

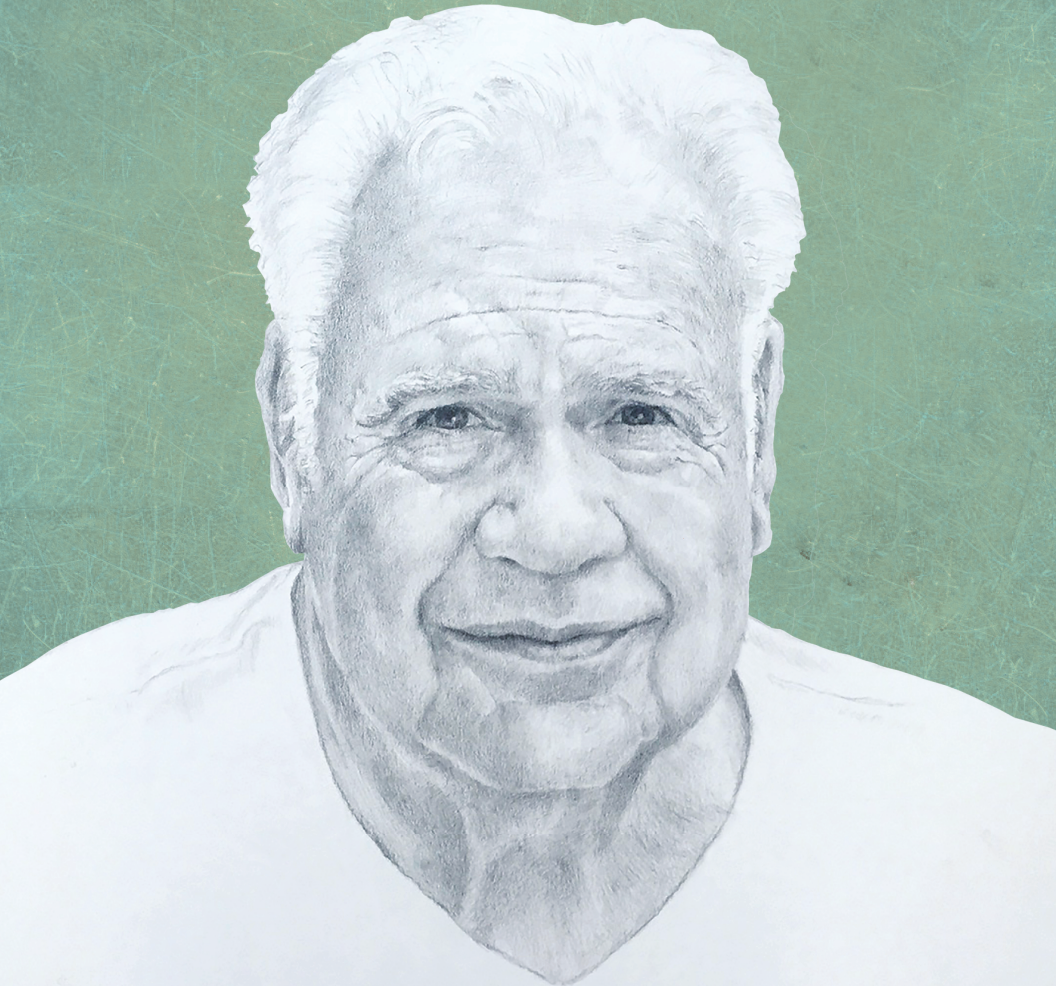
# THE JOY OF JOB

---

An *INVESTIGATOR'S PERSPECTIVE* on  
the Most Righteous Man on Earth

---

by Maribeth Vander Weele



# THE JOY OF JOB

*An Investigator's Perspective on the  
Most Righteous Man on Earth*

MARIBETH VANDER WEELE

# THE JOY OF JOB

*An Investigator's Perspective on the  
Most Righteous Man on Earth*

An Extraordinary Story of  
Repentance and Restoration

*"He will yet fill your mouth with laughter  
and your lips with shouts of joy."*

