in it we see Job reflecting rather than reacting. Whatever Job is thinking below the surface, he wholeheartedly agrees. The fate of the wicked is one he does not want.

Verse 18: "The house he builds is like a moth's cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman. He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more.

When he opens his eyes, all is gone. Terrors overtake him like a flood. A tempest snatches him away in the night. The east wind carries him off, and he is gone. It sweeps him out of his place. It hurls itself against him without mercy, and he flees headlong from its power. It claps its hands in derision and hisses him out of his place."

And that's chapter 27. And there is Job contemplating a set of undeniable truths that he still can't reconcile. And yet, no matter how much he can't make sense of it, he will not make it his excuse. He will not deny his integrity, and he will not dismiss God's power. Sometimes the only way forward through an irreconcilable paradox is faith.

How do you respond to the hard mysteries of life? What do you hold onto when logical explanation fails? You read Job 27, and I'll see you back here next time.

Job 28 | The Hunt For Wisdom

Welcome back to Job, my friends. We have arrived at the point of reflection. Chapter 28 lies at the very heart of Job, deep within the mind that is this ancient book of wisdom.

In fact, mining for treasure is the metaphor that carries the chapter.
To connect with this chapter, I want you to remember a feeling you discovered as a child on your first great search. The closest word I could find for it is an old one: questing. Questing is the relentless pursuit of something hidden, driven by wonder, longing, and the ache to understand. It's amazing what we'll do when that questing itch grabs hold, and what we can find. Job 28 is questing. As you read it, take time to ponder.

This chapter is an interlude, but it's not quite clear whether the words are spoken by Job or a narrator of sorts.
Regardless, the message remains here. The action is paused, and we reflect. It's good timing for me. My life is packed with life right now. I went from a terrible divorce announcement to a beautiful wedding in the same day. I visited the same hospital for one daughter having a baby and another in chemo. By the way, she's got an excellent prognosis. Thank you for the prayer. And she got engaged. That's a lot. But how do we reconcile all the beautiful with all the terrible? It's also good timing for Job. So many arguments made, so much theological wrestling. Yet Job cannot seem to reconcile these two incontrovertible truths: God is good, and this happened.

So here in the middle of Job's final speeches, between his vehement defense in 27 and his final forlorn reflections in 29 to 31, Chapter 28 stops the action like a spotlight moment on stage, a poetic pause, a pivot point for the whole book. As we read through, slow down to really see it. It's meant to fill the imagination. We begin at verse one.

There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. Iron is taken from the earth and copper is smelted from ore. Mortals put an end to the darkness. They search out the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness, far from human dwellings. They cut a shaft in places untouched by human feet, far from other people. They dangle and sway.

The picture is a mine for gold or gemstones. You have to wonder at the questing spirit that drives us old, deep into the caverns. Can you see them? The miner dangling in the darkness with a lantern and a mining pick to do his work, risking life and limb in the blackest darkness to find gemstones and metals that would change the course of history and make them rich. And what a testament to human ingenuity.

In verse five:
The earth from which food comes is transformed below as by fire. Lapis lazuli comes from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold. No bird of prey knows that hidden path. No falcon's eye has seen it. Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there.

For all the wondrous skills of the great birds and beasts, falcon sight and lion's dominion, only humans have taken on this quest, and it is an impressive one.

In verse nine:
People assault the flinty rock with their hands and lay bare the roots of the mountains. They tunnel through the rock. Their eyes see all its treasures. They search the sources of the rivers and bring hidden things to light.
Now that line really stirs up the quest inside. They search the sources of the rivers. Wanna read a truly fascinating history? Look up the search for the source of the Nile. Centuries of searching, and they found it. They brought hidden things to light. Yet for all our search and discovery, there remains one great treasure.

Verse 12:
But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? That question hits the heart of the whole book. Where do we find wisdom? Biblical wisdom is a God-centered mindset that discerns what's truly right and acts accordingly. Knowledge gathers facts; wisdom knows what to do with them. The Bible uses the same word to describe skilled craftsmanship. If ever you've attempted a seriously challenging craft and encountered someone who has truly mastered it, that's wisdom. But who can master the craft of life? Biblical wisdom is also distinctly moral. Worldly wisdom may be clever, insightful, and effective, but godly wisdom is also right and good. The moral question adds complexity and nuance. True wisdom balances all of it.

Here in Job, humans can find just about anything. Where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Now, understanding is the capacity to grasp truths, implications with discernment and moral insight to make real sense of it all.

But where do you find that?

In verse 13:
No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, "It is not in me." The sea says, "It is not with me." It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed out in silver. The key word here is worth.

Quest drives a man into the mine, keeps him coming back. And yet the worth of wisdom—does anyone truly see it? Job's quest has changed. Now the explorer who unearthed great riches from the mine now takes his wealth to exotic marketplaces and distant bazaars, all in search of the one great find: wisdom. But it's not for sale. Land and sea will not cough it up. He offers the finest of his treasures in trade.

But in verse 16:
It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or lapis lazuli. Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold. Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention. The price of wisdom is beyond rubies. The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it. It cannot be bought with pure gold.

That's a hard answer to accept. After all that sacrifice, risking life and limb to accumulate enough wealth to purchase the one treasure, to hear that it's not for sale. And so he asks again, where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky. Destruction and death say, "Only a rumor of it has reached our ears."

Now that line has always intrigued me: destruction and death. The Hebrew words speak of the mysterious place that holds the dead, and I believe that rumor refers to the sense you find only in death's shadow, the funeral, the brush with mortality, that sense that wisdom is near and that you cannot make sense of life without first grappling with death.

The lifelong quest finally has a clue, a rumor, but where does it lead? Verse 23:
God understands the way to it. He alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. And so the quest reaches discovery. God knows the place. He has the map. Of course, he sees everything. Every human has a point of view, but only God has full view. And verse 25 takes us back to the foundations, to creation itself.

When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, then he looked at wisdom and appraised it. He confirmed it and tested it. Now that fascinates me. We usually picture God simply creating the world—speak and it's created. But here we see the craftsman at work: measuring, setting pathways, designing. We see him looking at wisdom and appraising its value. Great care is taken to give wisdom its worth.

Think about that. The mind that designed the atom, set the wavelengths of light, gave DNA its code language, and formed your body in the womb—that mind appraised wisdom above every human treasure. And he gave us one clue.

Verse 28:
He said to the human race, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding."
If the Bible is a mine, Job 28:28 is a Hope Diamond. But like all true treasures, it only shines when you dig deep to find it. So we dug, and here we are. Take a long look. What do you see? The fear of the Lord—that's the answer.

So what is it? Words struggle to capture it: awe, respect, terror. It's well worth noting that this same jewel of a verse shows up four more times, each with slight variation and added insight at critical points in the wisdom books. If you want a real treasure hunt, take time to look these up and compare.

Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, and Ecclesiastes 12:13.
Interesting note: Proverbs opens with "the fear of the Lord" as the beginning of knowledge. Job centers on "the fear of the Lord" as the essence of wisdom. And Ecclesiastes closes with its great conclusion on life: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind"—also translated as "this is what it means to be human."

Go find them. Each one shows off the great jewel in a new light. The light of this book is unique—the light of suffering and of integrity.

The verse says just two simple things. First, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." Great. What does that look like in the struggle? Part two: "to shun evil is understanding." Have you ever asked someone, "Do you really understand, or are you just nodding your head?" When God asks that question, he can tell that you understand.

When you shun evil, someone who gets it doesn't just say God is good; they stop doing bad, especially when times are tough. They say no to temptation. Simple test, but effective.

Now set that in the light of this book. Recall the opening verse of the whole book: "Job was blameless and upright. He feared God and shunned evil." Then God repeated that twice. Recall Satan's challenge: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" That is the point of the whole test. It's the very thing we are supposed to keep watch for. Job fears God. Does he struggle? Yes. Struggle is part of it. As skill and strength are seen in the craftsmanship, the fear of the Lord is seen in the struggle, in the fight here, in the darkness of deep suffering. Wisdom shines.

So does Job really have this unfathomably priceless treasure called wisdom? And if so, why is he still searching for it? That, my friends, is the question. That's Job. We are meant to ponder it.

And perhaps more important is this question: Do you have it? Do you fear God and shun evil? Do you say no when temptation hits? And do you value wisdom enough to take the quest? Well, do you?

Job 29 | Grieving the Old Self

Welcome back to Job Everyone. I have good news. For the first time since our great journey began, we have a happy chapter. Job 29 is full of good things, okay, so it's not quite happy, but it remembers happiness. Job is reminiscing and as he does, we get a glimpse into the past, to the good old days.
It's actually quite nice.

Ever meet someone later in life and realize you never really knew the real them back in their prime when life worked and they really shined? I feel that way about my dad sometimes. Like people missed out. My kids never got to see it.

The promising young diplomat, the kind and gentle father, the world traveler they never saw, the sparkle in his eye when he'd start a story. The kind that makes you wanna sit back and listen.

I remember at his memorial how redeeming it felt that for one beautiful day, the timeline of his life leveled out so that once, the great stories of his adventures weren't overshadowed by the struggles that seemed to fill everything for so long.

For one brief day of stories and pictures, I had my dad back, at least in memory, and all those who met him later in life finally got to meet the real him. I'm guessing there's someone in your life like that, or maybe it's you reading Job. We all meet him at the very worst time of his life and we miss the man he was. I wonder sometimes how Job feels about that. In chapter 29, we find out.

We've seen the suffering. We've heard the arguments, but now Job speaks from the soul. We have just three final chapters of Job speaking. Chapter 28 was the pivot point, and 29 begins his final argument.

It's as though the book thus far has been a court case with Job's whole life on trial.
Yet all the witnesses refuse to address anything but the events of recent days, which by the way, still do not prove his guilt, but also totally ignore an entire lifetime of right living.

Job looks to the witnesses and wonders: Will no one testify to my decades of doing right? Does no one remember who I was?

In a trial, the final arguments offer a certain freedom—freedom to tell the whole story and to put this particular detail into perspective. As we begin Job's final argument, he wants us to see his whole story. More than that, he remembers it for himself. And maybe now, he finally grieves the man he was. What follows reads like a eulogy or a farewell speech, a poetic remembrance of a life well lived, rich with parallelism and vivid imagery that capture not just what Job lost but who he was. We begin at verse one.

Job continued his discourse: "How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone on my head and by his light I walked through darkness."

As we read through the chapter, there will be a swirl of emotions—longing, nostalgia, heartbreak, grief. And the first thing that Job misses is how close God was. God watched over him.

Sure there were dark days, but God's light shined in that dark, and Job could see and walk forward because God's light just seemed to follow him everywhere.

Verse four: "Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God's intimate friendship blessed my house, when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me, when my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil."

Ah, the good old days—your prime. Do you remember it? Hey, some of you're still in it. I'm 50 and still convinced this is gonna be my best decade.
But I think we can all relate to times gone by that we'll never get back. And I am sure Job is looking back with the same nostalgic haze that we all do. But these are his memories. Let him reminisce.

My soundtrack for writing this one was country. It just fit Trace Adkins, "You're Gonna Miss This"—was almost too much. Luke Combs? "Remember Him That Way"? Perfect.

So what do you miss most? For one, I would love to get some of my basketball moves back.
But I think the hardest losses are relationships. Some passed on, others just went different ways. For Job, he misses God. Look at his words: "When God's intimate friendship blessed my house." The Hebrew word is like an inner circle, a deep connection or secret counsel.

That's how Job felt with God. He was close. And think back to how God talked about Job. That relationship was real.

And Job misses his kids—the whole messy house full of them. Looking back, it was like even the rocks and pads were just drenched with blessing.

Verse seven: "When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, the young men saw me and stepped aside, and the old men rose to their feet. The chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands."

The voices of the nobles were hushed and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. So Job misses God, and he misses respect. And Job had it. He really had it. This isn't just nostalgia. Chapter one told us that Job was the greatest man in all the East, and he earned that respect.

Job is no self-righteous Pharisee who just loves to be seen. God declared him righteous. And that was not built on self-righteous piety; it was built on real faith. This is a humble and broken man who misses the man he was. This is honest grieving.

That's important. If life puts you in a place of grieving the old you, whether it's disability, divorce, or just old age, if you grieve, then let it be honest grieving. Don't let nostalgia paint a hero that you never were. But also, don't let false humility make you downplay the man or the woman you actually were.
The Bible calls for honest and sober reflection. Job did have respect, and he misses it.

Verse 11:
"Whoever heard me, spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me because I rescued the poor who cried for help and the fatherless who had none to assist them."

Now Job begins to remember why he was respected. He did right. He rescued the poor and the fatherless. He helped. That was real. Verse 13: "The one who was dying blessed me. I made the widow's heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing, justice as my robe and my turban.
"I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy. I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked, snatched the victims from their teeth."

Can you see the man Job was? I think you would've liked him. He was the real deal. He's grieved the man he was, and now he grieves the ending he thought he'd have but never got. Verse 18:
"I thought I will die in my own house, my days as numerous as the grains of sand, my roots will reach to the water and the dew will lie all night on my branches."

I thought the end—Job, the end Job, so far himself was the beautiful picture from the Psalm. Job, so far himself was the—the end Job, so far himself was that beautiful picture from Psalm one. The tree planted by streams of water, the man who abides in God's word.

Doesn't every godly person want that? In verse 20: "My glory will not fade. The bow will be ever new in my hand. People listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel."

After I had spoken, they spoke no more. My words fell gently on their ears. Hey, I get this. It feels good to know people listen, that your advice really helps people. Words were always helpful, never harsh. They fell gently. They made a difference. People wanted to hear him. Verse 23: "They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain."

When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it. The light of my face was precious to them. I chose the way for them and sat as their chief. I dwelt as a king among his troops. I was like one who comforts mourners.

And that was Job's identity. It's how he saw himself: helper to the needy, comforter to those who mourn. And isn't that God's calling—to reflect his image as comforter to our souls? Why would God take that away?
What good could come from putting the old me to death? And that's why this is a grieving: Job's identity—nearly everything about the man he saw himself to be—has perished.

So what about you? This may sound like a strange question, but have you grieved the loss of yourself, the man you were or the woman that some people will never get to see? You lamented that some friends will never get to meet the person you see in yourself? Maybe it's time you did.

I don't know your life, but I know plenty of ways to lose the person you were. Or maybe it's a role or a relationship, a marriage, some part of your identity—gone. And if we don't grieve well, that can lead to all kinds of coping mechanisms and failure to launch.

And if that's you, don't shortcut the process. Put on something nostalgic. Read Job 29 and feel your feelings.

And I'll meet you back here next time.

Job 30 | The Last Lament

Welcome back to the Book of Job. Chapter 30 is heavy. The whole book is weighty, but this one is pure lament. We're in Job's final argument, chapters 26 to 31. Chapter 29 was nostalgic grief, remembering who he was. Now, chapter 30 moves into raw lament, reckoning with who he is now.

And this chapter is all lament. I'm telling you now so that you'll know how to process the chapter. If there's a message from God here, perhaps it's permission to feel your feelings and to recognize that lament is a language of faith. Did you know that the Bible is full of lament, often from its most faithful heroes? Lament is the poetry of a grieving, but God-fearing heart, a vital step on the path to redemption. This is Hebrew poetry. Job's pain won't be explained. It will be felt through images and metaphors, rhythms, and repetition.

Now Job's lament will be a bit rough in places, as is pain talking, and pain is not pretty. As we listen, try to react with the same compassion that you would show to a friend in pain. Let Job talk. As he does, he will paint pictures not to tell us what to think, but to help us feel what he feels. It reminds me of something that helped me through one of the hardest stretches in my own life. We were in a season of instability, bouncing job to job and house to house with no real home at the time. I struggled to express how I felt until a picture popped into my head.

It's like we're a houseplant, uprooted for replanting, but left with roots dangling, desperate for home soil. And somehow that picture really helped.

It's like finding the right word. After enduring a trauma some time ago, my feelings felt all over the place. And it was my friend Peyton who said, "That's grief, brother."

And as he named the five stages, I saw them. Yes, that's how I feel.
Job is also grieving. Grieving for his children and servants, grieving the man he was and the life he lost. And as he does, he will paint several pictures to help us relate and to help him process.

The first picture is a direct contrast with what we just read. Recall that 29 ended with Job reminiscing about how people listened to him expectantly. It wasn't a pride thing, just nice to be heard, respected. That was then. This is chapter 30. So let's walk through Job's grief, one picture at a time, starting at verse one.

"But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would've disdained to put with my sheepdogs. Of what use was the strength of their hands to me, since their vigor had gone from them?"
Picture one is mockery.

Job has gone from the pinnacle of respect to the butt of the joke. If you've been mocked, you know it's not just rude, it's personal. It's disrespect. Does it matter who disrespects you? Of course it does. Job knew these young men and their fathers. They weren't even hireable. In his pain, Job recalls just how low they once were. Watch for the poetic repetition of the word "they." Notice the rhythm and emphasis.

Verse three:
"Haggard from want and hunger, they roamed the parched land in desolate wastelands. At night in the brush, they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the root of the broom bush. They were banished from human society, shouted at as if they were thieves. They were forced to live in the dry streambeds, among the rocks and in holes in the ground. They huddled among the bushes and huddled in the undergrowth, a base and nameless brood. They were driven out of the land.

And now those young men mock me in song. I have become a byword among them.

