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THE 66-BOOK 8-WEEK GROUP BIBLE STUDY SERIES • BOOK 18 OF 66

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JOB

An 8-Week Group Bible Study

By Greg and Kayla Gibson

THE COMPLETE STUDY • WEEKS 1–8 • JOB 1:1–42:17
GENERAL / MIXED GROUP EDITION

Job: An 8-Week Bible Study

An 8-Week Bible Study • ESV® • 8 Sessions of 75–90 Minutes

LEADER GUIDE EDITION

Complete Participant Text + Interleaved Pacing, Hebrew Word Studies, Facilitation Probes & Pitfalls

Job: An 8-Week Bible Study

Leader Guide Edition • General / Mixed Group Track

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WEEK 1 OF 8

Week 1: Tested and Accused — Job 1:1–7:21

Scripture Scope: Job 1:1–7:21 (ESV) • Session Length: 75–90 Minutes

- **The title:** The book is named for Job, a man of Uz who is "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1).
- **The setting:** Job lives in the land of Uz, east of Israel, apparently in an early, patriarchal-like era: he is wealthy in flocks and herds and offers sacrifices for his family himself. The book stands first among the Old Testament books of poetry and wisdom.
- **The main characters:** Job; his wife; his three friends Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; a younger man, Elihu the Buzite; the Adversary (Hebrew hasatan) in the opening scenes; and the LORD, who finally speaks out of the whirlwind.
- **Its form:** A prose story at the beginning and end frames a long poetic dialogue. Most of the book is poetry, full of vivid images and some of the most difficult Hebrew in the Bible.
- **The structure:**
  - Prologue: the test (chapters 1–2).
  - Job's lament (chapter 3).
  - Three rounds of dialogue with the friends (chapters 4–27).
  - A poem on wisdom (chapter 28).
  - Job's final speech and oath (chapters 29–31).
  - Elihu's speeches (chapters 32–37).
  - The LORD's speeches and Job's replies (38:1–42:6).
  - Epilogue: the verdict and restoration (42:7–17).
- **Why it matters:** Job asks not only why the righteous suffer, but whether God is just, whether anyone fears God for nothing, and where wisdom is found. It shows that faith can lament honestly, that tidy explanations of suffering can wound, and that the answer is not a formula but the God who speaks. Job points to Jesus, the truly righteous Sufferer, the Redeemer who lives.

How This 8-Week Study Works

Designed for weekly small groups, mini-churches, and community gatherings (75–90 minutes per session) rather than daily homework checklists, each week of Job invites you to walk through the story of a suffering man and his God together through six repeatable sections:

- **Section X.1 — Opening:** Sets the scene, the Week at a Glance, Head, Heart, and Hands objectives, the Opening Frame, and the Opening Entry Question.
- **Section X.2 — Historical & Literary Context:** Places the week's chapters inside the structure of Job and the ancient Near Eastern world.
- **Section X.3 — Movement 1:** The week's first guided passage: Guided Scripture Reading, Anchor Verses, Teaching Narrative, and Group Discussion Questions.
- **Section X.4 — Movement 2:** The week's second guided passage, following the same flow.
- **Section X.5 — Canonical Horizon:** Traces how the passage echoes across Scripture and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- **Section X.6 — Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer:** Moves the week's study into everyday life, previews next week, and closes in prayer.

Key anchor verses are printed in each section for quick reference. Longer focal passages are read aloud together from the ESV. Job's long speeches are summarized so the group can follow the argument. Job speaks honestly about grief, pain, and despair, and the study makes room for that honesty with care.

Choosing a Bible Translation: Top 5 Translations Compared

Every English Bible translation falls along a spectrum between two primary approaches: word-for-word translation (formal equivalence, which prioritizes literal accuracy to the original phrasing and sentence structure) and thought-for-thought translation (dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes immediate modern readability by translating idioms and ideas into natural contemporary expressions). Here is how five widely used English translations compare:

- **ESV (English Standard Version) — Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Follows the wording and sentence structure of the original Hebrew and Greek closely while using modern English; well suited to close study.
  - Cons: Because it tracks the original sentence structure, some phrasing can feel more formal than everyday speech.
- **NIV (New International Version) — Balanced (Between Word-for-Word and Thought-for-Thought)**
  - Pros: Widely read; balances accuracy to the original languages with natural, everyday readability.
  - Cons: Because some idioms are rendered as modern expressions, a few literal wordplays or technical terms can be less visible.
- **NLT (New Living Translation) — Thought-for-Thought**
  - Pros: Warm and conversational; reads smoothly aloud and helps readers follow the big picture of long passages.
  - Cons: Because it prioritizes meaning over literal phrasing, it can be harder to use for close word study.
- **CSB (Christian Standard Bible) — Optimal Equivalence (Balanced)**
  - Pros: Stays close to the original words where possible while smoothing awkward phrasing into natural modern English.
  - Cons: Because it is a newer translation, some well-known verses may sound different from the wording many readers remember.
- **KJV / NKJV (King James Version & New King James Version) — Traditional Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Historic cadence that shaped English literature and church history; the NKJV updates archaic pronouns ("thee/thou") while keeping the classic rhythm.
  - Cons: Often reads like older English poetry, with complex sentences and archaic or formal vocabulary that can be harder for modern readers to follow.

This study quotes the ESV.

Greg & Kayla's Recommended Study Bibles

Having a trusted study Bible on hand is one of the best ways to go deeper as you read through Job:

- **Greg's Favorite Study Bible:** The MacArthur Study Bible (ESV), which contains extensive explanatory notes beneath almost every verse, ideal for detailed study.
- **Kayla's Favorite Study Bible:** The ESV Study Bible, containing over 20,000 study notes, articles, and explanations.

The 8-Week Job Study at a Glance

Week	Title & Passage	Movement 1 / Movement 2	Canonical Horizon
1	**Tested and Accused** (1:1–7:21)	The Hedge Removed (1:1–2:13) / Job's Cry and Eliphaz's Counsel (3:1–7:21)	The tested righteous One; a High Priest who sympathizes
2	**No Arbiter** (8:1–14:22)	Bildad and Job (8:1–10:22) / Zophar and Job: Dust and Breath (11:1–14:22)	The one Mediator between God and man
3	**My Redeemer Lives** (15:1–21:34)	Eliphaz Again and a Witness in Heaven (15:1–17:16) / Bildad, Zophar, and Job's Redeemer (18:1–21:34)	The Redeemer who lives
4	**Where Is Wisdom?** (22:1–28:28)	The Third Cycle Breaks Down (22:1–27:23) / The Mine and the Source (28:1–28)	Christ, the wisdom of God
5	**Job's Final Oath** (29:1–31:40)	The Memory of Former Days (29:1–30:31) / Job's Oath of Innocence (31:1–40)	The truly innocent Sufferer; a better advocacy
6	**Elihu Speaks** (32:1–37:24)	Elihu Enters (32:1–33:33) / The Almighty Is Beyond Our Finding Out (34:1–37:24)	The Spirit who gives understanding; a mediator and a ransom
7	**Out of the Whirlwind** (38:1–40:5)	The LORD's First Speech (38:1–39:30) / Job's First Reply (40:1–5)	The Word through whom all things were made
8	**Then My Eye Saw You** (40:6–42:17)	Behemoth, Leviathan, and Job's Confession (40:6–42:6) / The LORD Restores (42:7–17)	The Lord's compassion and mercy; all things made new

How to Use This Leader Guide Edition

This **Leader Guide Edition** is built on a synchronized two-edition architecture so you never have to juggle two separate books during your small group or mini-church gathering:

1. 100% Word-for-Word Participant Text Included: Every section, Scripture reading prompt, verbatim ESV anchor verse callout, teaching narrative, table, and discussion or reflection prompt appears here **word-for-word identical** to what your group members see in their Participant Study Edition. Section numbers and question labels match exactly, so leaders and participants can stay on the same page.

2. Interleaved `[LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY]` Blocks: Immediately following each section, you will find a dedicated leader block containing:

- **Pacing & Time Targets** calibrated for a 75–90 minute session. Pacing targets appear in every Leader section header. Job weeks cover long poetic speeches, so summarize the argument of each speech and read only the focal passages aloud. If time runs short, shorten the Teaching Narratives and the retellings rather than the discussion.
- **Hebrew Word Study & Ancient Near Eastern Research Quick-References** so you can explain terms naturally without lecturing, when they add something useful.
- **Question-by-Question Facilitation Probes** listed in question order, designed to move conversation past polite answers into honest reflection.
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around** so you can gently redirect common rabbit trails back to the biblical text.

- **Additional Research Notes** appear when they add something useful.