—BILDAD TO JOB

*Job 8:21*

SAGERITY  
 Discern Press<sup>inc</sup>

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following publishers of the Bible for quotations in this book. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® as published online by [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com). Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Also quoted is the *New Living Translation*, (NLT), Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. Also used are the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible, Public Domain; the *Wycliffe Bible* (WYC) Copyright © 2001 by Terence P. Noble; *Young's Literal Translation* (YLT), Public Domain, and *The Revised Standard Version* (RSV), which is an authorized revision of the *American Standard Version*, published in 1901, which was a revision of the *King James Version*, published in 1611. The *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, Copyright © 1946, 1952, and 1971, is copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Also quoted is the *Common English Bible* (CEB), Copyright Common English Bible of Nashville, Tennessee, and *The Christian Standard Bible* (CSB), Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. One verse comes from *21st Century King James Version*® (KJ21®) Copyright ©1994 by Deuel Enterprises, Inc., Gary, SD 57237. Note that the author, in citations of Scripture and books, has capitalized references to God. Not all verses are quoted in their entirety. Ellipses are used within and after a verse to indicate missing words, but generally not before.

*The Joy of Job, An Investigator's Perspective on the Most Righteous Man on Earth* Copyright © 2018 by Maribeth Vander Weele. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without attribution to the copyright owner, including the book name. Passages of more than 750 words may not be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without prior written permission of the copyright owner. Inquiries may be sent to:

Sagerity Press<sup>LLC</sup>  
P.O. Box 408190  
Chicago, IL 60640-0005  
E-mail: [info@joyofjob.com](mailto:info@joyofjob.com)

For more information about this book, visit [www.joyofjob.com](http://www.joyofjob.com).  
ISBN: 978-1-7322408-1-0



*To Elizabeth Vander Weele,  
My Mother and Cherished Friend*

*To Dr. Harold Vander Weele,  
My late Father, a Man of Few Words but Many Deeds*



The cover of *The Joy of Job* depicts the author's late father, from whom she learned the value of the throwaway line, a key to unlocking the mysteries of Job. Her father's expression, captured at age 82, conveys living with joy in one's old age. Like Job, his journey ended well. The drawing was created by the author's sister, Susan Vander Wey of Tweed, Ontario, Canada. Her work can be viewed at [www.pastelpaintings.ca](http://www.pastelpaintings.ca)

## *Acknowledgments*

The author respectfully acknowledges that the story of Job is a pillar of multiple faiths. However, this book is written from a Christian perspective, based on Biblical Scriptures. As *The Joy of Job* evolved, pastors, church leaders, and friends supported its development and birth. Special thanks for the encouragement provided by the Reverends David and Maureen Freshour of Chevy Chase Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. Through God's providence, they were the first to sign on to the premise of the book. Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Daniel Meyer, who welcomed me into Christ Church in Oak Brook, Illinois, reviewed the book, and blessed it, and to Mark Lundgren, founder of Secure Church, who greatly encouraged the book's publication. Welcomed support and insights came from the Rev. Dr. John Sittema, a pastor for more than 39 years in the Christian Reformed and Presbyterian churches and retired President and Chief Executive Officer of WorldServe Ministries. He is also my cherished cousin. Thank you also to the Rev. Dr. Daniel Block, Gunther H. Knoedler Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Wheaton College, who assisted in the translation of a difficult verse and provided alternative viewpoints. Thank you, also, to Ken Stodola, Senior Pastor of Open Door Baptist Church in Prattville, Alabama, for his suggestions and support. Thank you to Coretta McFerren for late-night inspiration, to Admiral Samuel Sax for insightful discussions, to Ted DeRose for his points and counterpoints, and to Dr. Myrna Grant, Professor Emerita, Wheaton College Graduate School, and the author of 18 books. Special thanks to Nancy Moffett, who meticulously proofread the book and each of its verses. I am grateful to the kind contribution of her and many others.

## *Table of Contents*

xi		Introduction
1		Chapter 1: Reputation
9		Chapter 2: Innocence
17		Chapter 3: Family and Friends
37		Chapter 4: Servants
43		Chapter 5: God's Injustice
57		Chapter 6: Elephant in the Room
77		Chapter 7: Breakthrough
87		Chapter 8: Tapestry
99		Chapter 9: The Shrewdness of God
111		A Word from the Author

## *Introduction*

I learned the value of the throwaway line from my late father, a man of few words. At our family reunions, amidst heated debates over politics, my father would listen quietly. Then he would find an opening and, with one meaningful sentence, masterfully challenge an entire line of arguments. A hard worker supporting seven children, my Dutch-American father lived through actions, not words.