A byword means that the ragged little street kids are telling Job jokes. I think that each of us naturally holds our own name in special regard, and it always perks our ears to hear the way others use it. Job's name was respected. Now it's an insult.

These kids are literally singing songs to mock him. In verse 10:
"They detest me and keep their distance. They do not hesitate to spit in my face."

Now that is the height of disrespect—to spit right in his face and without hesitation, like it's nothing, like he's nothing.
Now to picture two, and it is a graphic scene of a man under siege and defenseless.

Verse 11:
"Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off restraint in my presence."
The image of a bow is a striking one. A bow is a weapon for hunting and defense. For an archer, it means confidence under attack. Job sees himself under attack. The following verses make that clear.

Yet as he reaches for his trusty bow, he finds it unstrung, useless. And the one who loosed the string is God.
Job fills in the word picture with more detail, and all of it underscore one terrible feeling: Job feels defenseless.

Verse 12:
"On my right, the tribe attacks. They lay snares for my feet. They build their siege ramps against me. They break up my road. They succeed in destroying me. No, they advance as through a gaping breach. Amid the ruins, they come rolling in. Terrors overwhelm me. My dignity is driven away as by the wind. My safety vanishes like a cloud."

Job sees his life under siege, his enemies succeed, and his dignity vanishes. And now to picture three: Job's life ebbing away, gripped by unrelenting suffering. This one is visceral. A more literal translation says that his soul is pouring out, spilled with no hope of recovery.

Verse 16:
"And now my life ebbs away. Days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones. My gnawing pains never rest. In his great power, God becomes like clothing to me. He binds me like the neck of my garment."

Job feels his sufferings as though God has grabbed his clothing and pulled tight on the neck, like God himself is constricting him. And here Job has it out once more with God. Watch his words carefully as he switches his references to God from "he" to "you," and watch again for that poetic repetition to drive it home.

Job isn't blaming God indirectly. He aims right at the source, and he gets harsh.
Is it sin to accuse God so directly? The text doesn't say, but like hearing a friend vent, we're just going to let Job speak.

God can handle it, so let it out. Job, verse 19:
"He throws me into the mud and I am reduced to dust and ashes. I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer. I stand up, but you merely look at me. You turn on me ruthlessly, and with the might of your hand, you attack me. You snatch me up and drive me before the wind. You toss me about in the storm."
I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living. And then a plea to God for just a little common compassion. Verse 24:

"Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man when he cries for help in his distress. Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?"
In other words, come on, Lord, I had compassion on them. Don't I deserve a little compassion from you? Verse 26:

"Yet when I hoped for good, evil came. When I looked for light, then came darkness. The churning inside me never stops. Days of suffering confront me.

I go about blackened, but not by the sun. I stand up in the assembly and cry for help."

Now watch here for two poetic devices: contrast and parallelism. "Hoped for good" and "evil came." Each line builds on the last, not just repeating, but intensifying the feeling.

Job's pain is echoing back from every wall with rhythm and structure.
"I have become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls. My skin grows black and peels. My body burns with fever. My lyre is tuned to mourning and my pipe to the sound of wailing."

So one final and woeful word picture. Job describes two musical instruments: a lyre or harp and a pipe or flute.
I relate to this deeply. Job calls them my harp and my flute—the music of his soul. For me, music is always there inside me.

But the music inside Job, the instruments that play from within, now play nothing but songs of grief and weeping. They wail from within loss, hurt, a cold and broken hallelujah.

Disrespected, defenseless, undone, unheard, and now wailing. Job walks through the picture book of his own story, and he lets it all out.
How do we respond to Job 30? Well, it's not a problem to solve. It's a lament to feel, to be mourned. Perhaps your hurts need a good picture to help you process, like an emotional Polaroid. You may relate to one of Job's, or ask God for your own. A journal helps, so does a good friend. I often find my best word pictures as I simply talk it out.

Pictures may not get us out of our problems, but they do help us through. I'll see you and Job next time.

Job 31 | The Final Plea

Job 31 today, his final chapter, one last heartfelt plea. And for me, this is now my fourth attempt at this guide. The earlier attempts were decent, but something was missing. Then one of those surprise alignments of life and scripture, and it clicked like finding that one connector piece in a puzzle that clicks the whole picture into place—not just for this chapter, but in some ways for the whole book.

I hope it clicks for you as well. We left off five chapters in on Job's longest monologue. He grieved the loss of the man he was. He lamented the sorry form that he's become. And he closed chapter 30 with the very music inside him tuned to mourning and wailing.

Look at him. Job is spent. His own soul pulls him downward—who he was, what he is. And from that deep sorrow, verse one: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman." Pay attention to timing here. Job cannot make sense of how he got from then to now, so he thinks back: "I did everything right. I didn't even lust."

Now, I used to read verse one as a lesson in defeating lust, which is good. But Job isn't teaching us sin prevention. He's wondering why his self-control didn't prevent this tragedy.

Job thinks over our allotted lot from God in verse three: "Ruin for the wicked and disaster for wrongdoers." Job knew that sin ruins things. In verse four, he knew that God sees his ways and counts his every step. He feared God the right way.

So why didn't that work?
What's Job doing here? It took me three drafts to see it, but it finally clicked. He's retracing his steps to make sense of tragedy. If you've known trauma, you get it. After a loss like Job's, there's this thing we do: a sort of retrospective guilt inventory for survivors. We replay it and wonder, "If I hadn't said that, if I hadn't gone there..." or "If only I had been there." I know that one. I call it guilt wrestling. It's human nature. The tragedy was totally out of our control, but the mind scrambles to blame something, and the heart goes in loops of self-blame and self-defense.

For a believer, that cycle is tied closely to the knowledge in verse four: that God sees our ways and counts our every step. We think back, "Maybe God is punishing me." And well-meaning religious people make it worse. Like in Job, for some, Eliphaz and Bildad are friends. For others, they are voices in our own head.

But we know from the book's very first verse that Job is blameless. This is not his fault. Job knows that in theory, but why won't God say it? He looks around: "Why am I on trial? Why am I blamed and still no charges? How do I defend myself against that?"

Fire returns to Job's eyes and fierceness to his words. Fine. If they won't name the charges, I will defend myself on all possible counts. If this be a courtroom, then hear my final plea. Now, an innocent man stands accused. Defense to count one, verse five: "If I have walked with falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit, let God weigh me in honest scales, and he will know that I am blameless."

Accusation one is deception. But Job is a man of truth. It's tough to prove in man's court, so he asks for God's scales. God will know he's blameless. Notice the word. This is about blame.

Defense two, verse seven: "If my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled, then may others eat what I have sown and may my crops be uprooted."

Accusation two is straying, leaving God's path. Again, Job cut it off at the root. He refused to let his heart follow his eyes. Job's words are raw. If I'm guilty, bring the consequences. But I am innocent.
Defense three, verse nine: "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door..."
Accusation three is adultery. It starts not with lust but with a heart enticed, lingering around for a chance encounter. Job knew that, and he shunned evil because he understood.

If he didn't, verse ten: "Then may my wife grind another man's grain and may other men sleep with her."
I warned you it's raw. And don't miss the poetic power of repetition and parallels that drive Job's whole defense. Notice the "if-thens" of sin and consequence.

But think about it. Why is Job listing sins and consequences? Watch in verse eleven: "For that would have been wicked, a sin to be judged. It is a fire that burns to destruction. It would have uprooted my harvest." Watch this: Job can make sense of punishment for adultery. Sow to the flesh, reap destruction. And he desperately wants consequences that make sense.

He took every precaution, prevented every sin to prevent consequences. Think back to the man who offered sacrifices for his kids after every celebration, just in case. But this still happened, and it doesn't make sense. Job pleads innocent.

Defense four, verse thirteen: "If I have denied justice to any of my servants, whether male or female, when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?"

Now remember, these are all possible accusations. Accusation four is injustice. Job fought for justice. Why? Because he feared God. And knowing your maker means knowing we all have the same maker. It means knowing both your equality with and your responsibility toward all people.
On to defense five, verse sixteen: "If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary, if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless..."

Accusation five is greed, selfish living in a needy world. But Job gave. He helped and guided. In verse eighteen: "But from my youth, I reared them as a father would. And from my birth, I guided the widow.
If I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing or the needy without garments, and their hearts did not bless me for warming them with the fleece of my sheep..."

Once again, innocent.

Defense six, verse twenty-one: "If I have raised my hand against the fatherless, knowing that I had influence in court, then let my arm fall from the shoulder, let it be broken off at the joint, for I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor, I could not do such things."
Accusation six is abuse of power. What stopped him? He feared God. See a pattern yet? Innocent.

Now, defense seven, verse twenty-four. Again, repetition and parallels drive it home.
"If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high."

Accusation seven is the big one: idolatry. Job understood that his wealth was not his security net—God was. He understood, so he shunned evil. Innocent.
Defense eight, verse twenty-nine: "If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him..."
Accusation eight: rejoicing when your enemy is harmed. Germans call it Schadenfreude.

In verse thirty: "I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against their life." Job, in his house, always offered hospitality regardless of the company. In verse thirty-two:
"No stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler."

Job freely offered food and lodging, and his benevolence was extended to enemy or stranger. Innocent.

Defense nine, verse thirty-three: "If I have concealed my sin as people do by hiding my guilt in my heart because I so feared the crowd and so dreaded the contempt of the clans that I kept silent and would not go outside..."
Accusation nine is the fear of man that makes you hide sin. Not Job. All of Job's fear went to God alone. That is his defense. That is his integrity. He is blameless.

Now watch the closing. Job sees the grand courtroom around him, and he closes his final defense with deep conviction. Verse thirty-five:
"Oh, that I had someone to hear me. I sign now my defense. Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser put his indictment in writing."
Job wants this official, signed, and he wants God's answer—official, written—because this trial is real to him.

And I can almost hear Job's words echo through time: "Let the Almighty answer me. Write my charges and answer me."
Can a man deliver a subpoena to God? Answer me. I don't know if he should, but Job just did. If he could actually get that indictment in writing, man, Job would just about dance with it. Verse thirty-six: "Surely I would wear it on my shoulder. I would put it on like a crown. I would give him an account of my every step. I would present it to him as to a ruler."

Job would wear that indictment because it would show everyone the truth: he is blameless.

Then it's as though Job forgot one, so to miss nothing, he adds count ten, the number of God's law. Accusation ten is sin against the land. Yes, God deeply cares for how we treat his creation.

Verse thirty-eight:
"If my land cries out against me and all its furrows are wet with tears, and if I have devoured its yield without payment or broken the spirit of its tenants, then let briars come up instead of wheat and stink weed instead of barley."
The words of Job are ended. There is something brilliantly ironic about Job's final, fitting consequence ending with stink weed.
Job feared God. That's wisdom. He shunned evil. That's understanding. So why didn't it work? Why did this happen beyond all reasonable consequences?

When we know from sentence one that Job is blameless, nothing he ever did deserved this. The court is silent. Will God respond?

On a personal note, I will share with you that this chapter was a game changer for me. And I had to write and rewrite this script several times to get it. So much of our struggle in the aftermath of tragedy is over blame. And the chapter doesn't settle the question, but it sure brings up the right one.
After tragedy, how do we respond to blame? Remember, answers will come, but the journey comes first. Read Job 31. Consider your final defense, and stay tuned. This case isn't closed yet.

Job 22 - 31 | Intermission IV - Kris, Peyton, & Friends

Hello everyone and welcome back to the Intermissions Today. We are heading back into the theater lobby one last time because we're nearing the grand conclusion of this drama. Don't worry. You'll catch Kris, Peyton, and me again in the final reflection at the end of the book. But for now, we turn to Job chapters 22 through 31. And this is where things get heavy. The speeches are sharper, the tension is thicker, and Job—we say this all the time—but he is not holding back anymore. So let's step into our emote, articulate, respond process. And once again, work through everything we've heard and felt. Let's emote, Kris. Where are you at in this stretch of the story?

Well, where I am at is a little bit emotionally wrecked. I actually was on a flight that gave me enough time to listen to all 10 of these together, and man, the nostalgic reflecting, mourning the man that he was. I actually was in a puddle of tears remembering my dad, and I was sitting there looking around like, nobody look at me. Everybody watches screens, because I was remembering the man he was, and realized that there is only one other person left in the world who actually remembers him, and my kids missed him—their Mr. Granddad. They didn't get to see the role model he could be—not only because he died younger, but because towards the end of his life, uh, he was robbed of himself, who he was, by mental illness.

And then moving forward to 31, right where we walked out of the theater just at the end: I was wrecked. Job's final defense, the guilt inventory. Wow. And I actually want to look back at this emotional tapestry that's been woven. It's been like a symphony.

The instruments weaving together: strings, woodwinds, bass, percussion. Each one pulls at the heart, draws out pain, lament, passion, nostalgia.

And as you listen through Job, you feel that ebbing and flowing as the conductor weaves it together. You feel the mastery of the whole story. And then quite suddenly, with all that gravity set heavy upon us, chapter 28 stops us in music. There's something called a fermata when a dramatic score suddenly halts. All you hear is your own breath. 28 lifts us to ponder and then takes us deep into the mind to find wisdom. Where's the jewel? Death whispers a hint. Then, of course, God has it. He knows, and wouldn't you know, he told us the answer: "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding." And we look at Job, and you have to ponder: Has the answer been in front of us from chapter one, verse one? Job fears God. He shuns evil. And then from deep in the mine, we're transported back in time, and for the first time we get to meet the Job that was.

And the score moves to nostalgic grief for the self he lost. And nostalgia makes way for the man he's become: defenseless. "Here I am, Bildad. Behold, the maggot. The music of my soul is broken." And in 31, Job stirs his last gasps of energy for one final defense—a full and thorough guilt inventory: 10 accusations, 10 vindications. And don't miss the bookends from Eliphaz's indictment: "You can't be blameless" to Job's final plea: "Let God weigh me in his scales. He will know I am blameless." And that is the emotional arc, and it is so powerful. Peyton, how'd you feel?

You know, coming out of the theater and into the lobby this time, this round hit me harder than any of the others. The further in we go, the more alive this dialogue becomes.

And what stood out to me in this section is just how locked in everyone becomes. Like, Job doesn't move his position at all—not even a little. Everyone digs in deeper, entrenched in their positions. Often in these scenarios of our own suffering, I feel that we just don't learn, like we're not really listening. At the beginning of Job, his friends are grieving with him, sitting in the ashes and trying to make sense of everything so they can help him. Somewhere along the way, it stops becoming about helping Job, and now it's just about being right. And like boxers go into their corners, Job is convinced of his innocence.

His friends are convinced of their theology. And instead of meeting in the middle to solve something, they come in the middle to exchange punches and then sit back like boxers, all busted up, waiting for the bell to ding again in their corners. And when you stop being open and you just want to be heard, you're not really hearing the other person. You're just waiting for your turn to respond. Maybe that's why we don't learn anything.

But the second thing that stood out to me is the way this is written, like the masterpiece it is. I've been reading C.S. Lewis's Introduction to Milton's Paradise Lost, and he talks about epic poetry. How it's designed—Job is not just dialogue on a page. What really jumped out to me is that it is epic poetry. And believe it or not, poetry like that would be recited out loud and get this—from memory. Epic poems like Homer's Iliad or Milton's Paradise Lost were meant to be set out loud. Rhythm was key.

And throughout history, this is the highest form of entertainment, like what movies are for us today. But the goal is not to make you think, "Oh, this is beautiful poetry." It was actually to make you forget it was poetry at all.

You're meant to be caught up in the story and transported into it. So this time, more than any other, I felt like I was transported into the private conversation with the grieving friends, sitting in the ashes of suffering with Job, because I was listening to it as I was on a walk. And I wasn't analyzing it anymore. I was experiencing it like I was actually in the room with them, feeling the weight of what was being said and grappling with the same confusion they were all feeling, trying to make sense of everything. And I think that's what God actually wants from us—to experience this stuff we often stuff down.

Job is designed for us to think we're coming into something that's not about us. It's not my argument. I don't have a dog in this fight. I'm not the one trying to defend myself here. But what actually happens, because our defenses are down, our issues come up. And as soon as our issues come up, we're like, okay. We had a listener who was tuning in, saying, "Man, I felt at the end of that chapter that I just needed some hope."

We will. Our story here will get to hope. And for those who really felt the weight of that, I remind you there's always light on the horizon. We'll get to that part of the story. But you have to take the down road up, or you will hold on to all of those emotions unprocessed, and they will keep coming out sideways in your relationships. That's why we need it.
So let's take that experience and move to articulate. Kris, let's go with you first.

Okay. I've been waiting for this one. It's our final encounter with the friends, right? And I just can't let them leave the stage without asking: What is wrong with the gospel according to Job's friends? These guys are believers, and they're not all condemnation.

They offer gospel: "Submit to God and be at peace with him. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored." That's New Testament grace. Eliphaz has it right. So why does it hit so wrong? I'm amazed yet again at the wonder of God's timing in my own life. This very week I'm wrestling with the same issue with a Christian friend. The two of us were talking through our response to another Christian friend in the midst of personal tragedy.

And we're genuinely trying to help, find the cause, place the blame, offer forgiveness. And I found myself trying to defend the character of my friend who's been through this against the well-meaning Christian who just couldn't accept that our friend was blameless. "Everyone's guilty of something, right?" And all the while, he's also insisting, "Hey, we want healing. Our goal here is forgiveness." But he just could not accept that our friend is not somehow to blame. "Surely they did something that we just don't know." And I'm sitting there stunned because it's like Eliphaz is sitting right in front of me. He's saying the right Christian things. So why does his gospel hit so wrong?

