

Lesson 10 Article

The Patience of Job

We know Job's story very well. He was very devoted and faithful to the Lord, and he was very prosperous and happy. And then the devil came along and suggested that Job was faithful because he was blessed. If his blessings were removed, his devotion to God would vanish!

So the Lord allowed Satan to test Job, and test he did! Job lost his family, his health and his possessions. But in the end, Job still had his faith, and the devil was proven wrong.

In citing the example of Job, James refers to 'the end intended by the Lord'. And that end was to show 'that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful' (v. 11).

By reminding his readers of Job, James was calling them to trust God to have a good purpose even in the midst of circumstances that they did not understand.

We are called to this same kind of patience, but, oh, how difficult it is for us! We look at this harsh circumstance and that unpleasant reality, and we are very ready and eager to pronounce an adverse verdict on God. If the Lord truly had our best interests at heart, he would not allow such things! These difficulties are so great that there could not possibly be a good purpose behind them!

If we will let him, the devil will always have us drawing false conclusions about God on the basis of our burdens and trials.

What are we to do? We must learn how to talk to the devil! And when he suggests that our circumstances are such that they could not conceivably come from the hand of a good God, we must learn to point him to the cross of Calvary. That is where God for ever declared how he feels about his children. He put his only Son there to bear the wrath of God in their stead.

As we point Satan to the cross, we must say to him, 'God did so much for me there that I can never question his love for me. God did so much for me there that if he chooses to do nothing else for me at all, I will still have cause to praise him forever.'

The cross is ever the great antidote for whatever ails the Christian. And if we will learn to always take the devil and his insinuations there, he will leave us and take his insinuations with him!¹

Here is the sobering truth about the nature of trials in the life of righteous persons, that God allows them to be tested in order to prove their faith (cf. 1:2; Heb 12:7–11). In some ways their endurance proves the Lord's boast in them and in other ways confirms to the world that God's approval rests on those who remain faithful to him in spite of the evil they suffered. This text gives insight into the basis for Job's prominence and the Lord's own word on his standing in God's sight. What else could Job be but one of the Bible's chief exemplars? The key point is that in all his trials Job maintained "his integrity," and this integrity in spite of trial is what was found most pleasing to God.²

¹ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James*. Opening Up Commentary (154–156). Leominster: Day One Publications.

² Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (226). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.