Now, years later, as a member of the corporate investigations profession, I teach the value of the throwaway line. It is a brief thought thrown over the shoulder at the conclusion of an investigative interview after notebooks and computers are packed away and everyone is about to leave. The interviewee has suppressed the thought throughout the entire conversation but, consciously or subconsciously, he can no longer hold it in. The words only hint at truth, but the hint contains the key to a matter.

The line has no context.

A throwaway line may be, “And I don’t know how he did all that snow plowing anyway,” uttered after an investigative interview that has nothing to do with snow plowing. The investigator follows the clue and finds that the company in question fraudulently billed for plowing snow at hundreds of sites, many of which had no parking lots.

The ancient Biblical book of Job is filled with throwaway lines that leave quiet, but unmistakable, clues to the mystery

of a suffering man whose story has confounded God followers for generations. The clues are part of an extraordinarily skillful undertaking by the author to teach the reader to “test” a person’s words.<sup>1</sup> For unraveling the mystery and powerful message of the book of Job requires a keen understanding of human nature and the gift of deciphering intentions. The investigative profession is skilled in this craft—and detecting throwaway lines is only one of its tools.

There are others.

Investigators learn to set aside the “metaview,” or lens through which we initially see a person. Doing so prevents preconceptions about his or her character or reputation from coloring the fact-finding process. We also know that the longer a person talks, the more likely truth will come out. When one is in pain, initial attempts to be brave or noble give way to an outpouring of one’s soul.

When we hear a person’s version of events, we don’t take it at face value. We listen for conflicting or inconsistent statements. We look for contradictory evidence from witnesses. We map out the described sequence of events, using logic to determine if the chronology rings true.

We are also attuned to projection, when a guilty person desperately tries to deflect criticism by accusing others. To disarm the listener, he takes a righteous stand against the very type of misdeeds of which he himself is guilty. Distinguishing

---

1. Job 34:3: “For the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food.” Job 12:11: “Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food?”



guilt from innocence requires exacting work, and the guilty person counts on the unwillingness of the judging party—an investigator, friend, boss, or relative—to take the time to determine who is telling the truth when the same accusation is leveled at both sides.

Investigators also recognize the more innocuous practice of telling stories about a mythical third party in the same situation as the listener in an attempt to convey truth. This device is used throughout the book of Job. We know that the story is a veiled reference to the listener when the listener accepts it as such.

Investigators can also sense fear and insecurity, which drive pride and demand extreme loyalty from followers, even if it means following a leader to destruction. Detecting delusion is another tool, described in greater detail at the end of this book. Whether a person—or a leader, as in the case of Job—views himself realistically provides a window to the soul.

In requiring this type of acumen, the author of Job encourages readers to be discerning about leadership and not to unquestioningly accept at face value who a person represents himself to be.

The author of Job quietly, amidst the blustery and heated debates, implores us to be wiser than that.



Job was a famously righteous and wealthy leader who endured immense suffering after Satan dared the Lord to a contest of sorts. The Bible says Job feared God and shunned evil. One

day, the angels presented themselves to the Lord, and Satan came with them.<sup>2</sup> The Lord pointed out that there was no one on earth like Job. But Satan attributed Job's righteousness to his being blessed by God, arguing that it is easy to be grateful and upright when one has vast wealth. Satan challenged God to strike Job and predicted that Job would curse God, an act that would have hurled the greatest man in the East into Satan's domain and ultimate possession.

In a mystery that has haunted mankind throughout the ages, the Lord agreed to the pact. So began an excruciating test for Job. He lost his ten children,<sup>3</sup> his servants, and his vast herds in a series of catastrophes, caused by both acts of nature and by marauders. Eventually, Job lost his health, too.

After months of suffering, deep grieving over his losses, angry debates with four friends about the nature of God and suffering, and a confrontation with the Lord himself, Job found healing. He fathered a new family, his fortunes were restored, and God gave him twice what he had before. He lived for nearly a century and a half after his restoration. In the end, Job emerged from his grief to discover joy.

As a child, I was taught that the lesson of Job was that innocent people—even the most righteous people on earth—can suffer without reason. God's ways are without

---

2. Job 1:6: "One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them."

3. Job 1:2: "He had seven sons and three daughters . . ." Job 1:18-19: "While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead . . .'"

comprehension. We must simply accept the mystery and obey. Left unsaid was the unnerving sense that Job, an utterly righteous man, was the victim of a cruel cosmic battle in which humans were pawns in the game. Which is exactly how Job saw it. In Job 9:17, he spoke about God, saying:

*He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds **for no reason.***<sup>4</sup>

Although none of us dared to say it aloud, it seemed that God was capricious in allowing Satan to test Job for their mutual amusement. And if God were capricious, He could not be trusted. For years, I had no way to resolve the incongruity between the harsh and distant God of the book of Job and the loving and trustworthy God I knew.