Watch Eliphaz. Every time he shares the gospel hope—"God will forgive"—he always begins with guilt. This whole section opened with Eliphaz saying, "What would God gain if you were blameless?" In other words, even if you were blameless, what's that to God? So, Job, just admit you're not. Repent. In the gospel according to Eliphaz, blameless doesn't matter anyway. So admit you're guilty. Now, this is where it gets personal for us: Does the gospel begin with guilt? Think about it. Romans Road, Four Spiritual Laws—all have sinned—but Jesus died, so now you can be forgiven. Amazing. I love the gospel. For a Christian, the gospel is the answer, right? But watch what happens when a Christian responds to tragedy with that gospel.

Something terrible happens, and being human, I search for cause. I review my steps. "What if it's something I did?" or "If only I had...." Even if it's not my fault, I still feel guilty, you know, like survivor's guilt. But I'm a Christian, so what do I do with guilt? I take it to the cross, and the cross reminds me I am guilty. Jesus died for me, so I'm forgiven. But for me, still reeling from the tragedy, I can't seem to get past step one: I'm guilty. Wait, back up. So God's message is saying that this terrible, random thing is my fault? And Eliphaz says, "Yeah, but it's okay, because you can be forgiven." Okay, that's good. But you're saying it is my fault. I'm forgiven, but I'm also to blame. And we get stuck there. We took it to the cross, but now we're just staring at Jesus in his suffering. "I'm so sorry, Jesus. I, I guess I did this, but I don't even know what I did." And whether I'm arguing with a well-meaning friend or with my own conscience, the blame loop is painful.

If the gospel is supposed to tell me I'm forgiven, why do I still feel guilty? If Jesus says I'm worth dying for, why do I feel like a worthless sinner? So my question is: Is that the whole gospel? Does the gospel begin with guilt? Even in tragedy, I don't feel like we have the answers yet, but I think we're asking the right questions. After tragedy, how do we respond to blame? What is the gospel for this?

You know what's so crazy about that, Kris, is even if the tragedy is not significant, even if it's just a small trip up, a small sin, a little thing—I had a conversation not even a week ago with a student who was struggling with something he messed up, and he felt disqualified from teaching. But everything that I heard from him in that conversation was blame and shame. Not once did he utter the words of grace.

And in youth, I see it in so many young people's lives: the weapons, the choice weapons of Satan, are shame and blame. He pushes people into these shame and condemnation circles that just go around and around and around, and always they ignore grace—one of the most important elements of the gospel. And I truly believe that the number one battle in youth and with the majority of believers is just believing the whole nature of grace itself and what that does.

Yeah. If you think about that in terms of Ephesians 6 and our spiritual armor, salvation is a defense. It's our helmet, and our righteousness—righteousness not our own, from God—is a breastplate. It protects the heart from Satan's weapons of shame and blame.

Peyton, what about you? What do you want to articulate from these chapters? Yeah, along those same lines, I mean, I really loved what Kris brought out about Job's relationship with the Lord and the timing of it. When Kris brought it up, it was just so good because in the middle of that argument about blaming and shaming, Kris brings out that Job is not being presented as perfect. He's not sinless or untouchable, but rather Job's wrestling with the fact: "But I've trusted God"—like, not just as a one-time deal or even in his mind, but his entire life was this lived-out expression of real faith. And that's what makes this whole thing hit a little harder for Job, because he's been walking with God. And so what you're seeing in Job is not an argument for perfection, but Job is revealing trust under pressure—faith that doesn't have all the answers but still refuses to let go of God. Like, that was super powerful for me. And honestly, I think it makes Job feel a lot closer to us because that's what faith looks like for most of us.

We don't always understand who God is or what he's doing. But through these experiences—and let's be honest, just the painful ones, but especially the painful ones—our view of God develops. Uh, we get to know him through the fellowship of his suffering. And it's like we go on our own journey from the simplistic faith of Job's friends—the need for all the easy answers—into this deep faith that Job has. It reminded me of something that C.S. Lewis said in A Grief Observed: "My idea of God is not a divine idea. It has to be shattered time after time, and he shatters it himself."

Guys, we are running out of time. The lobby lights are beginning to flash, signaling us to go back in to the final act. It's incredible and amazing. So we're going to move into our response section. Peyton, we're going to go back to you. Uh, what do you want to resolve, release, and reset?

You know, the last time I resolved it, if someone's mean in the delivery, you can disregard the message. This time around, it looks like Job actually made the same resolution I did. And I like that, because someone sent me a really rude text this week, and I didn't even dignify it with a response. But neither did Job. Like, he just ignores the words of Bildad and doesn't dignify what he says. And sometimes that's the best response to somebody who's being rude. Uh, saying they're not worth your time is going too far, but saying their words aren't worth a response can be very biblical.

You know, rockstar Sting said it this way: "It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile."
Yeah. You know, it's interesting. That same resolution really helped me in that conversation with the Eliphaz in my life. I just had to let it go. Like, I couldn't win the argument, and I just had to let it go and move forward.

And it was really helpful for a friend who is suffering to recognize the difference between character and reputation. And sometimes you can't control your reputation, but if you walk in your character, you can trust God with your reputation and you just gotta let go of what people say.

All right, but for me in our respond section, I'm going to reset one more time on the blame question. I feel like we've made some serious progress, but I'm still not resolved on this one. I know that the gospel is key, and we have to figure out exactly what is wrong with the gospel according to Job's friends. Does the gospel start with guilt? And if not, why do we always start there? I know that I'm a born sinner, but is there some part of the gospel that goes before that, back to something foundational?

I also want to resolve on Job 28. It's so critical because we can read this entire book and still come away saying, "Did I actually get any answers? Do I understand this now?" So the question is: Do you understand? And the answer in Job 28:28 is not simply explaining or answering the question. The answer is: shun evil. That is understanding. The answer is found in your life. For Job, the answer is found in his life. He did shun evil. He did fear God.
All right, guys, the lights are really blinking now. It's time to head back in. But before we head back into the theater one last time: emotions are powerful. They're deeply tied to our experiences. And in these intermissions, we've been modeling a process—EAR: Emoting, articulating, and responding.

Working through what we feel in real time from the Book of Job and talking it out like we've done is just one of the ways to do that. There are actually all kinds of ways to recognize and understand what's going on inside us.

For myself personally, journaling has been huge. It's how I slow down, process, and put words to what I'm feeling.
Yeah. Journaling, I think, is a fantastic way—especially for articulate—like, to put it into words. For me, the emoting comes best with music. Like, just put some music on and go for a run with some music. And man, sad songs say so much. Sometimes it really helps.

Yeah, I think for me, I have to go away and process. I have a rule that I will not deal with conflict or anything like that unless I have first slept on it, which is kind of like old, you know, proverbial wisdom. I actually find when I sleep, process everything, and I have a much different perspective the next day. It's usually more balanced and wise.

And, you know, I also want to recognize, as we're talking about healthy coping mechanisms, that there are just as many unhealthy ways to cope as there are healthy ways to process: addictions, porn, venting anger on your friends. So the key here for us is to recognize the unhealthy ones and replace each one with a healthy coping mechanism. And even our journey through Job might be one of those.

We gotta get back in our seats. Time to enter into the final journey, our final act in the Book of Job. Get your hearts ready. This is the big one.

Job 32 | Speak Up Young Man!

So I guess it's my turn. This is Noah, by the way. We met at intermission, and I'm back for six chapters. Why am I here? Well, there's a new guy in the story. His name is Elihu, and up until now, he hasn't said anything for 31 chapters, not a word. And apparently he's been here the whole time. So why now? And why did he wait?

Well, Elihu is younger, significantly younger, and that's probably why Kris and Peyton asked me to do this one. They're kind of old, and it's definitely why Elihu stayed quiet out of respect for his elders. Out of humility, three long rounds of speeches have come and gone, and Job just finished six long chapters.

And Elihu listened to all of it, but now there's a long pause. So how do you know when it's the right time to speak? I'm the sort of personality that waits for my turn. Let others talk first. So I relate to Elihu here, but I do have an opinion, and so does he.

So let's start in at verse two.
But Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. As Elihu steps forward, it's important for us to feel what he's feeling. He's angry, and not just that. Job in verse two. He was angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. He was also angry with the three friends because they had found no way to refute Job and yet had condemned him.

Did you catch that? Elihu is frustrated with everyone. He's upset with Job for defending his innocence more than defending God's justice. And he's upset with the three friends for condemning Job without actually proving anything. I think that's fair. Job has put all his focus on defending his own innocence, and the friends, they're acting like they're both judge and jury, but they have no real evidence. So in verse four: Now, Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he.

In that culture, age meant authority, and elders spoke first. But like a teapot left too long on the flame, Elihu's patience has reached its limit.
Time for us to sit back and listen to him. He begins at verse six.
"I am young in years and you are old.

That is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know.
I thought age should speak. Advanced years should teach wisdom,
but it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty that gives them understanding."

There it is. Elihu flips the assumption. Wisdom isn't just found in age; it's found in the spirit. The breath of the Almighty gives understanding. Verse nine: "It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged to understand what is right." In other words, you had your chance and you blew it. Elihu isn't speaking because he's older or louder. He's speaking because he's convinced God's spirit wants him to.

Then comes one of the most relatable lines in the whole chapter: "I waited while you spoke. I listened to your reasoning, and while you were searching for words, I gave you my full attention."

Ever been there, waiting to speak in a hard conversation, biting your lip, giving everyone else their turn, hoping someone says what needs to be said? You can almost picture Elihu pacing in the background of chapter 22, sighing in chapter 15, watching, listening, waiting. But finally: "Not one of you has proved Job wrong. None of you has answered his arguments." That's the indictment. Guys, you didn't refute Job. You just accused him loudly, repeatedly, but you never once clarified the charges against him.

Then in verse 13, Elihu warns them what not to do. Remember, he's angry with the friends for condemning Job without actually proving him wrong. And Elihu feels like they're leaving it up to God to close the case, but that's not fair to Job. It's condemnation without evidence. So in verse 13: "Do not say, 'We have found wisdom.' Let God, not a man, refute him." In other words, don't pretend like you have wisdom and just settle your case there when all you've really done is run out of arguments.

You tried and you failed.
Elihu is bringing something new in verse 14: "But Job has not marshaled his words against me, and I will not answer him with your arguments."
That's key. Elihu's not just another critic echoing the same old lines. He brings a different message, and he's not going to accuse Job of some secret sin the way they all did. And having set aside all of the broken arguments, he turns his gaze more directly to Job in verse 15.

"They are dismayed and have no more to say. Words have failed them. Must I wait now that they are silent? Now that they stand there with no reply?

I too will have my say. I too will tell what I know, for I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me. Inside, I'm like bottled up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst."

Now that picture helps us feel what Elihu is feeling. Look at the men before us. The three friends are in shock, sidelined, and dumbfounded. But not Elihu. His eyes are fierce. His words are strong. These words have been fermenting inside him, like wine kept too long, and the pressure is building. Elihu feels it; he has to speak. He has to bring clarity to this mess. And in verse 21:
"I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone, for if I were skilled at flattery, my maker would soon take me away."

In other words, if I just got up here just to play favorites or sweet talk to win friends, God would take me down. For Elihu, this is not about taking sides. It can't be.

Justice is blind, and God does not play favorites. And Elihu is convinced that these words he's about to speak are from God. So what are the words? Well, we don't know yet.

The chapter's done, and Elihu is still building up to his point. Then, what do we do with Elihu? First, he's different. He's not an echo. He's passionate, thoughtful. Sure, he is a bit full of himself, but give him a break. He's young. Elihu brings a fresh energy. He's frustrated with Job, but not dismissive. Frustrated with the friends, but not hopeless.

And though his speech will be long—really long—he brings something new. Elihu will wrestle with suffering, with purpose, and with the justice of God. He's raw, he's intense, and he's worth listening to.

But here in chapter 32, it's all wind-up.

But Elihu teaches us this: If we're going to speak, especially in hard moments, it must be with truth and with the spirit that gives it weight.
That's Job 32. I'll see you next time in 33 when Elihu finally makes his point.

At least, I hope he does.

Job 33 | The Gospel According to Elihu

Welcome back to Job, everyone. Noah Short here with you again for chapter 33 and our second look at the young man Elihu. So far, we're not quite sure what to make of him. He's got momentum now.

There's something burning in his chest that he's gotta get out. He's also angry—angry at Job for justifying himself and angry at the friends for condemning Job without actually refuting him. Also, he keeps saying he's going to speak, but hasn't quite gotten to his main point yet.

Have you ever had someone approach you in a time of trial, but you're really not sure what they're after? Are they here to comfort or confront, to offer compassion or press you for confession?

Interestingly, commentators don't agree on Elihu either. Some point out he's never corrected in the book—not by God, nor by Job. And they take that to mean his insights must be right. Others think the opposite: that his words are so off base, they don't even warrant a response.

But one thing is clear: he will have some profound things to say. So let's let the young guy speak for himself. We begin at verse one.
"But now, Job, listen to my words. Pay attention to everything I say. I'm about to open my mouth. My words are on the tip of my tongue. My words come from an upright heart. My lips sincerely speak what I know."

So Elihu is bold, but he's also sincere. The message burning in his chest is real.

He's probably nervous, but he also has a sense of conviction that's rather endearing. He's taking the stage in what feels like a big trial, so he brings some drama. There's a bit of theater in his approach, but still honest.

Verse four:
"The spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
Answer me, then, if you can. Stand up and argue your case before me. I'm the same as you in God's sight. I too am a piece of clay.
No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy on you."
Clearly, it's important to Elihu to establish a level playing field—we both are clay, we both breathe God's breath.

And that matters because when someone speaks with you—not down in arrogance or up in flattery—it opens space for dialogue.
Then Elihu starts subbing up Job's argument, like he's inviting Job to hear his own words and realize what he said. Verse eight:
"But you have said in my hearing—I heard the very words: 'I am pure. I have done no wrong. I am clean and free from sin.

Yet God has found fault with me. He considers me his enemy.'"
Elihu was clearly shocked that Job would say such a thing. And yes, that was a fair paraphrase. Job has said things like that—not in pride, but in pain, in confusion. But Elihu challenges him on it.

Verse 12:
"But I tell you in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal."

That's his first rebuttal to Job: "You're wrong because you've forgotten just how much higher God is. He's not your peer. You can't just drag him into court."

Then he asks a piercing question in verse 13:
"Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one's words?"
You can feel the tension between Job and Elihu here. Elihu just pressed the wound of Job's deepest frustration. God's silence. Job had been so close to God, and now nothing. And the longer heaven stays quiet, the more Job has slid from trust to protest to accusation—and that really bothers Elihu.

Verse 14:
"For God does speak now one way, now another, though no one perceives it."
That's different. Elihu isn't accusing Job of secret sin like the others. He's saying, "Job, maybe you're missing how God is already speaking." That's a fresh take. Verse 15:
"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings."

Now, Elihu isn't saying every dream is from God, but he does believe God can speak through dreams or fear to get someone's attention.
Verse 17:
"God does this to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword."
Notice Elihu's focus isn't on punishment but rescue. God warns to turn people from pride and save them from the pit. That's a different lens on God's silence. And in verse 19, it's also a different view on suffering.

"Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones."
He goes on, "Food is repulsive. Their flesh wastes away. They draw near to death." But again, the purpose isn't wrath—it's rescue. And then in verse 23, we get a twist of grace.

"Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, and he is gracious to that person and says to God, 'Spare them from going down to the pit.
I have found a ransom for them.'"

Now hold on. Read carefully. A one-in-a-thousand messenger tells the poor sufferer how to be upright.
Isn't that what the gospel does? Shows us how to be right with God?
Could this be one of those gospel breadcrumbs Chris was talking about?

Remember, this was written millennia before Jesus' life. And notice the messenger does two things: he speaks grace to the sufferer, and he prays to God to spare them from the pit—as in, saved from Hell.
And watch how "I have found a ransom for them." A ransom is a payment made to save someone. Talk about a breadcrumb—that's about as gospel as it gets: a ransom. Now, I doubt Elihu fully understands the whole gospel, but he does have some key puzzle pieces. You jigsaw fans know the feeling when some major pieces click together. He may not know that ransom will be Jesus on a cross, but he's onto something. And if you have never really taken the gospel to heart and applied it directly to the pain in your own life, then please read and reread these verses: Jesus is your ransom.
You are saved from the pit.

And watch the results in verse 25:

"Let their flesh be renewed like a child. Let them be restored as in the days of their youth."
That sounds a lot like being born again. God renews and restores. Verse 26:
"Then that person can pray to God and find favor with him. They will see God's face and shout for joy. He will restore them to full wellbeing."
Now that sounds like a person saved.
Notice that instead of blaming the sufferer, Elihu insists that God uses the suffering as—as C. S. Lewis said—suffering is God's megaphone to a sleeping world.

Now watch the response of the rescued one. Verse 27:
"And they will go to others and say, 'I have sinned. I have perverted what is right, but I did not get what I deserved. God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life.'"
That's confession, gratitude, a life in the light. It sounds like someone saved by grace.

Now some commentators are split about Elihu here. Some read pure gospel. Others think he's angling for a confession, using grace to nudge Job toward guilt. They see this confession of "I have sinned" as Elihu sort of feeding a script for Job to confess that he has sinned.
You know the gospel is always true, but is it right to use the gospel to guilt someone into confession? And is Elihu doing that? I'm not sure, but I do admire his conviction.