3. Leader Flags: Numbered in reading order, they mark passages that need pastoral care or tend to raise hard questions, with guidance on handling them. Job includes the death of children, chronic illness and pain, grief, despair and the wish to die, friends who blame the sufferer, and questions about whether God is just. The flags give a consistent approach: retell hard scenes briefly in your own words, never read graphic verses aloud, do not rush anyone past their grief, do not explain anyone's suffering for them, and make room for members who carry their own wounds. If anyone expresses thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or hopelessness, take it seriously, stay with them, and connect them with help. In the U.S., call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Outside the U.S., use the appropriate emergency or crisis service for your location.

4. Tracking the argument: The friends' speeches are not repeated filler; each round of dialogue moves the argument forward. Help the group notice what changes from week to week rather than repeating "the friends are wrong."

5. Reading aloud: Assign readers ahead of time for the Guided Scripture Reading. Printed anchor verses are for quick reference; read the longer focal passages from an open ESV. Passages marked "in brief" are summarized or retold by the leader rather than read.

6. Facilitating well: Ask the printed question, wait, and let silence work. Use the probes to deepen, not to lecture. Aim for every voice to be heard at least once each session.

Week 1 Session Pacing at a Glance (75–90 Minutes)

Section	Focus	Time Target
Section 1.1	Opening: Tested and Accused (Job 1:1–7:21) (1.1 Q1)	**10 mins**
Section 1.2	Historical & Literary Context: A Righteous Sufferer in the Land of Uz (1.2 Q1–Q3)	**12 mins**
Section 1.3	Movement 1: The Hedge Removed (Job 1:1–2:13) (1.3 Q1–Q5)	**22 mins**
Section 1.4	Movement 2: Job's Cry and Eliphaz's Counsel (Job 3:1–7:21) (1.4 Q1–Q5)	**20 mins**
Section 1.5	Canonical Horizon: The Tested Righteous One; a High Priest Who Sympathizes (1.5 Q1–Q3)	**12 mins**
Section 1.6	Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer (1.6 Q1–Q3)	**9 mins**
Total	**Full Week 1 Group Session**	**75–90 mins**

Scripture Scope: Job 1:1–7:21 • **Focal Group Readings:** Job 1:1–12; 1:20–22; 2:1–10; 4:12–21; 6:14–21; 7:11–21 (ESV) • **Session Pacing:** 75–90 Minutes

Section 1.1

Opening: Tested and Accused (Job 1:1–7:21)

Opening

There was a man in the land of Uz named Job, blameless and upright, who feared God and turned away from evil. He had ten children, great wealth, and a heart that prayed for his family. Then the curtain opens on a scene Job will never see: the LORD holds Job up as his servant, and the Adversary claims Job fears God only because of what he gets. The LORD permits a test.

In one day Job loses his herds, his servants, and all ten of his children. He falls to the ground and worships. Then his own body is struck with painful sores. Three friends come and sit with him in silence for seven days. When Job finally speaks, he curses the day he was born, and the long conversation about suffering, justice, and God begins.

Week 1 At a Glance

Scripture Scope	Job 1:1–7:21 (Job's character and household, the two heavenly scenes, Job's losses and worship, his wife's words, the friends' silence, Job's lament, Eliphaz's first speech, and Job's first reply)
Focal Passages	Job 1:1–12; 1:20–22; 2:1–10; 4:12–21; 6:14–21; 7:11–21
Literary & Structural Anchor	The reader knows more than Job: the heavenly scenes are never reported to Job or his friends. The words "bless" and "curse" are played against each other (1:5, 11, 21; 2:5, 9). Job's "integrity" is affirmed by the LORD and challenged by his wife (2:3, 9). The friends begin well, with seven days of silence (2:13). With chapter 3 the book turns from story to poetry.
Big Idea	Job truly fears God; his losses are not the unmasking of a hypocrite, and easy explanations of suffering already begin to fail.

Week 1 Learning Objectives (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD	**Know the Story:** Trace the two heavenly scenes, Job's losses and worship, and the first exchange between Job and Eliphaz.
HEART	**Fear God Honestly:** See that faith can both bless God in loss and cry out in anguish.
HANDS	**Sit with the Suffering:** Take one step to be a faithful, kind presence for someone who is hurting.

Opening Frame: Faith for No Reason?