Then one day, I opened my Bible to Chapter 29. A window opened, permitting me to peer, for the first time, into the unfiltered intentions of Job's heart. This was the first clue to the ancient mystery. More followed. I began to recreate the events of the book and run a movie of them in my mind. I looked at witness statements. I analyzed each accusation. In the heated debates about God's injustice and Job's innocence, I recognized the worst failings of people I have known—and I recognized my own. Startling throwaway lines, hidden without context amidst the bluster, leaped off the pages. The author, with a wink of the eye, had placed clues in plain view.

I now faced a choice: I could ignore these clues and cling to my traditional understanding of the book of Job—and thus join with Job in accusing God of being capricious and cruel—

---

4. Emphasis added by author.

or accept them, placing not God's character into question, but Job's.

I chose the latter. What I found was a masterpiece of a book that communicates one of the greatest stories of forgiveness and restoration ever told.

## Chapter 1

# REPUTATION

*“They waited for me as for showers  
and drank in my words as the spring rain.  
When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it;  
the light of my face was precious to them.”*

—JOB  
*Job 29:23-24*

**I**magine being a newcomer in a place of worship when you overhear two men speaking together. One of them says:

*“Hey, did you notice that when I walk through services, people part to make a path for me?”*

Intrigued, you edge closer. This must be a powerful man, you think. Is he a preacher? A rock star? A politician? A sports hero?

*“Everyone stops talking when I enter the room. They hang on my every word. I’m the wisest person around,” he says. “And look: When I smile at them, they can’t believe they came this close to me!”*

Did he really say that?

If he were a preacher or politician, would you like him? If he were a famous musician, would you respect him? If he were a sports champion, would you want your son or daughter to



emulate him? Most importantly, would you leave thinking that someone so fixated on his own acclaim—someone who so loved the stage of human approval—was truly righteous? Yet, these are the sentiments of Job who, in Chapter 29, Verses 7-11, recalls his way of life before catastrophe afflicted him:

*When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, the young men saw me and stepped aside and the old men rose to their feet; the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands; the voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me.*

Job continues in Verses 21-24:

*People listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel. After I had spoken, they spoke no more; my words fell gently on their ears. They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain. When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them.*

To New Testament readers, Job's opinion of his own importance sounds familiar. Jesus described the teachers of the law and the Pharisees in a similar way.

*Everything they do is done for people to see . . . they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be*

*greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called “Rabbi” by others.<sup>5</sup>*

The Bible instructs God’s followers to glorify God,<sup>6</sup> and the Lord states in Isaiah 42:8, “I will not yield my glory to another,” but Job focused on another type of glory: his own. In one of the book’s obscure but powerful throwaway lines, Job explained, simply, that he expected that his own glory would not fade.<sup>7</sup>

But fade it did, and in all that he lost—children, wealth, and power—Job was fixated most on one particular type of loss: his loss of reputation. Job said he was humiliated,<sup>8</sup> jeered at,<sup>9</sup> and ridiculed, even by little boys.<sup>10</sup> Young men whose fathers he would have disdained to put with his sheep dogs mocked him in song.<sup>11</sup> Mockers surrounded him and were hostile toward him.<sup>12</sup> They detested him and spit in his face.<sup>13</sup> They struck his cheek in scorn.<sup>14</sup> He had become a laughingstock to his friends,<sup>15</sup>

---

5. Matthew 23:5-7.

6. Romans 15:6: “So that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

7. Job 29:20: “[I thought] my glory will not fade.”

8. Job 19:5: “If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me . . .”

9. Job 16:10: “People open their mouths to jeer at me . . .”

10. Job 19:18: “Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me.”

11. Job 30:1: “But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs.” Job 30:9: “And now those young men mock me in song; I have become a byword among them.”