Verse 29:
"God does all these things to a person—twice, even three times—to turn them back from the pit, that the light of life may shine on them."
Thus far, Elihu's message isn't blame; it's salvation. And that's new from Job's friends.
He closes with another plea for Job to listen. And in verse 32:
"If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak up, for I want to vindicate you."

Did you catch that? "I want to vindicate you." That's exactly what Job wants. And Elihu is saying, "I'm on your side."
And he's not done. He's still got four more chapters in him.

So what do we make of this new voice with a new approach? Is Elihu truly different, or just a more eloquent version of the friends? Is he offering grace or simply a more persuasive push for confession?

We'll find out soon. Join us next time for Job 34, when Elihu rides again.

Job 34 | God in the Docks

Welcome back to Job. No short. Here again with chapter 34, and today Elihu speaks again. Last time we heard Elihu the comforter—thoughtful, sincere, and hopeful. He offered a picture of God who rescues, a God who used his suffering not as a punishment, but as a tool to save. It was a fresh voice filled with grace, but now it's the same voice, but the tone has changed.

The temperature is changed. Elihu's softness is turned to righteous fire. Have you ever been in a classroom when the teacher slams on the brakes and says, "That's it, everyone listen up"?

That's the energy in Job 34. Something has been bothering Elihu, and he's about to call it out.
To understand why, think back to chapter 30. Job was in lament, but in the pouring out of his grieving soul, Job said some things that didn't quite feel kosher. He accused God quite directly. We let it go at the time, but listen to his words again.

"I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer. You turn on me ruthlessly with the might of your hand. You attack me."

Job goes on to accuse God of intending to kill him. Is he allowed to say that? C.S. Lewis has long been respected as one of the great Christian thinkers of modern times, and yet Lewis once wrote a book under a pseudonym called "God in the Dock." It's a raw, emotional response to the loss of his wife. The title refers to a place in a courtroom where the accused sits. In other words, Lewis put God on trial.

The irony is that years before, Lewis had defended God's goodness in his book "The Problem of Pain."
But when his wife died, logic collapsed and emotion took over. Lewis didn't lose faith, but he did vent his pain toward God.

In Job's lament, he too put God in the dock and called for the Almighty to defend himself. And Elihu listened intently.
Elihu began with words of grace and compassion—very nearly the gospel. But he simply cannot let Job's words go unchecked.
Now Elihu does not accuse Job of hidden sin, but he can't stay silent when God's justice is challenged. Chapter 33 was Elihu the comforter; chapter 34 is Elihu the cross-examiner.

And he begins with a call to the entire courtroom. Verse one:
"Then Elihu said, 'Hear my words, you wise men. Listen to me, you men of learning.'"
Who captures the room? All eyes are on him. Verse three:
"For the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food. Let us discern for ourselves what is right. Let us learn together what is good."
I love this picture. We all know how to test food to see if it's gone bad. You taste it. Elihu wants to test Job's words. Taste them with your ear. Judge them carefully. He's not testing Job the man. Elihu respects him. He's testing Job's words, and that matters. This is the first time anyone has separated what Job said from who Job is.

It is a respectful approach, but it doesn't pull punches.
Now Elihu is quoting Job.

Verse five:
"Job says, 'I am innocent, but God denies me justice. Although I am right, I'm considered a liar. Although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.'"

Now, to be fair, Job did say things similar to that. Elihu is mixing quotes and summarizing, but Job said it. Sort of. Sure, Job said them in pain, but he said it—words spoken against God. Elihu will not let go.
Then comes verse seven: "What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water?"

That's vivid. He pictures Job gulping down bitter resentment and complaints one after another. Elihu has been watching grief turn into protest and protest into something worse.

Verse eight: "He keeps company with evildoers. He associates with the wicked, for he says, 'There is no profit in trying to please God.'"
That's a big accusation to Elihu. This is where Job crossed the line. He's not saying that Job is wicked or has wicked friends. He's saying that the statements Job made put him in the same category. He's saying, "Job, listen to your own words. You sound a whole lot like people you don't want to sound like—people who say, 'What's the point of following God if it only brings suffering?'"

To Elihu, that's dangerous ground. The courtroom has been flipped. God is no longer in the dock. Job's words are.
And to drive home just how wrong it was to put God on trial, verse 10:
"Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong."

Elihu's righteous anger is rising. You could hear it in his voice. Elihu isn't just correcting Job. He's standing up for the name and character of God.
Verse 12: "It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice."

Elihu has drawn his line in the sand. God is just always. If something is wrong, it is not on God's side of the scale.
Verse 13: "Who appointed him over the earth? Who put him in charge of the whole world?"
Pay attention to Elihu's logic here. No one appointed God. He's not a steward entrusted who must give account, and he certainly doesn't have to report to us.

Verse 14: "If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all humanity would perish together and mankind would return to the dust."
It's a sobering reminder. God owes us nothing, not even life. We breathe because he breathes into us. God doesn't stand trial under us. We exist under him. He is the very source of all justice.
In verse 17: "Will you condemn the just and mighty one?"
And Elihu goes on: God judges kings. He shows no favoritism. He is just.

Verse 21:
"His eyes are on the ways of mortals. He sees their every step."
The God who sees every step sees yours too. Even in suffering, nothing is hidden, nothing is missed. Verse 23:
"God has no need to examine people further that they should come before him for judgment. Without inquiry, he shatters the mighty and sets up others in their place."

This is interesting. Elihu is saying God doesn't need a trial to get to the truth. He knows it already, so he has every right to punish the sinner without a trial. Remember that Job wanted God to pronounce the charges. Elihu says God doesn't owe you that.

In verse 29:
"But if he remains silent, who can condemn him?"
That's the heart of it. Job is frustrated at God's silence, but Job, you cannot condemn God for that. He does not report to you or owe you a response.
And then Elihu proposes a hypothetical in verse 31:
"Suppose someone says to God, 'I am guilty, but I will offend no more. Teach me what I cannot see. If I have done wrong, I will not do so again.'"
Elihu imagines a penitent man before God confessing and asking God to help him get it right. Perhaps that's what he wants to hear from Job.
But instead, he sees Job demanding justice on his terms.
Watch his words in verse 33: "Should God then reward you on your terms when you refuse to repent?"

Watch this: For Elihu, demanding mercy on your own terms is not real repentance. It's like pleading with the judge: "I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. Also, I'm gonna need those forgiveness benefits delivered ASAP."
So what were the terms that Job demanded? Think back to his closing remarks. Job said, "Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser put his indictment in writing."

Those are demands. And just thinking about Job's demands gets Elihu's fire going. He closes with strong words in verse 36:
"Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man.

To his sin, he adds rebellion.
Scornfully, he claps his hands among us
and multiplies his words against God."
Man. That's intense. Job wanted charges. Elihu just pronounced them.

He calls Job sinful and rebellious. Yes.
Why? Job spoke words against God. For Elihu, no one gets away with that.
Elihu's ears tested Job's words, and Job failed.
Now we're no longer separating who Job is from what Job says. His words are enough to condemn. Job went too far.
So what do we do with Elihu in this chapter? His gospel was so good and gracious. So what happened? Did Job cross a line that God can't let go? Or is it just Elihu lying? His zeal to defend God's justice is commendable, but is it misdirected? It's hard to say just yet. I have known good, God-fearing Christians who speak the gospel with loads of grace but cross their line and they breathe fire.

If you talk to someone suffering what Job suffered, would you talk that way?
I agree with Elihu: God owes us nothing. Demanding mercy on our own terms is wrong. But is Job actually doing that, or has youthful zeal gotten the best of Elihu?

I guess we'll have to keep listening. Read Job 34, and I'll see you next time.

Job 35 | Do You Hear Yourself Job?

Welcome back to Job. We pick up at Job 35, halfway through the grand speech of Elihu. One statement in chapter 34 hit maybe a little too close to the heart for Job—back in verse 29: "But if God remains silent, who can condemn him?"

If we could see Job's face when Elihu said that—the silence of God has sat with Job like an open wound in his very soul. For Elihu to even mention it is surely poking the wound. Job also must wonder: Is Elihu inferring that I condemned God? I would never do that. Sure, I said some things, but I would never go that far.

Yet as we look back to Elihu, he stands his ground. He heard Job say some things—rough things. Job is an esteemed elder, a wise mentor. Have you ever been shocked by the words of someone you respected? Elihu was, and he did not forget. He finished out chapter 34 with a scathing rebuke to Job: "To his sin, he adds rebellion and multiplies his words against God."

So who's right? Job or Elihu? I'm not sure, and as I read Job, I don't think it's our job to figure out who's right in every sentence. There's a time for that, but here the text doesn't say. It simply presents each point of view for us to consider. And right now we have these two.

There is Job, a righteous man once—great. Now in the ash heap and desperate to hear God speak. We listened as his cries echoed into the silence: "Why? God?"

But now we listen to Elihu. He heard Job and offered grace, but some of Job's words he just cannot overlook—words against God. And now Job will listen. Job 35, verse 2: "Do you think this is just? You say, 'I am in the right, not God.'" Wow. I can almost hear Job thinking: I never said I'm right and God is wrong. But Job did say God is wrong to him.

It's interesting to hear how Job's words sounded to others.
Job also said things like: "God destroys both the blameless and the wicked. He mocks the despair of the innocent and blindfolds judges. If not he, then who? And does it please you, God, to oppress me and smile on the plans of the wicked?" So yeah, Job said things. Verse 3: "Yet you ask him, 'What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?'"

Wait, what? I never said that not sinning is pointless. Of course you shouldn't sin. Think back—Job insisted: "I will maintain my righteousness" because he values it. And again, he also said that even if he washed clean, God would plunge him in the mud. But he said that in anguish.

Yet Elihu—who heard it?—and it sounded to him like rebellion, complaints against God. "What do I gain by not sinning?" It may not be a quote, but it's what Elihu heard, and he's not letting it slide.

In verse 4, he addresses Job and his friends. For Elihu, this issue is bigger than one man's suffering. It's about how all of us relate to God when things go wrong. And he starts with perspective. Verse 5: "Look up at the heavens and see. Gaze at the clouds so high above you."

At this point, all eyes look heavenward—picture the skies and all their grandeur. Then consider Elihu's question: "If you sin, how does that affect him? If your sins are many, what does that do to him?"

Ponder that one. Almighty God, way beyond the skies—an unspeakable majesty. How does sin affect him? Of course sin matters to God, but does it affect him? It's a humbling thought.
And in verse 7: "If you are righteous, what do you give to him? Or what does he receive from your hand?"
That's a deep thought. God is no less when we sin and no more when we do right. His throne is unmoved. God is above it all.

In verse 8: "Your wickedness only affects humans like yourself, and your righteousness only other people."
So our good and bad behavior affects people, of course, but not God. And I think Elihu's point is: If we haven't given God anything, then he doesn't owe us anything. Now verse 9: "People cry out under a load of oppression. They plead for relief from the arm of the powerful. But no one says, 'Where is God my maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than he teaches the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds in the sky?'"

This is deep. So think it through—Elihu is challenging those who cry out for relief from God. They can say nothing about relationship with God. They want God to fix things but never seek their maker to know the songs in the night.
I love that phrase—faith sings even when we can't see past our troubles. Yes, life is full of both beautiful and terrible. Yet God gives us songs. He teaches us and makes us wise.

Verse 12: "He does not answer when people cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked."
So Elihu explains God's silence as a response to our arrogance. When we cry to God out of our pride or entitlement, we assume that God owes us an answer. It's that same arrogance from chapter 34 that demanded God's mercy on our terms. But who says God owes us anything?

Verse 13: "Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea. The Almighty pays no attention to it."
That's harsh. God ignores them. But when our mouths say "Help" and our hearts say "If you don't fix it my way," it reduces God to a transactional relationship. So how should God respond?

Now watch verse 14: "How much less then will he listen when you say that you do not see him? That your case is before him and you must wait for him."
So now Elihu calls out Job directly. "Job, listen to your own words. You said you can't see God." Job did complain in 23 that he goes east, west, north, and south and cannot find God. "You complain that he makes you wait for trial."
Yeah, Job 24—he wished God would set a time for judgment.
ElihU says that's arrogant, Job, and why would God listen to that?
Now I can't help but glance over at Job and wonder how that one hit.
Job is desperate to hear from God, and Elihu calls him arrogant. And he's not done. He quotes Job again in verse 15: "And further, you say that his anger never punishes and he does not take the least notice of wickedness."

That is serious. Back in 24, Job said that the souls of the wounded cry out and God charges no one with wrongdoing. We gave Job grace at the time, but maybe Elihu's right? Maybe Job should be called out.

Elihu sums it up in the final verse: "So Job opens his mouth with empty talk without knowledge. He multiplies words without knowledge."
Wow. Come to think of it—Job's been complaining about silence, but he hasn't stopped talking. Maybe he should cut the empty words and listen.
But look back now at Job. I think that last one hurt. Yes, he questioned God's timing, but he also declared his conviction that God will judge justly. In that same chapter 24, he said that God does judge—just not on our timeline.
Elihu's claim of Job saying God never punishes is flat wrong. It's one thing to be judged for your words, but to be judged for what someone heard wrong is quite another.

If Elihu was listening so well, why doesn't he remember Job's deepest convictions? Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him. I know that my redeemer lives.

There's a good lesson here about the way we listen as believers. Elihu's quotes are mostly right, and yet they misrepresent Job. There's no context or balance. Job wrestled openly with two truths tough to reconcile: God is just, but this world is not just—not yet. God will judge, but I don't see him judging.
Now Elihu heard Job, but he didn't hear him through. He latched on to what sounded wrong to him, and that's all he remembered.
And yet Elihu also makes a good point: God owes us nothing, and he certainly doesn't owe the arrogant an answer. So why do we seek mercy on our terms instead of seeking him?

So who's right? Well, it's a good thing I'm not in charge. Maybe Kris knows, or Peyton—I don't know. They haven't told me. Meanwhile, I think I hear a faint rumble of thunder and electricity.

Job 36 | I Will Ascribe Justice

Welcome to Job 36. No with you again, and Elihu back with us again too. Elihu Smith, if you're still counting. And before we start, I have to admit, I'm still struggling with what to make of this guy. Do you ever listen to someone who has a lot to say and plenty of conviction to go with it, but you just can't decide whether to agree, challenge, clarify, or all of the above?

And once you're in this far, you really have no choice but to just hear 'em out. That's how I feel about Elihu.
You started off humble, listening and waiting for his elders for quite some time. But as he listened, he grew frustrated, and conviction stirred like the spirit was pressing him to speak.

And I respect that. I think every young person knows that feeling of struggling to be heard among elders, and Elihu has something worth saying.
In 33, he got about as close as the Old Testament gets to the gospel. It was gracious, and 34 was good too. He defended God's character against some dangerous things that Job had said.
But that's where I started to wonder. It's that moment when you're listening to someone and everything they say sounds totally right, except you're not quite sure they heard the other person.

Right. It's called a straw man argument, where one side misrepresents or exaggerates the other's argument to make it easier to attack. Very sneaky. Listening to Elihu, he sounds right. He also quotes Job kinda. Is he using a straw man?

In 35, he defended God's silence. Why would God respond when Job arrogantly says that God never punishes the wicked? But that one definitely exaggerated Job's words.

So is Elihu right? I wish God would just speak up for us and tell us who's right, because Elihu does make a lot of sense. But I guess that's the point here in Job: hear people out and learn to discern.

So let's listen. Well, starting at verse one.
Elihu continued, "Bear with me a little longer, and I will show you that there is more to be said in God's behalf. I get my knowledge from afar. I will ascribe justice to my maker." Now that line is the very core of Elihu's conviction.
God is just, and Elihu will ascribe justice to God.
It's what he believes Job and friends failed to do. It drives his argument.
And I certainly won't argue with that.

Verse four. "Be assured that my words are not false. One who has perfect knowledge is with you."
Wait a second. Perfect knowledge? Didn't he just say that God doesn't answer the arrogant? The word can also mean sincere or complete knowledge, which softens it a bit, but I still think Job raised an eyebrow at that one.
But he's young. A little zeal is understandable. So let's hear him out. Verse five. "God is mighty but despises no one. He is mighty and firm in his purpose. He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives the afflicted their rights."

Now this I like. Move the focus to God's greatness and his character. He's mighty but not cruel.

Job talked like God was using him for cruel target practice, but God doesn't despise anyone. He's fair to everyone, and he doesn't just give the afflicted their rights—he's the source of their rights.
In verse seven, God keeps his eyes on the righteous and rewards them. That's justice. But what about those suffering? Verse eight.
"But if people are bound in chains, held fast by cords of affliction, he tells them what they have done, that they have sinned arrogantly.
He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil."

Pay attention. Elihu says when people suffer, God tells them what they did. Job's ears have to have perked up here. God isn't silent. He uses the affliction and tells the sufferer what they did. He corrects them and calls them to repentance. That's gospel.

But I do wonder how Job hears that. We'll come back to that. Verse 11.
"If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment.
If they do not listen, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge."
Now that sounds like justice. Turn from your sin. Do right by God. And God rewards you—prosperity and contentment. But refuse to listen to God and die without knowledge. Elihu's understanding of God's justice follows a very clean if-then formula, and it's right. God rewards good and punishes bad. Justice, right?

Verse 13. "The godless in heart harbor resentment. Even when he offers them, they do not cry for help. They die in their youth among male prostitutes of the shrines."

