

# SKEPTICAL

## UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

### WEEK 3 - JOB 1

#### LEADER NOTES

In a world filled with pain and suffering, many are left questioning the goodness, even the very existence of God. How are we to balance God's goodness with His permitting of suffering and evil? We must understand that God is in control of all things, that God works in the midst of suffering, and that God can be trusted.

As we are working through some of our faith's biggest questions, encourage your group to ask all the questions that they may have. Create an environment that makes the people in your group feel comfortable to ask these questions.

In addition, the topics we are addressing can be daunting. We want to encourage you to listen to other Teaching Pastors sermons on these topics. You can find their messages [HERE](#).

Please continue to ask your group about gospel connections and conversations. You can complete the form [HERE](#).

# COMMUNITY

*OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.*

**START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT PEOPLE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

- *ANYBODY HAVE A CRAZY/FUNNY STORY OF GETTING HURT AS A KID?*

# SCRIPTURE

**TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.**

## THE POINT

**GOD IS GOOD, EVEN WHEN LIFE IS NOT.**

### Job 1

#### Job's Character and Wealth

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. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed[a] God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

## **Satan Allowed to Test Job**

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan[b] also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." 8 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?" 9 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." 12 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

## **Satan Takes Job's Property and Children**

13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants[c] with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 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."

22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Job 1:1-22.*

# STUDY NOTES

Today's conversation will be centered around evil and suffering. Sounds fun right? The truth is that all people, even faithful believers, sometimes struggle with the fact that a good, loving God has allowed evil and suffering into the world.

As people who believe that everything the Bible says is true (last week set the foundation for us in this)—we are faced with a difficult tension. The Bible is so clear about the fact that God is all loving (1 John 4) and perfect in every way (Psalm 18:30). The Bible is also clear that God is in control (Psalm 135:6). If those things are all true, then it means we have to believe that God has allowed suffering and evil to come into the world AND this allowance is actually loving and good.

Job teaches us what living faithfully in this tension actually looks like. He's had everything taken from him, and God allowed it. He experienced so much suffering, and it would be natural for Job to blame God. Instead Job recognizes that God was in control when he had plenty, and God was still in control now that he had nothing. If he trusted God in the plenty, he ought to trust God in his suffering too. This kind of faith requires the belief that God knows more than we do, and He sees more than we see. To trust God even when it doesn't make sense requires us to admit we have a limited perspective. We don't actually see the big picture. God sees it, and we can trust Him with it.

Another concept that could be helpful to you in this discussion is St. Anselm's "Best Possible World" theory. Doing some additional research on this idea could help further your discussion if you feel it would be helpful for your group. In short, St. Anselm believed that God, being perfect, could do nothing but create the best possible world. The thing that would make this world the best it could possibly be would be for God to get the maximum possible glory in it. So, St. Anselm's argument is that a world with evil and suffering must lead to God's maximum glory. Here's how this applies to our lives: God's maximum glory in your life is the best thing that could ever happen to you. God might be allowing suffering in your life so He can be more greatly glorified in your life. And if that's the case, nothing could be better for you.

We must understand three key things:

- 1) God is in control.**
- 2) God works in suffering.**
- 3) God can be trusted.**

*For more resources on this passage click the resources link [HERE](#).*

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Why would God allow Job to suffer in this way? Why would he allow us to suffer?*
- *What are some obstacles to us trusting God in the midst of so much evil and suffering? What makes faith hard in these circumstances?*
- *How does Job's faith model the perspective we should have in suffering?*
- *If anyone feels comfortable sharing, what are some things you have gone through that have tested your faith? How did you keep going? How did you see God's hand in the midst of your circumstance?*
- *What questions do you have about this tension between God's character and the suffering and evil He has allowed in this world?*

# COMMISSION

**AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.**

- **OUR CULTURE IS SKEPTICAL OF THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY. HOW DOES OUR DISCUSSION THIS WEEK EFFECT THE WAY YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE IN THIS WORLD?**
- **WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS TO KNOW JESUS?**