Esther closed the history books with sorrow turned to gladness. Job opens the books of poetry and wisdom with a man who loses everything and does not yet see any reversal. Job is blameless and upright; he fears God and prays for his children. Then, in a scene he never sees, his faith is called into question, and in one day his world falls apart. This week, watch what the reader is shown that Job is not, and listen closely to how Job and his friend speak about God. The question for this week: can we trust God and still speak honestly when life falls apart? Before we read together, take a moment to share with the group:

Opening Entry Question (Icebreaker)

1.1 Q1 (Opening Entry Question): Think of a time someone simply sat with you, or you sat with someone, in a hard moment. What made that presence meaningful?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.1 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 10 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 10 minutes. Opening and At a Glance, 3 minutes; Head, Heart, Hands, 2 minutes; Opening Frame, 2 minutes; Opening Entry Question, 3 minutes. Front matter is for reading at home; point members to it rather than reading it aloud.
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Welcome the group to a new study and say plainly at the start that Job deals with deep suffering. Let members know they are free to listen without sharing, and that you are available to talk afterward.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.1 Q1**: Who was there? What did they do or not say? Why did it matter?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not ask members to share their own losses in the opening question.
- **Additional Research Notes:** James 5:11 points the church to "the steadfastness of Job." Job's steadfastness includes both his worship (1:21) and his honest protest (3:1–26; 7:11); the book holds them together.

Section 1.2

Historical & Literary Context: A Righteous Sufferer in the Land of Uz (Job 1:1–7:21)

Entering the Land of Uz

1. Historical Background

Job's world looks patriarchal: wealth in livestock, a father offering sacrifices for his household (1:5), and a long life (42:16). Uz lies east of Israel, perhaps toward Edom. The book does not date itself, and its author is unknown.

2. Cultural Setting

Other ancient Near Eastern writings portray a pious sufferer who complains to his god, such as the Babylonian poem known as "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom." Job belongs to that conversation but is unique: the LORD himself speaks, and the sufferer is vindicated. Tearing a robe, shaving the head, sitting in ashes, and seven days of silence were ancient mourning practices.

3. Literary Structure of Job 1:1–7:21

- **Job's character and household** (1:1–5)
- **The first heavenly scene** (1:6–12)
- **The losses** (1:13–19)
- **Job's worship** (1:20–22)
- **The second heavenly scene and Job's body** (2:1–8)
- **Job's wife and the friends' silence** (2:9–13)
- **Job curses his day** (3:1–26)
- **Eliphaz's first speech** (4:1–5:27)
- **Job's first reply** (6:1–7:21)

4. Key Themes

The reader knows more than Job; blessing and cursing; integrity; the gift of silence; from story to poetry.

5. Theological Considerations

The Adversary acts only within limits the LORD sets. The test concerns whether Job's fear of God is free, not whether he has a hidden sin.

6. Relevant Scholarly Insights

Hasatan means "the adversary" or "the accuser," a figure in the heavenly court who must ask permission. Later Scripture reveals more about Satan; Job's scene should be read on its own terms.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.2)

1.2 Q1: The reader is shown the heavenly scenes, but Job and his friends never are. Why do you think the book is told this way?

1.2 Q2: The Adversary asks, "Does Job fear God for no reason?" (1:9). What is he really questioning about Job's faith?

1.2 Q3: After his losses, Job's friends sat with him seven days without a word, "for they saw that his suffering was very great" (2:13). Why is silence sometimes the best first gift to a sufferer?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.2 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 12 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 12 minutes. Context summary, 5 minutes; discussion, 7 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Explain the shape of the book briefly using the Front Matter outline. Emphasize that the heavenly scenes are for the reader, not for Job.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q1**: What do we know that Job does not? How does that change how we hear his words? What does it say about our own limited view?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q2**: What does the Adversary suspect? Is that a fair question to ask of us? What would faith "for no reason" look like?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q3**: What did the friends do right? Why silence? When has silence helped you?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not use the heavenly scenes to explain any member's suffering; no one in the group has been shown their own "heavenly scene."
- **Additional Research Notes:** The heavenly council appears elsewhere in Scripture (1 Kings 22:19–23; Psalm 82). In Job the Adversary is under the LORD's authority: he can act only within the limits set in 1:12 and 2:6.
- **Ancient Near Eastern Research Notes:** Babylonian works such as "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom" and the so-called Babylonian Theodicy feature a righteous sufferer and a dialogue about divine justice. Job differs sharply: the one God, the LORD, is in control of the test, speaks personally to the sufferer, and declares him in the right.