Well, that's harsh. Did he just say die with prostitutes? Well, let me explain. In that time, idol worship often involved sex with temple prostitutes, part of a system of exploitation, slavery, and spiritual corruption. Sex trafficking and idol worship was all one godless system. And Elihu is painting a stark picture of the godless person who refuses to listen to God's warnings.
And even as life gets worse, they keep going back and wind up dying there.

But still, Elihu, have some compassion, brother. Your version of God's justice is starting to sound callous. Is God like that?
But Elihu does offer another option. Verse 15. "But those who suffer, he delivers in their suffering.

He speaks to them in their affliction."
Now we're getting to the heart of it. God delivers the sufferer. He is not silent. He speaks to them in their affliction and through it. This is where Elihu's formulas are set apart from the other friends. Suffering isn't just for punishment.

God can also use it to speak to you. That's powerful.
And here Elihu looks directly at Job. Verse 16.
"He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place, free from restriction,
to the comfort of your table laden with choice food."
Now there is a comforting thought. God is wooing—pursuing—Job. His plans are good.

Yeah. But Elihu balances it with a series of warnings.

Verse 17.
"But now you are laden with the judgment of the wicked. Judgment and justice have taken hold of you. Be careful that no one entices you by riches.
Do not let a large bribe turn you aside."
It's a timely warning. Suffering can weaken your resolve. Temptation catches you off guard, and it's easy to justify taking a little bribe when you're in pain.

So in verse 19,
"Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction."
Elihu is genuinely concerned for Job. Job is in danger. As Elihu says, Job seems to prefer doing evil to enduring suffering.
But hold on. Does Job prefer evil? Elihu may be right about justice, but is he right about Job? How does that sound to him? Let's back up. Back in verse nine, Elihu says God tells the afflicted that they have sinned arrogantly.
Does that mean that Job's sinned and that his sin caused all this death? Elihu seems to think so.

His repentance message is awesome, and he takes a strong stand for God's justice. But does it all fit here for Job? Elihu doesn't know this, but you and I know that Job's sin did not cause this. And where does Elihu get this idea that Job prefers evil to affliction? We know from God's own mouth that Job fears God and shuns evil.

But can someone so right about the gospel get this so wrong? And why doesn't God just tell us? But I guess that's what discernment is all about: separating the right from the wrong, even if they come from the same person.
Maybe these chapters are here for discernment practice.
Elihu's formula would tell Job to just repent, but repent of what?

If I could give Elihu one piece of advice, it would be situational awareness. Look at Job, see what he's been through.

Then Elihu's focus changes, his tone changes. The transition at verse 22 is so striking. It's almost like, "Ha, have you ever been outdoors? And the air feels stagnant, stale, and then a breeze—fresh air, gentle but driven, like someone opened a great door in the distance." That's how this moment feels. Verse 22.
"God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?
Who has prescribed his ways for him or said to him, 'You have done wrong'?

Remember to extol his work, which people have praised in song."
This is so good. After hashing and rehashing through suffering and blame for 36 chapters, Elihu reminds us to look up. God is exalted. Extol his work. And in verse 25,
"All humanity has seen it. Mortals gaze on it from afar. How great is God beyond our understanding? The number of his years is past finding out. He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams.

The clouds pour down their moisture, and abundant showers fall on mankind. Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds? How he thunders from his pavilion? See how he scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depths of the sea?

This is the way he governs the nations and provides food in abundance. He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. His thunder announces the coming storm. Even the cattle make known its approach."

And there we close. The air has changed. We can feel it. Thunder rumbles the ground. Electricity fills the air and lights the distant sky. And as the storm builds on the horizon, our very senses alter.
Why? Elihu ascribed justice to his maker. But this, this is another level.

Read Job 36, and I'll see you in the storm.

Job 37 | Storm Warning

Welcome back to Job, everyone. Chapter 37 is our last day with young Elihu, and before we begin, I have to confess, I'm still wrestling over how to respond to him. Is he right or wrong?

Bible commentaries are divided. Even Chris and Peyton disagree, and they both changed their minds in opposite directions. At first, I really liked him. He's young, zealous, and he very nearly has the gospel.

But as we dug deeper, I saw flaws. He never shows compassion for Job's loss. He misses Job, then draws conclusions from what he misheard.
It's really frustrating, but then I realized it's the same frustration I feel today with Christians, preachers, even myself. We get so much right and then miss something so badly.

So why did God give us the story with flawed characters sharing flawed theology? Some right, some wrong.
I think it's a life lesson. Only one is always right, and I'm not him. None of us are. So we need grace from God and for each other, and we know that, but we don't always live it. We cancel people for one wrong statement or for disagreeing on one key issue. Often we base our judgment on words taken out of context, just like Elihu.

We all get things wrong. Every character in Job's story delivers both fantastic insights and fallible conclusions, and God never tells us which is which.
He lets us wrestle as though working through conflict is essential to following him.

Suffering is hard to figure out. We need patience and compassion in all directions.
So what do I make of Elihu? I like his gospel. I respect his zeal for God and disdain for arrogance.
And I hope he grows up to see his own arrogance. I hope he learns to show compassion, listen better, and verify what others mean before drawing conclusions.

And I hope I do too.
Okay, now back to 37. Thus far, one of the themes has been God's silence. He points out that God doesn't owe us answers, but more importantly, God does speak. He tells you what you've done wrong in a dream, through a messenger, through pain, and in chapter 36, in the storm.

And there his tone changed. Suddenly Elihu was less about people's sin and more about God's greatness. It was like a wind blew across the whole scene, driven by a storm brewing in the distance, and Elihu feels God's presence in the coming storm. The very thunder announces it.

And 37 begins with skies rumbling, hairs raised, and senses tingling. Verse one: "At this, my heart pounds and leaps from its place. Listen. Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth." Elihu's poetry lifts and the scene nearly comes to life—lightning cracks, lighting up the skies to the horizon. Remember, Job has been longing to hear God for what feels like an eternity. And now as the hills echo, every heart leaps from its place.

And in verse four:
"After that comes the sound of his roar. He thunders with his majestic voice, and when his voice resounds, he holds nothing back.
God's voice thunders in marvelous ways. He does great things beyond our understanding.
God's work surpasses knowing. God's voice doesn't just deliver words; it shakes our world."

Verse six:
"He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour,' so that everyone he has made may know his work. He stops all people from their labor. The animals take cover; they remain in their dens."
The imagery is stirring.
There's a distinct feeling when you take cover from the downpour: solitude, stillness. Stop your work and know his work; be surrounded by it. Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens declare his glory, and sometimes they drench us with it.

They stop us and give us time to see it.
Verse nine: "The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen."
Suddenly an icy wind washes over us, and behind every turn of the weather is the power of God.

Now, if you think that God is here working around the laws of science rather than through them, your view of God is far too small. The creator of science is also its master. The one who invented the storm could also wield it.

Verse 11:
"He loads the clouds with moisture. He scatters his lightning through them. At his direction, they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them."

So the storm obeys; creation listens to its maker. And his purpose for it is not always the same. Verse 13:
"He brings the clouds to punish people or to water his earth and show his love."

So the same storm serves many purposes—to punish, to nourish, or to show his love. Same rain, different reasons. And only God can say which is which. Now consider that reality in terms of suffering. Same tool, many purposes. Or look at the cross.

For Satan, it was defeat. For sin, judgment. For us, salvation. And for Jesus, the only way to fully know what it's like to suffer, to struggle, to be like us.
Verse 14: "Listen to this, Job. Stop. Consider God's wonders."
Now that's a verse that should stop all of us. Let it echo across our anxieties and confusions. Stop and consider God's wonders.
And here, Elihu's imagery is so vivid, it nearly puts us there standing before the storm. It takes me back to Arizona, monsoon season. The horizon darkens to an ominous purple.

Clouds tower like dark mountains. The air holds its breath. Lightning flickers deep within, and rain pours down like buckets.

Verse 15:
"Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? Do you know how the clouds hang poised? Those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge! You who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind—can you join him in spreading out the skies hard as a mirror of cast bronze?"

Elihu's poetry is majestic, haunting. His questions are poignant. Do you know how God does it? Can you join him? Of course Job can't. And yet God's knowledge is perfect. Every molecule of moisture, every volt of electricity—he knows it all and wields it for his purposes. God is at work in things we don't understand. So maybe, Job, it's true in your life too.

Verse 19:
"Tell us what we should say to him. We cannot draw up our case because of our darkness. Should he be told that I want to speak? Would anyone ask to be swallowed up?"
In other words, Job, what are you gonna tell God that he doesn't know? What will you explain that he doesn't understand? You wanna speak to God—the lightning wielder? You're asking to be overwhelmed. Verse 21:
"Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies, after the wind has swept them clean."

Here Elihu grabs hold of our childlike wonder at staring at the sun. Did you know the sun isn't even yellow? It only looks yellow when it's low enough in the sky to look at, and our eyes are shielded by lots more atmosphere. A bright sun and a wind-swept sky is brilliant white. It overwhelms our eyes. We literally cannot process its brilliance.

So how could we ever take in the God who made it?
And then a look comes over Elihu, as if he senses something, as if he knows something.

Verse 22:
"Out of the north he comes in golden splendor. God comes in awesome majesty.

The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power. In his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress." Elihu is closing. He senses that his time is up. God approaches. So he ends with one last stand for God's justice, and that has been his abiding conviction: "I will ascribe justice to my maker. You got him wrong, Job. God does not oppress."
And as Elihu closes with "the Almighty beyond our reach," it occurs to me that he never once referred to God by his name. When our Bible says "LORD" in all caps, it's translating his covenant name, Yahweh. In fact, no one outside the narrator has used that name since Job did in chapter one: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. May the name of the LORD be praised."

Why? Elihu called him Maker and Teacher, but no one says his name. The collective knowledge about God from all these men has been knowledge from a distance. God has been distant. But not for long.

And Elihu's final word, verse 24: "Therefore, people revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?"
But right now we're out of time. The storm is upon us.

Job 38 | Out of the Storm

Welcome back, my friends. Job 38 is like no other. And as we begin here, I want us to take in the scene before us. There in full view stands the man Job, covered in wounds and ashes, in misery and grief, and in accusations of some unknown guilt that caused all of this. Why did this become a trial? Why the interrogation? The man who was introduced to us as blameless and pure is now presumed guilty, and he wonders why God hasn't shown up. Why silent? Why not make the charges known? And for a moment, all is silent.

I searched for words to set the stage for how Job 38 feels to me. One memory came close. It was a long road trip some years ago. My heart was recovering from a trauma that defied reason, defied faith, and defied recovery. We stopped on a small island in the vast Columbia River Gorge at a point called the Bridge of the Gods, and grandeur swallowed me. That's at least a start at how Job 38 feels.

For Job himself, the feeling has been building for some time. Elihu's words have painted the imagery of a great storm. And now it seems it was more than metaphor. If ever you visited a place where the sky is somehow much larger and a storm rolling in fills them beyond any size you've ever fathomed, that's Job 38.

I share that because this is a chapter that needs to be felt—like we're there with him in the ashes, looking up at the storm.

Verse one: Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said, "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer me."

At long last, the Lord is speaking out of a storm, a whirlwind. His opening words sting. "Who is this that obscures my plans?" I say we collectively put us in Job's place. To obscure means to darken—like the opposite of shedding light. God has a plan, and we were trying so hard to find it, but somehow we darkened it with words without knowledge. We were ignorant, but we spoke anyway.

"Brace yourself like a man." To hear those words from your maker—I feel strong and oh, so weak all at once. "Brace yourself. I will question you. You will answer."

All this time waiting to question God, but now he's here, and he will ask the questions. Get ready.
Verse four: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. Stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"

Where was I? I don't know. I didn't exist. I don't know the first thing about laying the earth's foundations, marking its dimensions. I talk like I know the facts, but measuring lines and cornerstones? I don't know if God's using metaphors or if those are real. Either way, I don't know.

I'd love to know, but each question opens a whole new volume of things I don't know. And the songs of stars and angels at creation.

Verse eight takes us out to the vast wonder of the great oceans and back to their very beginnings: "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness? I fixed the limits for it and set its doors and bars in place. When I said, 'This far you may come and no farther,' here is where your proud waves halt."

For perspective, have you ever felt the crash of a single wave big enough to destroy you? No man tames the ocean. So who gave the sea its limits? Who separated the waters? A geologist may theorize with great understanding about early formation, but do not confuse the science with the power that invented the science.

In verse twelve, God jumps forward from creating the world to maintaining it, and here he looks right at us: "Have you ever given orders to the morning or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?"

With Job we talked about God judging the wicked, like it's a simple act—just set a time and judge. Easy. So God challenges us: How about sunrise? Set that as your time. Then you order the sun to rise. Then have it grab hold of the earth to shake the wicked out of it.

Verse fourteen: "The earth takes shape like clay under a seal. Its features stand out like those of a garment.

The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken. Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?"

Did you know the deep sea has volcanic springs teeming with life forms previously thought impossible, and that the ocean runs over 35,000 feet deep? Have you walked there?

Verse seventeen: "Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. What is the way to the abode of light, and where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know, for you were already born. You have lived so many years."

God's irony is sharp, and I feel it. I talk like I know so much because I have learned a lot. Fifty years is a lot of life to me, and I can explain a lot, but I don't know the gates of death. I don't know the abode of light or dark, or even get close to comprehending the vast expanses of this earth. I don't know.
And I think that offers a hint as to why God is asking questions. There are so many mysteries to this life, so many blank spaces in our understanding. Yet the Bible has a lot of answers, and I'm a Bible teacher, so when people ask, I like answering. But what to do when I don't know the answer?

In my younger years, I sometimes stretched the answers I did know to cover the gaps. I didn't remember where God started—words without knowledge. That's the stretch, and it obscures God's plans. It fills the mysterious places that cause us to wonder—amazing, wondrous places, and also terrible, difficult places.

All these long chapters of monologue, we've heard intelligent men stretching the truths they know about God's justice to cover the gaps of unexplained suffering. Notice that God does not provide answers. He doesn't fill the blank space. He widens it.

I think some mysteries are part of his plan. That the blank spaces make us wonder—because we're supposed to wonder. And God's questions here are like reps in training, saying, "I don't know," because acknowledging our ignorance is actually key to solving it. Thinking we're wise makes us fools. Knowing we are fools is the first step to wisdom.

With that in mind, I think I'll talk less and let God talk more.
Verse twenty-two: "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle? What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth? Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no one lives, an uninhabited desert, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?

"Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen?"
There are spectacular wonders here to contemplate—storehouses of snow. About a million billion snowflakes fall each year, each one a momentary masterpiece of art, never to be repeated. And rainstorms to satisfy a land where no one lives. Yet God is there, watching, providing. Our world is blanketed in wonder upon wonder.

If all that stuns you, look up. God takes us even higher.
Verse thirty-one: "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs?"

The picture of leading out the very constellations is mind-blowing. Two trillion galaxies, billions of trillions of stars, and the galaxies dance. Seriously. And we can't bind or loosen a single one. We are powerless.

Now the Pleiades mark spring. Orion brings winter. God says, "You think it's so simple to set a time for judgment? Go ahead, tell the stars. Can you bring the seasons?" Still can't.

And don't imagine this is some old mythology of God arbitrarily leading stars around. Read verse thirty-three carefully: "Do you know the laws of the heavens? Pay attention. God runs his universe on laws."
That one truth has shaped how believers across the centuries see our world and truly sparked the birth of modern science—physics, chemistry, medicine, and more. Our universe moves by fantastic design. We discover it. God designed it.

And yet I am tempted to think that yes, I do know the laws of the heavens. So the next question: "Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?"
Now there's a challenge for me. I studied science. I've learned the equations that run the earth. Okay, wise man. Now make one. Establish them all. Can you stand and answer? Can you? No, I cannot.

Verse thirty-four: "Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you? Here we are. Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the rooster understanding? Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard and the clods stick together?

"Do you hunt the prey for the lions and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?"
So how are your answers coming? I have a whole lot of "no, I can't" and "I don't know" and "only you, Lord." So how do we respond? I would say precisely like that. And let those answers sink down deep. Let them push back, open the spaces that we filled and darkened with words without knowledge, and let his light shine once again through all the great mysteries and wonder of all that we don't know.

And brace yourself. The questions have just begun.

Job 39 | Into the Wild

Welcome back to Job, my friends. We return at chapter 39 to our hero, overwhelmed and awestruck. Job stands before a great storm, a whirlwind, and the Lord is speaking directly to Job.

"Brace yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer me." God is asking the questions, but Job hasn't answered once. How can he in chapter 39? Stand again with Job. A few quick notes to prep.

First, I want you to reconnect with a particular sense of wonder. We've known since childhood animals, magnificent creatures, but then we get used to them. Job had thousands of sheep, donkeys, oxen.

He was surely quite gifted at feeding, breeding, and tending to all of daily life. But consider the wild animal—ever encountered one? I'm reminded of a wild mountain goat at Glacier National Park, or the gray whale just 30 feet starboard, or the graceful manatee just feet away from my kayak. And for a moment, my heart floats like it unbuckled in zero gravity, and it occurs to me: these spectacular creatures surround us. They fill the wild spaces every moment.

Now bring that to Job 39, but also remember that these are—God is not listing facts. He's demanding answers from Job.

Also, side note that some old animal names are tough to translate with certainty. You can dig into that another time. For now, keep yourself in awe before God.

