

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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The lessons of Job and his wife also call each person who would live by faith to a common point of experience: suffering of all types and intensity levels. God creates stronger lovers through suffering. God builds the body of faith through suffering. God frees each of his children from the lies we believe through suffering. Suffering is the last fire into which we are poured, more intense, hotter, and successful at burning off the remaining dross.

Job saw nothing wrong about himself—of what he saw about himself.

Job reasserted his faith in God in chapter 19; his insistence to live by faith was unusual, and it aggravated him and frustrated his friends. As he was in retreat on a heap of trash and scraped the peeling skin from his body with broken pottery, Job resumed questioning God. By the time his friends joined him, he was firm in his faith in God. They sat in silence near him many days before saying a word. Then three of his friends began to offer their explanations as to why Job was suffering. They took 10 stabs and jabs at Job.

After their back and forth, Job shifted and with boldness defended himself against his friends' assaults and explanations. In chapter 19, he laid out another defense against one of these friends, using his *own questions for God* in his defense against his friends. As he defended himself on one hand, Job was on the offense against God with the gift of faith God had given to Job! Job demanded that God lay out to him an explanation for what God had done to him.

One of Job's blind spots.

Job, even in his attack against God, saw himself separate from Mrs. Job; he is in full "me/I/my" mode. This important aspect of Job's story is that in all his misery and self-examination, he did not recognize his relational sins, particularly his sexism; one of Job's many blind spots. I see it because it has been a blind spot for me, along with objectifying women as sex objects. A entire book about Job with about 10 words from his wife makes no sense whatsoever, except from the ill-gotten perspective that it is righteous to silence a woman; they deserve shaming.

After all, Job diminished, silenced, and objectified his wife—whom he also left unnamed. All of this was culturally acceptable behavior on Job's part, but even then, no one would have argued that God was pleased with a man controlling, diminishing, objectifying, silencing, and demonizing his lover or any woman. All a man or a fear-bound woman who agreed with all of this could have said was, "*That's the way it's always been!*" "*That's just what we do!*"

Job responded to an attack by one of his friends who had asserted he must be suffering because of something he did against God. This argument had not heard Job's confession, nor had it taken into consideration that Job *knew* he was a sinful man and had certainly offended God. Job did not seem to be a man who held onto his sin. He confessed his sin. Job knew his sin needed atoning, so he presented burnt offerings to God for himself and for his children. We are not told he did the same for his wife; his wife might have been an unbeliever, but that is not borne out by the Hebrew text. Job's wife wanted his suffering to end, and she'd recommended he bless God, (not, "curse God" as in the English text) lie down, and succumb to death at God's hand. For her, that would have been a response of faith. Only disregarding her and silencing her voice in his head could explain Job not documenting more of what she'd actually said to him.

Seeing this man in action in relationship to his wife terrifies me as I consider myself with my wife. He simply does not recognize his blindness to his mistreatment of the wife he has not named.

Kellie and I are in our fourth decade of traveling together in marriage. As I age and deal with the onslaughts peculiar to our nation, me being Black, her being White, there are plenty of opportunities to reflect on the ways in which I have disregarded her and silenced Kellie's voice in my head before she's even finished a sentence. It terrifies me that God loves me and drew me to follow Jesus by faith.

This is where I can see and agree both with Job's description of his experience (19:6-20) and his assertion of his faith in the God who shepherds him in his experience (vv. 23-27). I don't think Job—like me—realized either the extent of his depravity or the inscrutability and vastness of God's love for him. I appreciate God's love in a different way through meditating on Job.