Section 1.3

Movement 1: The Hedge Removed (Job 1:1–2:13)

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Reader 1: Job 1:1–5** (focal passage) — Job of Uz is blameless and upright, fears God, and turns from evil; he has seven sons, three daughters, and great wealth, and he regularly offers burnt offerings for his children in case they have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.
- **Reader 2: Job 1:6–12** (focal passage) — The sons of God present themselves before the LORD, and the Adversary comes among them; the LORD commends Job, and the Adversary answers that God has put a hedge around him and that, if all he has is touched, Job will curse God to his face; the LORD permits him to touch all Job has, but not Job himself.
- **Leader summary of Job 1:13–19** — In one day messengers arrive one after another: raiders have taken Job's oxen, donkeys, and camels and killed the servants; fire has burned the sheep and shepherds; and a great wind has struck the house where his sons and daughters were feasting, and all ten children have died.

- **Reader 3: Job 1:20–22** (focal passage) — Job tears his robe, shaves his head, falls to the ground, and worships, blessing the name of the LORD; in all this he does not sin or charge God with wrong.
- **Reader 4: Job 2:1–8** (focal passage) — Again the LORD commends Job, who still holds fast his integrity; the Adversary says a man will give anything for his own life; the LORD permits him to strike Job's body but spare his life, and Job is struck with painful sores and sits in the ashes.
- **Reader 5: Job 2:9–13** (focal passage) — Job's wife urges him to curse God and die; Job answers that we should receive both good and evil from God, and he does not sin with his lips; three friends come to comfort him, weep at the sight of him, and sit with him on the ground seven days and nights without a word.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

> **Job 1:1:** There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.
>
> **Job 1:21:** And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."
>
> **Job 2:3:** And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason."
>
> **Job 2:10:** But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Teaching Narrative: The Hedge Removed

1. Blameless and Upright (Job 1:1–5)

Job's integrity is stated before any loss. He prays for his children.

2. Does Job Fear God for No Reason? (Job 1:6–12)

The question is whether faith is free or hired. The Adversary acts only within the LORD's limits.

3. One Terrible Day (Job 1:13–19)

Retold briefly. Everything is gone, including all ten children.

4. Blessed Be the Name of the LORD (Job 1:20–22)

Job grieves fully and worships.

5. Skin for Skin (Job 2:1–8)

The test reaches Job's body. He still holds fast his integrity.

6. Shall We Receive Good and Adversity? (Job 2:9–10)

His wife's bitter words; Job's reply.

7. Seven Days of Silence (Job 2:11–13)

The friends' best moment is their silent presence.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.3)

1.3 Q1: Job is described as "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1) before any of his losses. Why does it matter that we are told this at the very start?

1.3 Q2: The Adversary says the LORD has put "a hedge around him" (1:10). In what ways can our faith become tied to the blessings God gives rather than to God himself?

1.3 Q3: After losing everything, Job said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (1:21). How can someone grieve deeply and worship at the same time?

1.3 Q4: The LORD says Job "still holds fast his integrity" (2:3). What does it mean to hold on to integrity when life falls apart?

1.3 Q5: Job asks, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (2:10). How do you understand his response, and how can faith receive life's adversity without becoming passive about harm that should be addressed?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.3 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 22 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 22 minutes. Guided Scripture Reading with brief retelling, 7 minutes; Anchor Verses and Teaching Narrative, 4 minutes; discussion, 11 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).

- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Have readers take 1:1–5, 1:6–12, 1:20–22, 2:1–8, and 2:9–13. Retell 1:13–19 yourself, slowly and simply, without reading the messengers' reports aloud. Pause briefly after the retelling before moving on.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q1**: What are we told about Job? Who says it? How does it shape how we read what follows?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q2**: What does the hedge stand for? What would remain if it were gone? Where is your faith tied to blessings?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q3**: What did Job do first? Then what? Have you seen grief and worship together?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q4**: What is integrity? What threatened it? Where are you holding on?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q5**: What does Job mean? Is it comforting or hard to hear? What helps you live it?
- **LEADER FLAG 1: The death of children and servants (1:13–19)**
  - Retell only; do not read the messenger speeches aloud, and do not use them as anchors. Members who have lost a child, or who have lived through disaster or violence, may be deeply affected. Go slowly, allow silence, and say explicitly that the later gift of new children (42:13) does not erase or replace these deaths. Offer to talk privately after the session.
- **LEADER FLAG 2: Job's wife (2:9–10)**
  - She too has lost all ten children. Do not make her a stock "bad wife," and do not linger on her words. Job's reply is firm but is not permission to shame a grieving spouse; members whose spouses have spoken bitterly in grief may be in the room.
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not explain Job's suffering as punishment, testing for growth, or any other theory; the book refuses to let us. Do not speculate beyond what the prologue says about the Adversary. In Job 2:10, "evil" refers to calamity or adversity rather than moral wickedness. Do not use Job 2:10 to discourage medical care, safety planning, reporting abuse, or appropriate action against preventable harm.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Job does not curse God, the very thing the Adversary predicted (1:11; 2:5). The narrator twice says Job did not sin (1:22; 2:10). Job's response in 1:21 echoes the confession that we bring nothing into the world and can take nothing out (1 Timothy 6:7).
- **Ancient Near Eastern Research Notes:** Tearing the robe, shaving the head, falling to the ground, sitting in ashes, and throwing dust on the head were all ancient mourning rites. Seven days was a customary period of mourning (compare Genesis 50:10).
- **Hebrew Word Study:**
  - Tam (תָּם), "blameless," in 1:1, 8 and 2:3, with the related tummah (תֻּמָּה), "integrity," in 2:3 and 9. The narrator and the LORD use it before any loss. In this movement it establishes that Job's later protests rest on this given; blameless does not mean sinless, but whole and honest before God.
  - Yare' (יָרֵא), "feared," in 1:1, 8, and 9. The book's first description of Job is that he feared God. In this movement it shows that the test is about the fear of the LORD, whether it is free, not about uncovering a hidden crime.
  - Hasatan (הַשָּׂטָן), "the adversary" or "the accuser," in 1:6–12 and 2:1–7. The article marks a role in the heavenly court. In this movement it reminds us that Job never hears this scene, so the prologue must not be used to scold Job for failing to understand it.
  - Barak (בָּרַךְ), "bless," in 1:5, 11, 21 and 2:5, 9. In the Adversary's and the wife's mouths it is a reverent stand-in for "curse." In this movement it sharpens the test: will Job curse God? His first answer is blessing (1:21).

Section 1.4

Movement 2: Job's Cry and Eliphaz's Counsel (Job 3:1–7:21)

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Leader summary of Job 3:1–26** — Job opens his mouth and curses the day of his birth, wishing it had been darkness; he asks why he did not die at birth, why light and life are given to those in misery who long for death, and he says he has no rest, only trouble.
- **Leader summary of Job 4:1–11** — Eliphaz speaks gently at first: Job has strengthened others, and now trouble has come to him; then he asks who that was innocent ever perished, claiming that those who sow trouble reap it.
- **Reader 1: Job 4:12–21** (focal passage) — Eliphaz describes a night vision in which a spirit whispered that no mortal can be righteous or pure before God, who finds error even in his angels.
- **Leader summary of Job 5:1–27** — Eliphaz urges Job to seek God and not despise the discipline of the Almighty, promising that if he does, God will heal him, protect him, and restore his household.
- **Leader summary of Job 6:1–13** — Job replies that his anguish is heavier than the sand of the sea and that the arrows of the Almighty are in him; he wishes God would let him die, for he has no strength left.
- **Reader 2: Job 6:14–21** (focal passage) — Job says that whoever withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty; his friends have been like streams that dry up just when thirsty travelers need them.
- **Reader 3: Job 7:11–21** (focal passage) — Turning to God, Job says he will not keep silent but will speak in the anguish of his spirit; he asks what man is, that God should pay him so much attention and test him every moment, and why God will not pardon him and let him be.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

> **Job 4:17:** ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?
>
> **Job 6:14:** “He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
>
> **Job 7:17–18:** What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, visit him every morning and test him every moment?

Teaching Narrative: A Cry and a Counselor

1. Let the Day Perish (Job 3:1–26)

Retold briefly. Job's first words are a cry of despair, and the book lets it stand.

2. Who That Was Innocent Ever Perished? (Job 4:1–11)

Eliphaz's kindly start hides a rule: suffering means sin.

3. A Whisper in the Night (Job 4:12–21)

Words that sound true about God's holiness are used to humble a sufferer.