12. Job 17:2: “Surely mockers surround me; my eyes must dwell on their hostility.”

13. Job 30:10: “They detest me and keep their distance; they do not hesitate to spit in my face.”

14. Job 16:10: “They strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me.”

15. Job 12:4: “I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called on God and He answered—a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless!”

and even his intimate friends detested him.<sup>16</sup> His dignity was driven away by the wind.<sup>17</sup> Success had also been driven from him.<sup>18</sup> He was full of shame.<sup>19</sup>

Job sorely missed his own adulation. Despite his initial reverent words<sup>20</sup> and a heroic refusal to stop believing in a powerful God—a choice that has been rightly venerated throughout the centuries—Job was devastated by his loss of prestige, a loss he blamed on God. It was God who had stripped him of his honor and removed the crown from his head.<sup>21</sup> It was God who made him a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit.<sup>22</sup> It was God who had wronged him.<sup>23</sup>

Lamenting loss of stature is an understandable human reaction in times of devastation, but it is not that of a righteous man filled with the Spirit of God. The proud nature disdains shame most of all, says William Gurnall in his landmark book, *The Christian in Complete Armour*.<sup>24</sup>

---

16. Job 19:19: "All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me."

17. Job 30:15: "My dignity is driven away as by the wind . . . ."

18. Job 6:13: "Do I have any power to help myself, now that success has been driven from me?"

19. Job 10:15: "For I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction."

20. Job 2:9-10: "His wife said to him, 'Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!' He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."

21. Job 19:9: "He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head."

22. Job 17:6: "God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit."

23. Job 19:6: "Then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me."

24. William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, (Reprinted by First Rate Publishers, Volume 1, 1662). The reprint does not provide page numbers. John Newton, the converted slave trader, reportedly said that if

In contrast, the Apostle Paul relinquished his reputation as a wise and powerful religious leader to take on the sufferings that would lead him and others into the knowledge of Christ.<sup>25</sup> Paul no longer sought the praise of man. He had no need to garner approval like a rock star from the powerful.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Paul stated that if he were trying to please people, he could not serve Christ.<sup>27</sup> Other Apostles also rejoiced because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for Christ's name.<sup>28</sup>

Although Job mourned the loss of his path “drenched with cream” and the rock that “poured out for [him] streams of olive oil,”<sup>29</sup> Abraham willingly left his home country for the unknown land of Canaan.<sup>30</sup>

---

he were confined to one book beside the Bible, he would choose *Christian Armour*. Charles Spurgeon commented that Gurnall's work is “peerless and priceless; every line full of wisdom. The book has been preached over scores of times and is, in our judgment, the best thought-breeder in all our library.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Gurnall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gurnall)

25. 2 Corinthians 11:24-28: “Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”
26. Galatians 2:6: “As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message.”
27. Galatians 1:10: “If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
28. Acts 5:41: “The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”
29. Job 29:1-6: “How I long for the months gone by . . . when my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil.”
30. Genesis 12:5: “He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.”

Consider Moses, one of the great men of faith whose journey is recounted in Hebrews 11, the book of faith heroes in which Job is notably absent. Moses, by faith, walked away from the honor and riches of being in the household of the powerful Pharaoh. “He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of [the promised] Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”<sup>31</sup> When instructed by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses did not believe himself worthy to undertake such a task.<sup>32</sup>

Job, in contrast, saw himself not only as eminently worthy of leadership, but *entitled* to praise for one reason: *because* he rescued the poor and the fatherless.<sup>33</sup> “I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban,” he recalled of his former way of life.<sup>34</sup>



“Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me,” Job recalled. Job’s statement raises a pressing question: Was it accurate?

Evidence suggests it was not.

First, Job’s claim of universal regard is, on its face, unrealistic. What leader garners universal acclaim? Even the

---

31. Hebrews 11:24-26.

32. Exodus 3:11: “But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’”

33. Job 29:11-12: “Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help . . .”

34. Job 29:14.



wisest and holiest leader in the world, Jesus Christ, faced a murdering crowd consumed by jealousy. Furthermore, like any great leader, Job would have made difficult decisions that left some people angry. His wealth would have attracted naysayers and envious critics.

Second, a highly regarded man in power garners sympathy—not contempt—after he faces tragedy. Think of a great leader who suffered a disaster not of his own making, a leader such as U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, who was stricken with polio. Although the extent of his disease was not fully known, the public knew he had been afflicted. Did such a disaster decrease his stature? No, experience tells us that heroes who face adversity gain more—not less—respect from their adoring people. How then could family, friends, the chief men, servants, his community—everyone—drop Job like a hot potato when this good man ran into trouble that he did not create? Why were those pearls of wisdom he boasted about no longer in high demand?