Verse one.
"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? They crouch down and bring forth their young.
Their labor pains are ended. Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds. They leave and do not return."

There is no other wonder quite like birth—brand new life enters the world. Job likely delivered hundreds of sheep and oxen, but mountain goats climb where humans don't dare to tread to give birth in safety.

A mother will climb where no other land creature could ever reach.
To this day, it is an extreme rarity for a human to observe. So God challenges us: "Do you know? Do you watch? Do you count the months?" No, we do not.
Verse five.

"Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied its ropes?" This time, God chooses a donkey, an animal Job cared for by the hundreds. They needed him, and he was good at it.
But now God points to the wild donkey. "Who set it free?" Job, in verse six: "I gave it the wasteland as its home, the salt flats as its habitat. It laughs at the commotion in the town. It does not hear a driver's shout. It ranges the hills for its pasture and searches for any green thing."

Consider Job seeing a wild donkey. His first instinct would be concern: "What if one of his donkeys escaped? It's in danger. It relies on me." But that's a wild donkey. And through the complex design of seasons and ecosystems, it thrives in the salt flats of a wasteland.

Wild vegetation grows in tiny crags, and the donkey finds them. How? God knows, because he designed the wild to depend on him, not us.
Now connect this with Job's struggle. He wanted answers. He wanted God to set a time for judgment and order life and justice in a way he could understand—controlled, predictable, more like caring for domestic animals.
Yet God has set an order even for the wild things.
An order beyond our control, an order with such complex and intricate design we can only begin to fathom.

God set the donkey free, and he provides. He's got the wild things. He's got Job. He's got us. Verse nine.
"Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will it stay by your manger at night?"
Now this wild ox is not escaped. This species was never tamed, nor could it be.

An older translation says "unicorn," but rest assured, this is no mythical beast. Most scholars agree this is an oryx, a very real and very massive cattle, only recently extinct.

Job would know it well: taller than most men, horns spanning wider than your arms can reach, and never tamed.
Tempting to try because that thing could plow through stone, but good luck.
Think ancient bison crossed with Texas Longhorn, doubled in size, and wild as the free wind. Go ahead, Job, ask it to serve you. Verse ten.
"Can you hold it to the furrow with a harness? Will it till the valleys behind you? Will you rely on it for its great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to it? Can you trust it to haul in your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?"

Notice how God blends two things: what Job knows and controls, and what he never could. Job knows oxen. He knows the harness and plow. He knows the satisfaction of clearing a valley, planting seed, and bringing in the harvest, all powered by his oxen. But this is wild—it's more power than Job could dream to use. But God can. God's got this. He has the wild things.

And speaking of wild, just wait till you meet the creature in verse 13.
"The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork."
Hello, beautiful! Okay, so the ostrich is not pretty, but take a good look and you will see two things in great measure: absurdity and awesomeness. Nine feet tall, six foot wingspan. The world's largest bird cannot fly.
But look at it, flopping away joyfully. Not pretty. Doesn't care.

Verse 14: "She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them."
Now God has us observing. Take some notes. If you watch birds do their thing, they spend a lot of effort on nest building to protect the eggs. An ostrich? Just scratches a shallow spot in the dirt, lays the eggs, and leaves them—biggest egg on the planet, six inches long, just out there for whatever.
And you just might be tempted to think, "I could design better." Verse 16.
"She treats her young harshly as if they were not hers. She cares not that her labor was in vain, for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense.

Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider."
Ha! Did you know that an ostrich can outrun a horse? Forty miles an hour!

But what about the egg? Go ahead, stand on it. It can support a grown human.
And did you know that an ostrich does not bury its head in the sand? Nope. It does crouch real low. But attack it, and its kick can take down a lion.
Come on!

The point, Job: some things in the wild don't make sense to you. God makes them as he chooses. You may never understand, but God's got this. The ostrich is like a strange invention—either absurd or brilliant.
Better yet, both.

Life does that. Some things defy explanation. God's wisdom is wild, untamed, and brilliant.
Verse 19: "Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane? Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting?"

Now we go from absurd to astonishing. Nothing in the world is like a warhorse. Take a good look: beauty, terror, and wonder. Verse 21.
"It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength, and charges into the fray. It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing. It does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against its side, along with the flashing spear and lance. In frenzied excitement, it eats up the ground. It cannot stand still. When the trumpet sounds, at the blast of the trumpet, it snorts 'Aha!'

It catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry."

Now admire the horse, but answer the question: You might harness it, but did you give the horse its strength? Whatever your profession, whatever tools or skills you harness, who gave them?

Verse 26: "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high?" This time the Lord goes straight up to soaring majesty: the flight of a hawk.

Binocular vision eight times sharper than ours, with precision wings that cut through the wind like blades. Eagles have telescopic vision, nest out of reach of any predator. They spot a rabbit from two miles out.
Did your wisdom design that? Do you command it? Go ahead, answer. Verse 28.

"It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night. A rocky crag is its stronghold. From there it looks for food; its eyes detect it from afar. Its young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there it is."
So what do we do with Job 39? I suggest we answer God's questions and decide what to do with the wild things.

In the last chapter, we talked about our tendency to take the stuff we know and stretch the answers to cover the gaps in our understanding—like simple answers about God's justice to fill the gaps in human suffering.
We sort of act like we tame the wild things, and perhaps we do that because the gaps make us doubt.

But what would life be without the wild? And what would faith be without the gaps?
Sure, they make us doubt, but doubt is not the opposite of faith. It's the edge of faith. Without doubt, faith is never tested, never stretched.
Maybe real faith welcomes the wild.
God's got this. Don't stretch the answers. Stretch your faith, and let the wild things stay wild.

Here's a little bonus challenge you can try at home.
Take a raw chicken egg in your palm. Make sure you remove your rings and squeeze it. I dare you. Squeeze it with all your might. The ellipsoidal design and composite material distribute pressure so perfectly it can withstand a hundred pounds.

Yet a tiny beak will crack it. An ostrich egg can take a thousand.
Wild and brilliant.

Job 40 | Behemoth

Welcome back to Job Everyone. Chapter 40 picks up in the very middle of one of the Bible's most dramatic scenes. So I say we jump straight in. Verse one: the Lord said to Job, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him."

Pause there. God's conspicuous silence is over. He confronted Job with nature's glory and then with earth's wild things. Now God asks, with striking precision, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?" Set yourself in Job's place and hear that. Dwell on it. Job is not in trouble for his lament—that was faith. This is about Job correcting God. To contend is to bring a legal case against. To correct is to discipline or instruct, as a parent does a child. And to accuse? Well, Job did just that. Think back from his opening words. Job questioned why he was ever given life. Later, "Does it please you to oppress me?" Later still, "Then know that God has wronged me."

At the time, I felt deep compassion for this man whose circumstances really made that appear true. Even when Elihu called him out on it, I felt for Job. But things sure look different when God says it. "Let him who accuses God, answer him."

The Lord has been asking questions for two long chapters, and Job finally answers in verse three. "Then Job answered the Lord: 'I am unworthy. How can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer; twice, but I will say no more.'"

Do you know that feeling of wishing you would just stop talking? Wishing you could rewind? Your hand instinctively covers your mouth as if your own body is fighting to stop your folly.

Job's only answer is that he has no answer. Verse six: "Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm: 'Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer me.'"

God opened with the same words, and now they strike me just as deep. "Brace yourself." Anyone who has known battle knows the term. Prepare for action. Gird the belt. Hold fast the shield. Prepare to fight.
"Brace yourself like a man. I will question you; you shall answer. Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"

Wow. You know that moment when a complex and nuanced argument is suddenly and succinctly crystallized into the one question that matters? Job, would you discredit God's justice? The very foundation of all our righteousness and moral good. It's like an engineer so sure of himself that he would sooner question the laws of physics than question his own calculations. Not my mistake.

"Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" Job has been adamantly concerned about clearing his name. His integrity was at stake. It's all he had left. Ironically, we know that he was blameless, and yet he was not nearly so careful to honor God's integrity and his name. "Know that God has wronged me." Is that a trade you are willing to make? Job's God's reputation for yours? Verse nine: "Do you have an arm like God's? And can your voice thunder like his?

Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath. Look at all who are proud and bring them low. Look at all who are proud and humble them; crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you."

Now pay attention to the question: "Do you have an arm like God's? Check your armor, or a voice, speak up." And if Job does have that power, God challenges him. And watch the specifics: "Unleash your wrath. Look at all who are proud and bring them low." Whoa, that's a very pointed challenge. Think back again on Job's words. "Why do the wicked live on? Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? God charges no one with wrongdoing." Job spoke of justice as though it were a simple act that God simply neglected or postponed. But what does it take to humble the proud, crush the wicked where they stand, bury them in the dust? Accomplish that simple task, and God will admit that you can save yourself. Salvation and judgment are not nearly so simple and tame as we might desire.

And so God takes us back out of the courtroom and returns us to the wild. As we read, imagine it, see it. Verse 15: "Look at behemoth, which I made along with you, and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength it has in its loins! What power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar. The sinews of its thighs are close knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze. Its limbs like rods of iron. It ranks first among the works of God, and its maker can approach it with his sword."

Now, what on earth is that? It is behemoth.

And my encouragement as we read is that the wonder behind that question is more important than the precise answer to that question. As before, it is not possible to take the ancient Hebrew term and know for certain what precise animal this refers to. Hence the name "behemoth"—a general description rather than a specific animal. Is it, in a word, awesome?

Now, guessing and wondering at behemoth is kind of fun because the theories get wild. And after all, God's purpose here is wonder. I imagine that Job knew the creature, and I'm sure it amazed him. Can you see it? Feeds on grass, so herbivore. Strength in its loins and power in its belly, its impressive tail, like a cedar. That's the line that fires the imagination. Cedars grow big and mighty. Bones like bronze tubes and limbs like iron rods, ranking first in God's works. So what are the theories?

The most common is hippopotamus. Don't mess with the hippo. One near you at a zoo will amaze you. One near you in the wild will put the fear of God in you. Two tons, herbivore, yet still the world's most dangerous animal. Now, "tail like a cedar" does not fit unless that somehow describes the tail's motion. But is this behemoth even bigger—an elephant? Or some say mythological beast, a symbol of the great wild, tamable only by God. Only its maker can approach it with his sword.

Others still say behemoth is a great dinosaur—a stegosaurus or other sauropod. It's got the tail and up to 50 feet in height and the mass of 50 hippos in one great beast—beyond awesome. That theory also fits well for those who believe that dinosaurs lived alongside humans; however, that's also a debate. That debate is important to science, but it is not God's point here.

So come back to it in our Science and the Bible series. But don't get sidetracked now. Right now, remain awestruck. The reality is God is maker to both hippo and stegosaurus. So if you've seen a hippo in the wild, capture that wonder. Or if you were like me—just the right age to have still been young and wonder-struck when the trailer hit the theaters—and you remember that very first time when they're all in the Jeep and Dr. Hammond says, "Welcome to Jurassic Park," and the camera pans to the massive brachiosaurus. And for a kid, you didn't know what CGI was. For all you knew, they did clone a real dinosaur because that giant looked real.

Now, I am not saying that behemoth was for sure a dinosaur. I don't know. But I am saying that feeling in the theater—that's what I carry to this chapter. That's what God wants. So, awestruck now, debate later, and let's keep reading. Verse 20.

"The hills bring forth their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plants, it lies hidden among the reeds and the marsh. The lotuses conceal it in their shadow. The poplars by the streams surround it."
Now there is an idyllic scene—the great beast at rest among the wildlife. But don't be fooled. At a raging river, it doesn't flinch. The Jordan itself could crash into its mouth, and it wouldn't move. Pay attention to God's final question: "Can anyone capture it by the eyes or trap it and pierce its nose?"

That is God's point. Many things, Job, are beyond your control—way beyond. You cannot master. You cannot tame. It's true for us too. Yet even when life is out of our control, it's not out of his. He can handle the surging river.
So how does this all tie together? The chapter started with Job's desire to justify himself at God's expense. Why?

Because Job's friends wanted to blame Job. They've all been wrestling over the cause of terrible events—as we all do—and all their arguments centered on Job. The cause must be Job. But some things are beyond Job's control and yours.

God started with the just-beyond wild donkey and wild ox. And now the way beyond behemoth. Not in the wildest stretch of your imagination can you control this. But God can. You are not in control. You are not to blame. But God's got this.

How about us? Do we justify ourselves at God's expense or blame others rather than recognize that some things are just beyond us? God still got this. Read Job 40, and if you thought behemoth was awesome, just wait till you see what comes next.

Job 41 | Leviathan

Job 41, my friends, and we have arrived at God's grand finale to the Book of Job and to one of God's greatest monologues in the whole Bible. Job 41 is Leviathan.

It is critical that we experience this chapter undistracted. So before we start, we have to ask, what is it?

Leviathan, God's quintessential untamable beast of the sea.
Impenetrable skin, fearsome teeth, armor like shields.
Job himself referenced Leviathan way back in chapter three. So what is it? Theories abound. Some say crocodile crocs are fierce, but Leviathan breathes fire. Smoke pours from its nostrils. It boils the depths like a cauldron. That's no crocodile. That's a dragon.

And that fires up the imagination and the debate.
Some see Leviathan as myth, the apex of chaos. Others say it's real prehistoric sea monsters like the Mosasaurus inspire dragon legends for a reason.

Massive, armored, and jaw-dropping. Look 'em up.
Could some have breathed fire chemically? Yes. Were they alive in Job's time? That's the debate.

But remember, awestruck now, debate later. Sea monsters were real. Was this one alive in Job's time? Great question. Later.

God is talking. Now he can speak of or produce any creature, past, present, future, or mythical.

Maybe Job saw fossils. Maybe he saw it live. Maybe God uses the myth. The key for us is to see it with Job just as God describes it.
So why is Leviathan here? That's worth pondering. This is one of the great themes in human storytelling. From Gilgamesh to Odysseus to Aeneas, from Beowulf to Moby Dick, from Godzilla to Jaws to Jurassic Park. The story of mankind versus unconquerable beast seems to resonate with the heart of all humanity.

Why? We are explorers, masters of the sea, trailblazers through exotic lands, captors of wild creatures,
until we face Leviathan.
The moral of all those stories: it is a dangerous folly to believe that we can control the beast.

So why is it here in this story of suffering? As you ponder, consider two key perspectives: Job's and ours. From the outset, our perspective sees more. We met a blameless man. God said so twice.
Then tragedy struck.

We know who caused it. Job does not. His friends blame him, and Job, he blames God. God has wronged me. You destroy a person's hope.
His final speech is one long defense: This is not my fault.
Then God showed up. God has not addressed the subject of blame.
Instead, he called Job out for obscuring his plans with words without knowledge.

He brought Job back to creation. Where were you? Job into the wilderness. Do you provide for it? Job to the wild things? Can you tame them? Job, he called out Job for correcting him. Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Then the wild things got wilder. Can you capture Behemoth?

So why didn't God just settle the argument about blame and why? Leviathan, chapter 41, verse one:
Can you pull in Leviathan with a fish hook or tie down its tongue with a rope?
Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook?
Will it keep begging you for mercy? Will it speak to you with gentle words? Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life?
Leviathan is a beast. Do you ever wonder why God made such fearsome creatures? Now, pay attention to God's questions. There's a theme. Can you pull in, tie down, pierce, take as a slave. Every question is about control, and the answer is no.

Verse five:
Can you make a pet of it like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house?
You may imagine control, but sorry, Job. A T-Rex doesn't want to be fed. He wants to hunt.

Verse six:
Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again.
Man may be a mighty hunter, but not here. Leviathan is a clever girl. You cannot tame this beast.

Now consider that truth from Job's perspective. What does control mean to him? Back to all the effort Job put in to ensure that even his kids would be safe from guilt—just in case offerings after every party.
He did everything in his power, but they died beyond his control. They died.

Recall Job's retrospective guilt inventory: I did everything right. Why did this happen?
Some things, Job, are beyond your control.

Verse nine:
Any hope of subduing it is false. The mere sight of it is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse it.
Who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

This is the heart of the chapter. None can defeat Leviathan.
Who then can stand against God?
Job wanted justice on a reasonable timeline, so do we. Wanted life to work out: If you do the right things, so do we. For many of us, Christian faith seems like the perfect solution. Hello, good life. It's all gonna work out
until it doesn't, and a beast destroys it. Didn't he owe me?
Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me. Have we given something to God that wasn't his already?

Does he ever owe us?
No time to ponder that. Now back to Leviathan as God speaks.

Behold the great monster, verse 12:
I will not fail to speak of Leviathan's limbs, its strength, and its graceful form. Who can strip off its outer coat? Who can penetrate its double coat of armor? Who dares open the doors of its mouth, ringed about with fearsome teeth? Its back has rows of shields, tightly sealed together. Each is so close to the next that no air can pass between.

They are joined fast to one another. They cling together and cannot be parted. Its snorting throws out flashes of light. Its eyes are like the rays of dawn. Flames stream from its mouth, sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke pours from its nostrils as from a boiling pot over burning reeds. Its breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from its mouth.
Now that sounds like a dragon. Sorry, Job. You're gonna need a bigger boat. I bring up Jaws because I want you to reconnect with that raw, overwhelming dread that every one of those beast movies taps into. God is speaking from the whirlwind grander than any screen you've seen or any sound effect you've felt.