4. Do Not Despise Discipline (Job 5:1–27)

Eliphaz's promises sound pious but assume Job's guilt.

5. Heavier Than the Sand (Job 6:1–13)

Job explains the weight of his grief.

6. Dried-up Streams (Job 6:14–21)

The friends' failure is first a failure of kindness.

7. What Is Man? (Job 7:11–21)

Job turns from the friends to God, speaking honestly in his anguish.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.4)

1.4 Q1: Job's first words after seven days of silence are a cry of despair, wishing he had never been born (chapter 3). Why do you think the Bible includes such raw words, and lets them stand?

1.4 Q2: Eliphaz asks, "who that was innocent ever perished?" (4:7). Why is this a dangerous thing to say to someone who is suffering?

1.4 Q3: Eliphaz's vision asks, "Can mortal man be in the right before God?" (4:17). How can something true about God still be used in a hurtful way?

1.4 Q4: Job says, "He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty" (6:14). What does kindness to a suffering friend look like in practice?

1.4 Q5: Job says to God, "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul" (7:11). What do you think of bringing complaint directly to God?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.4 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 20 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 20 minutes. Guided Scripture Reading with brief retellings, 6 minutes; Anchor Verses and Teaching Narrative, 4 minutes; discussion, 10 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).

- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Retell chapter 3, 4:1–11, 5:1–27, and 6:1–13 yourself in a few sentences each. Have readers take 4:12–21, 6:14–21, and 7:11–21.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q1**: What does Job say? Why might God include it? How does it help those who suffer?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q2**: What does Eliphaz assume? Is it true? Have you heard words like that?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q3**: What is true in 4:17? How is it used? When have true words hurt you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q4**: What did the friends fail to give? What would kindness look like? Who needs that from you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q5**: What does Job do? Is it faith or unbelief? How do you pray in pain?
- **LEADER FLAG 3: Job curses the day of his birth (ch. 3)**
  - Retell; do not read the chapter aloud. This is language of despair, not a plan to be discussed. Be alert to members with depression or suicidal thoughts. Do not correct Job too quickly; the book lets this cry stand before any friend speaks. If anyone expresses thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or hopelessness, take it seriously, stay with them, and connect them with help. In the U.S., call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Outside the U.S., use the appropriate emergency or crisis service for your location.
- **LEADER FLAG 4: Eliphaz's rule (4:7–11; 5:8–27)**
  - "Who that was innocent ever perished?" is a pastoral danger. Name it as a half-truth that can wound people in the group who are already suffering. Affirm Eliphaz's instinct to speak of God's greatness without adopting his system.
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not treat Eliphaz as a villain; he is sincere and partly right. Do not let the discussion turn into a debate over whether suffering is caused by sin.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Eliphaz is not wholly wrong: God is holy, and discipline can be a gift (5:17; compare Proverbs 3:11–12; Hebrews 12:5–11). His error is applying a rule to Job's case that the prologue has already shown to be false. Job's "what is man" (7:17) bitterly echoes Psalm 8:4, where the question is asked in wonder.
- **Hebrew Word Study:**
  - Chesed (חֶסֶד), "kindness" or "loyal kindness," in 6:14. Job says that whoever withholds chesed (חֶסֶד) from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. In this movement it shows that the first crack in the friends' visit is not doctrine but a failure of kindness; the fear of God shows itself in how we sit with the suffering.
  - 'Enosh (אֱנוֹשׁ), "mortal man," in 4:17 and 7:17. Eliphaz uses human frailty to humble Job; Job uses it to question why God will not look away from a brief life already in pain. In this movement it shows how the same truth can serve either a hard system or an honest cry.

Section 1.5

Canonical Horizon: The Tested Righteous One; a High Priest Who Sympathizes

Tracing the Thread Across Scripture

Job, tested and faithful in his losses, points forward to Jesus, the truly righteous One who was tested and did not turn from the Father, and who is now the High Priest who sympathizes with our weakness. Turn to each passage as the connections are traced.

1. The Truly Righteous Sufferer (Matthew 4:1–11; 26:36–46)

Jesus was tested in the wilderness and in Gethsemane, and he did not turn from the Father.

2. A High Priest Who Sympathizes (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin, and he understands our weakness.

3. The Intercessor Greater Than the Accuser (Luke 22:31–32)

Satan asked to sift the disciples, but Jesus prayed for Peter. The accuser is not free, and the intercessor is greater.

