

I could write 45 pages of things God has done during this Job study this semester, for God has shown up each and every day that I curled up on my chair with his Word during this study. He was faithful to answer prayers each day for him to speak, sometimes an encouraging word, many times a convicting message, at times a gentle whisper, occasionally a thundering voice in the storm.

I was so struck by God's description of Job, he being upright and blameless, fearing God and shunning evil. Job knew God, yet he didn't have the written, living, Word of God to learn from, or cling to. Job trusted God enough to do what was good and right, to reverence and obey him, and to run from evil. I have spent a lot of time thinking about what that looks like in my life. Job's righteousness came from his relationship with Him, there was no other source. It wasn't in the skills that he possessed, his determination to be a good person, or whether he got his hands on the right information. He heard from God, and he believed what God said, and he lived his life accordingly. I want to be a woman who God could confidently say is upright, blameless, fearing Him, and shunning evil. The key to the treasure is continuing to nurture my relationship with Him, falling more in love with my Savior each time we meet, each time I see his handiwork, each time I experience his fingerprints in my life.

When I first started studying the friends' responses to Job, I was shocked at how insensitive and wrong their long expositions to their friend were. The first wave of conviction came for me as God showed me just how similar I was to these men. I could relate to each one in some way. He uncovered pride and arrogance in my heart. Speaking from my own observations, experiences, things I've read from others, and my own faulted wisdom, I have so often spoken untruths, half-truths, and semi-truths to those around me. God is helping me be much more mindful as I speak to those who are in the midst of suffering or hurting. I want to be an instrument of His Grace, to speak His words, and not my own. In each situation I want to be so in tune with the Spirit of God, that every word, and every silence will be from the very mouth of God.

I could identify with Job's wife being an instrument of suffering to her husband. God showed me that I specifically was like Zophar, standing on my own wisdom and thinking I was pretty good. My mind was taken back to several weeks earlier when I critically said to my husband, "You're awfully grumpy today, what's your problem, did you not have a quiet time today? Where are you with God?" My attitude being that I was God's gift to my husband and that I needed to set him straight. Ugly, arrogant, and full of my flesh! A critical spirit only does harm, not good. I have become keenly aware through studying Job, of the power of my words, my inability to change others, and my need for dependence on Jesus and His Spirit to do any good in this world. I am reminded of God's Word in Proverbs 18:21, *my tongue has the power of life and death*. I so want to choose life! Job's wife had opportunity to breathe life into her husband, and instead she exhaled destruction.

I also identified with Job's responses, going from beautiful Truth, to outright arrogant falsehood about God, all in the same breath. So much like me, God's praises on my lips one minute, and my wrongful attitudes, actions, or words in the next. For me, my need

to please others and win the approval of man raises its ugly head more often than I'd like to admit. It so often affects my conversations and the thoughts in my head. I want to be singularly focused, so focused on my Lord, who He is, and what He wants, that man's opinions of me won't matter as they did before. I realized to a greater degree the importance of having God's Word on my tongue, placing Truth at the forefront, and repeating what I know to be true. Sometimes it takes repetition for God's Truth to penetrate and allow it to dwell in my heart. (Col. 3:16) That is how Christ changes my being, he replaces me with the His Truth, with who He is.

For me, Job has been about humility, about seeing God for who He is, and seeing myself as an unworthy, yet redeemed child of God. I was taken to my knees, with my face on the ground when God finally spoke in chapter 38. Who am I to think that my ways, my opinions, my plans are greater than the God of the Universe?

Yes, He is who He says He is, He is Just, He is Righteous, He is Faithful, and He is so worthy of my complete trust. You, O LORD, are Glory, and Honor, and Power! I KNOW, without a shadow of a doubt, that my Redeemer lives! To Him be every ounce of Glory due Him! Praise you Jesus!