Verse 22:
Strength resides in its neck. Dismay goes before it. The folds of its flesh are tightly joined. They are firm and immovable. Its chest is hard as rock, hard as a lower millstone. When it rises up, the mighty are terrified.
They retreat before its thrashing. The sword that reaches it has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin. Iron it treats like straw, and bronze like rotten wood.

Arrows do not make it flee. Sling stones are like chaff to it. A club seems to it but a piece of straw. It laughs at the rattling of the lance. Its underside are jagged potsherds,
leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge.
It makes the depths churn like a boiling cauldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment.

It leaves a glistening wake behind it.
One would think the deep had white hair.
And as the beast retreats into the depths, you can hear the men start to breathe again, only now realizing they had stopped. And only the image of a glistening wake to remind them of the terror.

Verse 33:
Nothing on earth is its equal, a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty. It is king over all that are proud.
And with that, God's speech is through for Job and friends. It is an endless moment of deep trembling and perhaps a moment in which to consider our perspective.

Job stands before us with a lesson carved into his very soul: There are things, Job, that you cannot control, yet God does. You cannot fight God. God does not owe you. You, Leviathan, and everything are his.
So what do we make of Leviathan? Those who know the backstory: the blameless man has been arguing over blame for so long, and God answers with a sea monster. History and legends aside, are there any other leviathans in the Bible? In fact, there are.

Job mentioned Leviathan in his opening paragraph, and do you recall his curious reference in chapter 26 to God's defeat of Rahab, the gliding serpent? Could that be the same beast, not the woman of Jericho? This Rahab is a great serpent, and God defeated it.
Isaiah 51 also recalls God's defeat of the monster Rahab, and there Rahab symbolizes Pharaoh's army as they tried to devour God's people, defeated in the Red Sea.

Isaiah 27 points to God's final judgment when he will slay Leviathan, the gliding serpent. It's symbolic and appears to clearly represent Satan.
So Rahab and Leviathan are used interchangeably to symbolize both the general chaos and specific evil that is all ultimately powered by Satan. Consider all that attacked Job: wicked marauders, fire from heaven, a destructive wind, a terrible disease. From Job's perspective, random chaos and evil. From ours, all Satan.

Psalm 74 speaks of God crushing the heads of Leviathan. That's heads plural. And head crushing hearkens back to God cursing the serpent, Satan, in Genesis three.

A dragon appears once more: a huge red seven-headed dragon in Revelation 12, clearly identified as that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.
Satan, the one who appeared so curiously at the story's outset and whom we've known all along, is the one to blame.

Why would God make such a fearsome creature? Why would God listen to him? He's evil. He's like Leviathan, king over all that are proud. But is this Leviathan Satan in Job 41?
Return to Job's perspective. Job knows nothing of Satan's work. He never knew why. I imagine it's for our sake, for we also don't get to know what was Satan's work in our lives.

It's not for Job to figure out, and it's not for us. For Job, it just happened—terror, chaos, random as far as he could tell. It could have been God himself. Isn't that our struggle? Tragedy happens. Was it random? Did God do it? If not he, then who? Or if Satan, then why did God allow it?
Scholars say Leviathan is symbolic. True. But for Job, what happened was real,
and Leviathan is the terrifying truth: There are things, Job, you could never control,
but God created it. God has a purpose for it. God shall defeat it.

Who is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must pay?
Everything under heaven belongs to me.

Job 42 | The Final Chapter

Hello, my friends. As we turn to Job 42, I feel a keen sense of awareness that the story is running out of pages, and I still have questions, but there's still a little time yet. Job lost everything: his wealth, family, health. Then came the long conversation—accusations from his friends, anguish from his heart, and the ever-haunting silence of God.

Until God spoke from the whirlwind: "I will ask and you will answer questions about stars and storms, beasts and behemoth. And then Leviathan, the untamable king over all who are proud."

And as the great monster retreated into the depths, Job was left trembling and wondering: "If God made Leviathan, who can stand against him?" And don't miss it—it was all questions. How will Job answer? Chapter 42, verse one: "Then Job replied to the Lord, 'I know that you can do all things. No purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, "Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?" Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

"You said, "Listen now and I will speak. I will question you and you shall answer me." My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.'"
And with that, one of the Bible's biggest talkers goes quiet. Job had been a talker; his book is a conversation. He needed that. We needed that. But now, in five short verses, he says it all.

It begins with a proclamation of simple faith: "I know that you can do all things." "I know"—that's faith. "That you can"—stop there.

Remember God's questions. Twelve times he asked, "Can you, Job?" Job gets it. He can't, but God can.

Job is letting go of the need to control and trusting God again—all things. There's a selection of key verses with the phrase "all things" that work like anchor pieces in the Bible's grand puzzle: "He works all things for good," "From him and through him and to him are all things," and "I can do all things through Christ."

Yet this verse was first from Job, whose first words to us were hopeless. He didn't just want his life ended; he wanted it erased. Now confronted with all that he cannot control and all that God can, Job returns to humble faith: "I know that you can do all things. No purpose of yours can be thwarted."
That Hebrew word "purpose"—mezimah—is intriguing. In human terms, it can mean clever strategy or even a devious scheme, but when applied to God, it speaks of a perfect, intentional design, a master plan with both power and the discretion to use it at the right time for the right ends.

Nothing—not suffering, not human scheming, not even our failure to understand—can contort God's purpose. Even seemingly impossible purposes like achieving both justice and mercy, or judging the proud without destroying all humanity. It is no coincidence that every one of those "all things" verses is about Jesus.

Only in Christ do we find all of God's seemingly impossible purposes accomplished. In his death, he gave us life. It is finished.
Only he can work all things for good. Job's Redeemer lives.

Then in verse three, Job remembers God's opening question: "You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?'" That stuck with Job. He realizes now that he was guilty of a fill-in-the-gaps theology, like God's guidebook had pages marked "This page intentionally left blank," and Job couldn't stand it. So he filled them in.

Verse three: "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know." It's not simply that Job didn't know; he couldn't know. It's beyond knowing—too wonderful. The word means marvelous, extraordinary. It's the difference between being impressed by a blueprint and being in awe at the real machine, or between knowing the basic tenets of the Gospel and watching Jesus transform a sinner's life. Too wonderful for me to know.

Verse four: "You said, 'Listen now and I will speak. I will question you and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."
That verse speaks multitudes. Have you ever had the experience of hearing about a place for years then seeing it? For me, it was Rome. What I heard was true, but standing in the Colosseum, immersed in history, all I had heard was transformed.

Job had heard plenty about God, but knowledge is not experience, and answers revealed are no match for God revealed. And as you struggle with your questions yet unanswered, spend time on this verse and ask yourself: "Which is better?"

Job has experienced God, and that means more than explanations ever could. This is not merely a submission to God's will. This is a new knowing, a deeper trust.

Verse six: "Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." The word "myself" is not in the Hebrew. Job says, "Therefore I despise," but it's unclear whether he means himself or what he said. I believe what Job feels is that deep regret that comes when it sinks way down deep—just how wrong you were. "How could I say that? How could I have believed that?" He repents, changes his mind. His words are now burned away in dust and ash with his pride and his old perspective.

Now watch what happens next. As we listen, I want you to see the faces of the friends and of Job—Eliphaz, who took the lead, so sure that the good guys always win; Bildad, who condemned Job's kids because God must be justified; Zophar, who wished God would speak up and condemn Job directly. All spoke elements of truth. All felt obligated to step up and defend God. And Job, who took the brunt and battled them all. Watch them now.

Verse seven: "After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, you have not spoken the truth about me as my servant Job has.'" Pause there. Can you see them? They defended God, but got it wrong. "You have not spoken the truth about me." And as that reality sinks slowly into their understanding, look over at Job. God just said, "My servant Job." Job, who worked his whole life to live right and love well—for his kids, for the poor and needy, for God himself. Job who longed with heart-wrenching cries for the God he knew would count his steps and not his sins. Job hears those words from God: "My servant Job."

God has instructions: "So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me as my servant Job has." Can you see the friends' eyes as they hear the Lord and look to Job—Job, covered in scabs and ash? His appearance, the very same that convinced them that he must be wicked. Job will pray for them. The Lord will hear him and will not deal with you according to your folly.

Notice God's mercy even to those who wielded God's judgment like a weapon. God corrects his kids. And if you are God's kid, he corrects you.
We cannot leave this book without recognizing that the Pharisee in the room is me and you. The disciples did it—they assumed that a blind man deserved it. And we do it; we misrepresent God. Yet the Lord does not deal with us according to our folly. He sends us to his servant Job just as he is to pray for us.

And not just pray—a sacrifice is made. That's crucial. For these men who were so bent on God's justice poured directly on sinners, now that they have sinned, God does provide justice, but not on them—on a sacrifice. Their sins are not simply overlooked; they are atoned. They are set right.
If you have been an Eliphaz, come to the cross and be forgiven in full. Jesus' sacrifice even covers judgmental religious hypocrites so that we can all live without blame and without shame.

And while we all have our turn at being Eliphaz, we are also Job. We are judged. We are presumed guilty by voices without and voices within.

But watch him now—tears of letting go. Four times God called him "my servant." If Job was Forrest Gump, he'd say, "Me and God was like peas and carrots, again." And twice the Lord said that he spoke the truth.
Now God already corrected what he got wrong, but here in the grand summary, Job got it right. That's vindication. He feared God. He shunned evil. He recognized the reality of injustice, yet trusted God and held his integrity. His faith was not in vain.

And now he has an assignment to keep. Verse nine: "So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them. And the Lord accepted Job's prayer."

Ah, and how good does that feel? These men who would steal from Job his very integrity, and who wished that God would punish Job to the full—Job does not get revenge in kind. He defeats the haters with God's love and the judgmental with God's mercy.

Now it's curious that Elihu is not mentioned. We'll come back to that in our final discussion. For now, verse ten:
"After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring."

So the Lord restores. Is this God's way of making up for the wrongs? I don't think so. Remember, God doesn't owe anyone.

And attempting to balance the bad and good on scales seems a foolish endeavor. This is God's grace—pressed down, shaken together, and running over.
Yet God is also just, and this is at least the beginnings of redemption. Job's Redeemer lives. He is still the God who rewards the righteous and punishes evil.

Job was right way back in chapter 17. He insisted that the righteous will hold to their ways. He struggled with God's timing, but he trusted God's faithfulness, and his faith and perseverance paid off.

He still grieves. Nothing can replace his kids, servants, and family. His family consoles him. Yet in his time, God delivers correction, justice, mercy, and grace. And don't miss it: life was terrible, hopeless. Now it is beautiful again. Verse twelve: "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters."

So Job is back at it, tending animals in the sphere that he can control, and blessed in his work and kids. Now these kids are not replacements. Only in eternity is death defeated and tragedy redeemed. We need Jesus for that. I believe Job will see those kids again. These kids are beautiful and worthy in their own right.

Recall that Job was suicidal. This doesn't fix his past, but it does make his future worth living for.

Verse fourteen: "The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-Happuch. Nowhere in all the land were found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers."

So Job is a girl dad. I don't think we're meant to read anything into this—only to see that life is indeed beautiful again and Job is a good father. Even in a culture that prioritizes sons, Job gives them all an inheritance.
In verse sixteen: "After this, Job lived one hundred and forty years. He saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years."

And that, my friends, is our happily ever after. So what do you make of it? Part of me feels like it's almost too happy, like life doesn't work out that simple. But perhaps this is God's way of painting our eternal rewards into Job's story in a way that we could relate to.

God does reward the righteous. Fear God and shun evil, whether here or in eternity. It pays in the end. And when we get there, our light and momentary troubles will not be worth comparing with the glory that is revealed in us.
So did God answer our questions? I'm not sure. But let's not interrupt Job's joy. Save the rest for our final reflection. Enjoy the moment.

If God corrects you, receive it. If he vindicates you as Job, take it in. Leave the mysteries to God and trust that he can do all things and can work all things for you. No purpose of his can be thwarted.

As for Job himself, he made it. Well done, Job. Well done.

Job in Retrospective | Conclusion

Welcome back to Job, everyone, and we are stepping out into the theater lobby for one final debrief and decompress. Okay, Kris, so how will this one be different from the intermissions? Are we still doing the emote, articulate, and respond?

So yes and no. This time we definitely have some emotions to process, but this time the drama is done. The theater lobby is the same, but we are not. So yes, we have some emoting to do, but this time our articulation will finally weave together some of the grand themes we followed throughout, and we'll save our responses for a very personal bonus episode about our own journeys. But I have to ask: did the story resolve? I mean, we waited a long time for God to speak, and he did. But did he answer the questions about suffering or blame?

And that, my friends, is why we're here in the lobby to talk it through. Since last we gathered, young Elihu spoke, God spoke, and then Job was restored. So guys, what are your initial feelings walking out? Let's start with the Elihu section.

I think Elihu is meant to be funny relief. He's the young guy who thinks he has all the answers, and yet simply restates everything the three old men have already said. He's the embodiment of the statement: "Young men think old men are fools, but old men know young men are fools."

That's really good.

You know, we wrestled over the rightness or wrongness of Elihu, but for me, in the end, Elihu is an opportunity to look with humility on my younger, overconfident self—all answers and no gaps. With maturity, I am now content to let the wild things stay wild.

All right, Peyton, what do you think about the Lord's speech?
Well, after all of this, God still doesn't give any answers. His speech is basically, "You can't handle the answers, Job." So I think the Book of Job is more about the validity of questions than the necessity of answers.
Yeah, it's amazing to me that, really, after listening to God, I was just awestruck and overwhelmed. And I relate to Job's response: "I repent in dust and ashes." I think that's a recognition that I was addressing the wrong questions.

There was never a more fitting sentence or statement that God said: "Brace yourself like a man, Job." That was about what God did, his approach. It was just so different. It felt like God. It was a wild experience.
All right, final chapter: your initial reactions to the restoration of Job. What do you think, Peyton?

You know, after some listener feedback, it struck me this time that Job accepted his chapter 42 resolution when he no longer needed to understand his chapter one.

You know, I've read through Job before, and this time I was genuinely surprised how much chapter 42 affected me. Like, even listening back, I had tears because Job got his God back. He was restored. And this was also the first time the restoration actually made sense to me.

You know, it wasn't just a replacement for his former family. And it made sense as the closest thing that we could relate to the reality of looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth. And it wasn't until I brought my pain that I actually really understood it.
But I'm gonna save that explanation for our personal reflection. Right now I really want to get to articulate, and this time I want each of us to put into words the grand story. There have been so many themes and tensions woven together, but now we view the full story.

So let's capture that for each of us. How have you seen the threads weave into a grand tapestry? Langham, what was your experience?
So I actually want to take us back, not just to the beginning of Job's story, but to the way we approached it. And we did not take the usual approach to the Book of Job. Job is a wisdom book, and if we treat it like Proverbs, we come looking for principles, concise takeaways, applications. That's powerful in Proverbs.

But if my approach to Job is to find application first, I will most likely bring to it what I already know. Alright, Eliphaz is very judgy: "Application: don't judge. Got it. Next." But Job doesn't work like that because Job is not God's answer book for suffering, which I have to admit is what I used to think. And when you, Kris, first suggested we approach it as a drama with multiple voices, I just thought, "That's a whole lot of work. Logistically, I'm the guy who manages the calendars for these things. I really don't want to do that." But we did it. No quick answers, no pithy takeaways. Just listening. Let them speak, let them feel. So when we heard Eliphaz, it wasn't just "He's wrong. Don't judge."

We listened, and the longer I sat with Eliphaz, the more uncomfortable it got—his need to explain suffering, to defend God, to make it all fit. And suddenly, wait. I've heard that before. I've heard that voice. Eliphaz is me. And somewhere along the way, as we stopped trying to solve the story, the story started working on us. We walked with Job through loss, confusion, and silence. We felt the weight of his questions, the sting of his friends, the tension of not knowing.

And many of you listeners shared that as Job faced his suffering, you found yourself facing your own old wounds, deep losses, things you hadn't fully processed. And something began to shift—not because we got answers, but because we stayed in the story. And right in the middle of Job chapter 28, we paused, and in verse 12: "But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?" As Job describes the miners digging deep into the earth, searching in the dark for precious stones, I see us mining Job's stories for answers, mining our own story, but mining the wrong way. Can wisdom be found? It's not in the mind. God understands the way to it, and he alone knows where it dwells.

Wisdom isn't something we uncover in the dark. It's something God holds in the light, and this book doesn't hand you answers. It leads you on a journey. And the irony is, by avoiding quick application, we found deeper application. So many stories from listeners who reconciled with family, processed loss, and trusted God without all the answers.

That's the beauty of God's word. All scripture is God-breathed, and when we let God's words speak on their own terms, he meets us in our own stories in ways we just don't expect.

Dude, that's so good. And I would just like to point out, for any Hitchhiker's fans out there, that in our grand search for the answer to life, the universe, and everything, the answer was 42 chapters. Just saying. But book reference aside, I thought about this grand story of believers who have so many right answers yet get it so wrong.

And I realized it's kind of like you're working on a puzzle with a missing piece—just one little gap—and you search everywhere. It's gotta be here. And your friends try to help by forcing the pieces together that don't match, and then they blame you for losing the piece. And then God shows up, and he doesn't fix the puzzle. So what does he do? Let's look back from the beginning. We started with a man blameless and upright who fears God and shuns evil, and we wrestled with that from verse one. But does he fear God for nothing? After tragedy, unspeakable loss, but not his fault.