4. The Steadfastness of Job (James 5:11)

James points the church to Job's steadfastness and to the Lord's compassion and mercy, a horizon the study will open fully in Week 8.

Anchor Verse (ESV)

> **Job 1:21:** And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.5)

1.5 Q1: Hebrews says Jesus is one "who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). How does it help in suffering to know that Jesus understands from the inside?

1.5 Q2: Jesus told Peter, "but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32). How does that compare with the scene in Job 1–2?

1.5 Q3: James writes, "You have heard of the steadfastness of Job" (James 5:11). Based on this week's reading, what did Job's steadfastness look like?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.5 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 12 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 12 minutes. Canonical Horizon teaching, 5 minutes; discussion, 7 minutes.
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Assign participants to look up Matthew 26:36–46, Hebrews 4:14–16, Luke 22:31–32, and James 5:10–11 ahead of time.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q1**: What did Jesus face? How does he respond to our weakness? Where do you need his sympathy?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q2**: Who asked to test Peter? What did Jesus do? What comfort is there for you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q3**: Did Job's steadfastness include complaint? What does that teach? What would steadfastness look like for you?

- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not imply that Jesus' sympathy means our suffering does not matter or should be quickly fixed.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Unlike Job, Jesus was told something of the trial before him, and he still went to the cross (Matthew 16:21). In Gethsemane he too was "sorrowful, even to death" (Matthew 26:38), showing that anguish and faithfulness can belong together.

Personal & Group Application (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD	The blameless Job lost his wealth, his children, and his health, worshiped God, and then cried out in anguish while his friend offered a rule that did not fit.
HEART	Faith can bless God in loss and also lament honestly, and Jesus, the righteous Sufferer, sympathizes with our weakness.
HANDS	Faith sits with the suffering in kindness rather than offering quick explanations.

Section 1.6

Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer

Application

Take a few minutes to move this week's study into everyday life. Discuss these three questions together and write down what you want to remember:

1.6 Q1: Where are you, or someone you love, carrying a loss or pain right now that needs honest words before God?

1.6 Q2: What is one "tidy explanation" of suffering you have heard or said that you now want to avoid?

1.6 Q3: Who is one suffering person you could sit with, call, or write to this week?

Looking Ahead to Next Week

Recap: In Week 1, Job lost everything, blessed the LORD, cried out in anguish, and heard his first friend's tidy rule.

Transition: Two more friends speak, and Job longs for someone who could stand between him and God.

Week 2 Overview — No Arbiter (Job 8:1–14:22): Movement 1, Bildad and Job (8:1–10:22), covers Bildad's appeal to tradition and Job's longing for an arbiter. Movement 2, Zophar and Job: Dust and Breath (11:1–14:22), covers Zophar's harsh words and Job's meditation on mortal life and hope. The Canonical Horizon traces the one Mediator between God and man.

Focal Readings to Preview

- Job 8:1–7
- Job 9:1–4
- Job 9:32–35
- Job 11:1–7
- Job 13:13–19
- Job 14:1–14

My One Concrete Step for the Week Ahead

Write down or name aloud the specific rhythm, boundary, or conversation you want to practice before next week's gathering:

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by inviting each person to share a one-sentence takeaway or prayer request, then pray together along these lines:

Closing Group Prayer

LORD, you give and you take away; blessed be your name. We come honestly with the losses and pain in this room. We pray for the bereaved, for the chronically ill, and for anyone in despair. Forgive us for quick explanations and for kindness we have held back. Thank you for Jesus, the High Priest who sympathizes with our weakness and prays for us. Give us grace to bless your name and to sit faithfully with those who suffer. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.6 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 9 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 9 minutes. Application and questions, 5 minutes; Looking Ahead and Focal Readings, 2 minutes; Concrete Step and Closing Prayer, 2 minutes.
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Treat 1.6 Q1 as silent reflection unless members choose to share. Stay available after the session for anyone the reading has stirred up.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q1**: (Silent reflection.) What comes to mind? What would honest words to God sound like? Who could pray with you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q2**: What was said? Why did it hurt? What could you say instead?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q3**: Who comes to mind? What would you do? When?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not close by resolving the problem of suffering; let the tension of Week 1 stand.

- **Additional Research Notes:** Next week Job first voices his longing for an "arbiter" (9:33), a key step toward the witness (16:19) and the Redeemer (19:25) of Week 3.