Then 35 chapters of arguing blame and seeking wisdom, with one shining jewel in 28:28: "The fear of God, that is wisdom, and to shun evil, that is understanding." And Job had those very things from sentence one. He has those puzzle pieces, and he also has a significant amount of gospel. So what do we make of Job's gospel insights?
On his pulpit, Charles Spurgeon kept these words: "Please, sir, we would see Jesus." I think we always want to look for Jesus in every book. I mean, after all, Jesus said, "You search the scriptures diligently; they testify of me."

The Book of Job is ancient, and yet the gospel's already leaving footprints across its pages long before anyone, including Job, had language for it.

A famous breadcrumb is Job's defiant confession from the ash heap: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end he will stand upon the earth." It's a stunning declaration that seems to outrun everything Job could have known, but it's not alone. He longs for a mediator—someone, and I quote here, "to arbitrate between us, someone to lay a hand on us both, to bridge the gap between a holy God and a suffering man." He longs for God to count his steps and not his sins. That's from Job 14. He longs for an advocate who defends him like a friend. Job 16. And he anticipates the resurrection in Job 19:26: "After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God." And this is not accidental. These are gospel breadcrumbs, and every breadcrumb followed far enough leads us to a person.

Because Job himself is a picture of Jesus. The thread goes all the way back to the wager in chapter one. Satan appears before God, and he's permitted to test what is most precious to God: a blameless, upright man who's done nothing wrong.

That mirrors the temptation in the garden when God allowed Satan to move against Adam and Eve. And here that same adversary is unleashed on Job, and an innocent man is made to suffer. His friends drew the only conclusion that seemed logical: God must be punishing him. Like the onlooker said of Jesus at the cross, they considered him stricken, smitten by God. Isaiah would later echo this about the suffering servant, in words that would find their fullest meaning on a Roman cross. Nobody could have grasped the cosmic drama unfolding behind it—that's the point. Something is happening beyond the veil that no one can see. In the Book of Job, there is a wager in heaven, a battle in the unseen realm, and an innocent one bears the weight of it in his body without knowing why.

Job is the mystery of the gospel in human form: the blameless servant who suffers, who cries out, who feels the silence of heaven, like Jesus, who cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Job embodies what the whole story is building towards: the innocent can bear what the guilty deserve, that suffering is not the final word.

Paul pulls all this together in Romans 8, sitting on the far side of the resurrection. Paul can finally name what Job could only grope towards: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The accuser who stood before God in Job 1, demanding suffering for the blameless, has been silenced. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?" And nothing—not suffering, not loss, not the schemes of the adversary—shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. So when we're suffering, we should let these truths anchor us in God's love because, whatever answers we don't have, we do have these greater truths that will steer us through.

And for me, what makes Job's connection to Jesus so powerful is that Job is also connected to us. Like, I can relate. For me it was Job's guilt inventory in chapter 31. That one got me. He is blameless. He believes God's justice. Yet after this tragedy, he can't stop wrestling with guilt.

That's when I saw that Job's puzzle pieces are the very same pieces that we all stare at and arrange and rearrange after tragedy: blame, guilt, God's mercy, God's silence. Why do we do that? We're forgiven. So why keep blaming ourselves and blaming the world? Then God speaks.

Not once does he address blame. Instead, he takes Job into the wild, beyond his control. Why control? What's the connection? Look back at our puzzle. So many pieces are right, with just one little gap. But then you notice some pieces don't match up. We just kind of force them to, and as you separate those out, the puzzle expands. It's not just two-dimensional. I'm not sure three dimensions is enough. We don't even have end pieces: creation, birth, death. What do we know? And the gaps between them—they aren't blank. They're wild, full of beauty and adventure and beasts. And they weren't meant to be tamed or explained, but explored.

Now, evil is real, and God will judge. Job attested to that. But stretching that truth to cover gaps leads not to understanding but to blame. Shun evil—that's understanding.

So what about the gospel? Do you remember last intermission when I wondered if the gospel begins with guilt? I thought about that, and I recalled a verse with something about the foundations of the earth. So I found it. It's Ephesians 1:4, and when I read it, it about knocked me over:
"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."

There it is—the very same word that tripped me up in Job 1:1. Can Job actually be blameless? And can I relate? We're born sinners—it's Gospel 101. And after this whole journey, I stumble into Ephesians 1, telling me that you and I in Christ are blameless from the foundations of the world, like our very own chapter 1, verse 1. Chosen by God before we were born, sinners, before we felt worthless. Jesus said we are worth dying for. Our guilt is real, and God has every right to blame us if he chose, but Jesus took it all.

He crucified that blame and rose from the dead to prove it's gone. He chose you. His prerogative: to be blameless in his sight.

And we must leave that choice to God. Blame is not for us to give or take. Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Why? Because God did post the bond Job asked for. Elihu was right about the ransom. It's Jesus, and it is paid in full. Now, that doesn't remove the call to take responsibility or to make restitution. Old Testament sacrifice called for both sacrifice and restitution. But Jesus took the blame. Romans 12 drives it home:
"Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will repay. It belongs to him. So let it go." God does not blame you for what happened. That weight is gone. You might have been part of the cause. You can even take responsibility if you weren't the cause. But God does not blame you. Jesus took it. Your relationship with God is clear, and even as you take responsibility, you can do it without shame, without guilt.

So stop blaming yourself. The gospel begins and ends with God's love. You can find the cause, hold responsible, and seek justice. But the blame is neither yours to take nor give. Job's friends made one mistake: they thought blame was theirs to give. Job thought blame was his to defend. All the while, God had it settled. The gospel ends the blame loop.

So what is the gospel in response to tragedy? God still loves you. Your Redeemer lives. Your advocate defends you on high like a friend. His name is Jesus, and he counts your steps and not your sins.

Those gospel truths are not puzzle pieces to fill the gaps, and they're not band-aids to hide your wounds. They're anchors to steady your soul. This storm will not take you. He has you.

If God is for you, who can be against you? So why didn't God just say all that? He did. We couldn't hear it. Our pain wouldn't hear it. So 42 chapters, and now we do.

Job Epilogue

Welcome everyone to our personal epilogue for our journey through Job. I'm Chris Langham. For those of you who don't know what I look like because you've been listening on audio, it's me. I'm Kris. And we got the whole crew here. Wanna welcome the gang. We have been walking through the Book of Job for more than a year now, and for us, this has been quite a journey, and I'm sure for some of you it's been quite a journey as well.

We decided to add to our conclusion a little get-together, and an epilogue for ourselves after this phenomenal journey. So I'll introduce everybody for those who haven't seen any of us. Uh, next to me is Noah, Eliphaz himself.

How's it going, everybody?
Pete, you probably know.

Yeah, I played three characters, you know?
Including AI Kris.
And I am AI Kris on video. On social media, people think I'm an AI version of Kris. At least one person. At least one person.
This is what I actually look like.

Compliment of the highest regard.

All right. And we have one more that we decided to bring with us. This has been such an experience for the three of us that we decided we probably need some counseling after this experience to navigate this, so we literally invited our counselor. Thank you, Bill Farris. Yes. Welcome. How are you, Bill?

I'm well, and I'm really happy to be here. This is gonna be great.
So Bill has not been on mic through this experience, but he is literally counselor to each of the three of us, and we've been talking through the experience the whole time.

So we decided to bring him in. Bill, we're so glad you're here.
I'm so glad to be here.

I hope you bring a sense of professionalism to this mess.
To this mess. That's asking a lot, Kris. Yeah. I wish you good luck. Godspeed. All right. We wanna—I actually wanna kind of separate for the camera and just connect with you guys here.

We need to talk this through. I do think it'll be a great experience for our listeners, but this is for us to talk through what we've been through. We finished off our conclusion. We emoted. We articulated. This is the final response, and this is final—where we can't just keep resetting.

The play is done. We're through the drama. What are your responses? What are you taking away from this whole thing? We've got several of our main issues to talk about. We're gonna talk about the blameless question, blame, control. We're going to talk through reputation, integrity, the unanswered why questions.

But let's just start with what's your biggest takeaway? Now that a year has passed, and we've had a few weeks on for each of us, what are you holding onto?

I mean, what an incredible masterpiece.
This book went from, like, a stinker book to this is the most incredible book in the Bible.

Stinker book? You called a book of the Bible a stinker? It was, man. You know, you grow up with this kind of idea of what the Book of Job is, and now going through it at the pace that we went and sitting with Job in the ashes from the beginning to the end, it is absolutely incredible. It is a masterpiece.
Like, Peyton, you talk a lot, too. The dynamic of what it is is poetry, but it's absolutely mind-boggling.

Yeah. I mean, for me, you know, just coincidentally, I happened to be reading through C. S. Lewis talking about John Milton's Paradise Lost. He did, like, a ten-chapter introduction. Wow. And he just talks about epic poetry, and at a certain point I'm like, "This is epic poetry."
Yeah.

And this would've most likely been read out loud, and possibly—I mean, the way that we did it with different voices, I don't know if that's the way the rabbis do it or whatever, but that's how you would've done it in most of the world when you had a poem like this. But I've always thought of Job as, like, a book about suffering and how to get through it.

I think that's a how-to for getting through suffering. You either suck at it, or you're good at it like Job was. And for me, it was kind of like, for the first time ever, I saw, no, this is a book about faith. This is a book about a guy who's confused. He's hurt. He feels betrayed at times by God.

But he knows what he knows about God. And he can't reconcile that with what's happening, but he still holds on. And so for me at the end of this, I just came away like, "This is a book about faith." That's really good.
I feel like it's a book about Job.

And I say that in detail. We should call it Job in the—I mean, then we would know what to expect. Right, right. In that he's a person. Yeah. And we relate to him. You know, Forrest Gump is one of my favorite movies. It's about Forrest Gump. It's not about anything in particular. Yeah. And this goes back to old wounds, feelings from English class.

I always felt like we were killing books.
Yep.

And I think I learned so much in the process. I respect my English teachers who taught me so much to be able to analyze the subject and, you know, find a thesis and write a book report. And yet in that process, I always felt like I killed the experience.

And for me, Job is about Job—what he went through, and I relate to that. And it is good to give words to it, but not to pick it apart. Yeah. And that was what I felt really proud of, our work together of just letting Job be who he is and walk through it with him.
Yeah.

Bill, you're coming into this first time. You've been listening through with us. What's some of your experience with Job?

Um, I appreciate, for one thing, the way the audio guides have asked us to just, "Don't rush. Don't—you wanna answer this. You wanna jump in. You wanna get to this, you know, and let's let them talk. Let them sit in the moment and just be in the mystery, and don't try." So I really appreciate that approach so much because it reminds me a little bit of Lamentations, actually. Jeremiah's very epic poem about the fall of Jerusalem. Some of the most, shall we say, mind-bending verses in the Bible are in Lamentations. Just the description that he gives of the absolute devastation, kind of on par with Job's personal devastation, his individual devastation. But here, Jeremiah's walking through a city and seeing the rubble, and he had warned everybody, "This is gonna happen unless you, you know, do certain things that God is asking."

And then they don't, and it does. And then right in the middle of that, he finds this diamond that we all love to quote from chapter two where he says, "Nevertheless, I keep this in mind: the mercies of God are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness." And then he goes back to some more devastation and rubble and all of that. And that's kind of like how I feel about Job. Is like buried treasure is in all of the lamentation and conversation. I particularly think chapter 19, that's been made into some beautiful music about, "I know that my redeemer lives." Right in the middle of the book is this diamond, like in Lamentations. "I know my redeemer lives, and in the end I will see Him, and I will, you know, I will see Him in my flesh."

And He will judge. Yeah. Like, here's this gorgeous truth buried in all of the agony.

And maybe there's something in both of those books that are talking about what Job, in particular as we're talking about it today, is pointing us toward, which is we have to be present to all of the devastation, describe it, spell it out, be with it.

But you know, there's diamonds buried underneath in there, and if you look for them, they're telling us something about God's faithfulness.
Yeah. And that God invites us on the quest to find them. And I personally am absolutely guilty of coming to the Book of Job for many years to skip to the diamonds.

Yeah. To just, like—and it's like visiting a museum and just, like, running to the Mona Lisa, like there it is, there it is, and then running out. Or just going to the Hope Diamond and just. But walking through Job was like digging for the Hope Diamond, not knowing if you're gonna find any gems at all but just getting in there and finding them. And I do the same thing with Lamentations. There's a few great verses. Yeah. And I just skip to them, teach those, and move on. Don't we all? Right. And I think this approach to Job would help anybody who's reading Lamentations or some of the psalms of lament or some of the other parts of scripture that are not just brimming with happy juice to get us to just, like, slow down, be present, listen to this voice. It's painful, it's awful, but there he's talking about something that we need to hear about the human experience and about God.

Yeah. And faith. So yeah.
So let's talk about that. My buddy calls it "the downroad up." I've talked about that before. And so often—he's in counseling and rehabilitation, and he says so many aren't willing to take the downroad.

And I say, "You gotta take the downroad and get to the up." But I think Job gave us permission to walk down into the valley into those feelings. Let's talk about permission a little bit. Why do you think Job's story does that, giving people permission? And why is it that we need that permission to feel the negative feelings?

There's a misconception of faith that says faith and doubt are oppositional. They don't coexist.
I think that's true of faith and unbelief, which is sort of a decision to not believe, but I think I see doubt in all of our Bible heroes, and it exists on the edge of their faith. Yeah. It's like muscle burn when you're training for a sport or lifting weights. It's like it hurts to lift past a certain point, and yet you need to to keep getting stronger, right?

So doubt is that place where it's like, um, I used to lift 100 pounds, and it hurt. Now I can lift 100 pounds okay. Now 120 hurts to lift, and so I think that's what doubt is. It's the edge of your faith where it's not easy to believe. It hurts to believe. It's hard to believe because you're pushing against facts and things and experiences and feelings. And I love the verse in Matthew right before the Great Commission.

Right before it, it says that the disciples came to Jesus on the mountain, and they worshiped him, and some doubted.
Yeah.

I love that worship and doubt exist in that same verse, in that same experience of looking directly at the risen Jesus and going, "Huh? Really?"

It's making me push on reality, and yet I worship, and I struggle at the same time. Yeah. And that's not something that's often offered in our Christian culture.
No.
Um, doubt is often seen as well, if you're doubting, you have no faith. I'm saying if you're doubting, you probably are pushing on the edges of your faith, and that's a good thing.

Yeah. In that story, they doubted, but they showed up.
Yeah. They brought their doubt to the scene. Yes. And I think that's what we do in Job. We brought it.

Yeah, I think Job is, as you said earlier, it's about Job. It's about a human, and he's just very human. And the more that I study the Apostle Paul, dude's so human. Like, he says, "Hey, pray for me. I'm nervous. You know, pray for me for boldness." You don't ask that if you have it all figured out and you're confident.

And Paul talks about his struggles often. He talks about, "Hey, I got arrogant." You know, the gospel portrays to us very human people, and it never glosses it over, especially not in the Old Testament. There's not a hero we have in the Old Testament didn't radically fail. Abraham, Moses, David, they all fail. Solomon. Like, you name a hero, and they fail, right? Job doesn't give some spectacular failure. It gives us his humanness. And there are people that have a ban on humanity. Like, you can't be human. You have to be superhuman if you have faith, like Bill said. That's not true.

You know, the reality is that most of us go through our day without these same answers that we come away with at the end of the Book of Job. At the end, we come away with the answer like, "It's okay. Everything's okay." But we're not given answers. We're just told it's okay, and we are meant to, by faith, kind of understand that, but it doesn't whitewash our humanity.
It doesn't explain away, hey, you're gonna have days like this. You might have years like this, where you're going to be very human in the midst of very real suffering.

Well, guys, we're gonna have to cut the conversation there. It was a powerful discussion, and it went on another hour.
So we're cutting off here, and we posted the full discussion on Through the Word's YouTube page. We'd love to have you join us there. Just find Through the Word's channel and scroll through our Job series until you find the epilogue: Finding Closure in the Book of Job. Through the Word teachers reflect on the journey.

You'll hear Peyton, Noah, and myself reflect on some of the big issues that came up and some fantastic insight from our friend Bill. We talked through several of the biggest issues that we each wrestled through on this journey, including the issues of blame and loss of control, healing from some of our own trauma, and the challenge and power of trusting God through the wild things.

And we share our own personal resolutions moving forward. I wanna thank Bill Ferris for his wisdom and guidance, thank Peyton and Noah for sharing the journey with me, and huge thanks to all of our early access listeners who gave us feedback, which was a huge help and really impacted our delivery.

And I loved reading the stories. The stories were so good, we decided to capture some of them. And I had the incredible blessing and honor to talk to some of our Job listeners and get their stories. You can also find those on the Through the Word YouTube channel with the Job series.
And before I go, I wanna thank you. We did this for you, our amazing listeners. It is one of my life's greatest honors to accompany all of you on your journey with the Lord through His Word.

And speaking of which, what's our next journey? Well, that's up to you, and it might depend on when you hear this and where you are in your journey. If you are new to the Bible, I suggest that we meet Jesus.

So join me on our study journey through Mark and Colossians. If you're looking for something a little more like this one through Job, perhaps join me for a more philosophical pondering over the meaning and meaninglessness of life in Ecclesiastes.

As for me, my next big project for launch is a personal favorite: Science and the Bible.

Or if you're looking for a Bible book that gets more practical about how to respond to trials and suffering, join us for 1 Peter. Whichever you pick, sign up now.

Thanks for joining me on this one, guys.
Can't hardly wait for the next one.