Third, Job's claim that everyone spoke well of him for rescuing the poor is contradicted by his own description of skirmishes he had with a group of starving young men living among the rocks. These young men detested him—and the feeling was mutual.

Fourth, the only friends who visited Job forcefully contradicted his claims of blamelessness. When Eliphaz the Temanite talked to Job, nearly the first words out of his mouth were, in effect, "You reap what you sow."<sup>35</sup> Zophar

---

35. Job 4:8: "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it."

the Naamathite said that God had even forgotten some of his sins.<sup>36</sup> Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite, begged Job to return from evil.<sup>37</sup> Bildad the Shuhite concurred. All four agreed: Job was not blameless.

As we shall see, Job eventually came to realize this himself.

---

36. Job 11:6: "Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin."

37. Job 36:21 (NLT): "Be on guard! Turn back from evil, for God sent this suffering to keep you from a life of evil."

## Chapter 2

# INNOCENCE

*"I will defend my integrity until I die."*

—JOB

*Job 27:5 (NLT)*

Job's preoccupation with his loss of stature was matched in intensity only by his fixation on being proved innocent. He had done nothing wrong, he maintained. He was blameless.<sup>38</sup>

By Job's account, he hadn't walked in falsehood, nor had he been deceitful.<sup>39</sup> He hadn't concealed sin in his heart.<sup>40</sup> He hadn't been enticed by a woman.<sup>41</sup> He hadn't put his trust in gold,<sup>42</sup> nor did he rejoice over the fortune that his hands had gained.<sup>43</sup> He did not worship the sun or moon.<sup>44</sup> He did not

---

38. Job 31:6: "Let God weigh me in honest scales and He will know that I am blameless . . . ."

39. Job 31:5: "If I have walked with falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit . . . ."

40. Job 31:33: "If I have concealed my sin as people do, by hiding my guilt in my heart . . . ."

41. Job 31:9: "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door . . . ."

42. Job 31:24: "If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' . . . ."

43. Job 31:25: "If I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained . . . ."

44. Job 31:26-27: "If I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage . . . ."

rejoice over his enemy's misfortune or curse him.<sup>45</sup> He hadn't denied justice to his servants.<sup>46</sup> He hadn't failed to pay for the yield of his land, nor did he break the spirit of its tenants.<sup>47</sup>

He hadn't denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary.<sup>48</sup> He shared bread with the fatherless, rearing them from his youth<sup>49</sup> and rescuing those who had none to assist them.<sup>50</sup> From his birth, he guided the widow<sup>51</sup> and he made her heart sing.<sup>52</sup> Anyone he saw perishing for lack of clothing or needing clothes, he helped.<sup>53</sup>

Job shared his food,<sup>54</sup> and because he opened his door to travelers, no stranger had to spend a night in the street.<sup>55</sup> He was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and father to the needy.<sup>56</sup> He put on righteousness as his clothing; justice was his robe and his turban.

---

45. Job 31:29-30: "If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him—I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against their life . . ."

46. Job 31:13: "If I have denied justice to any of my servants, whether male or female, when they had a grievance against me . . ."

47. Job 31:39: "If I have devoured its yield without payment or broken the spirit of its tenants . . ."

48. Job 31:16: "If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary . . ."

49. Job 31:17-18: "If I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless—but from my youth I reared them as a father would . . ."

50. Job 29:12: "Because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them."

51. Job 31:18: "From my birth I guided the widow . . ."

52. Job 29:13: "The one who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing."

53. Job 31:19: "If I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments . . ."

54. Job 31:31: "If those of my household have never said, 'Who has not been filled with Job's meat?'"

55. Job 31:32: "But no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler . . ."

56. Job 29:15-16: "I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father



Some of these claims seem farfetched. Job said he guided the widow from his birth or, as the *King James Version* of the Bible puts it, “from [his] mother’s womb.”<sup>57</sup> This would mean that even before he was a toddler, Job shared his wisdom with widows. Similarly, he reared the fatherless in his youth. This suggests that before he owned his own home or land, he began raising other people’s children.

Like his other claims, Job did not restrict the description of his largesse to one or two people; he spoke globally. Job said he helped “anyone” perishing for lack of clothing or needy without garments. He did not miss a stranger in need.

As those in the giving professions might recognize, Job—amazingly—did not specialize in one or two types of vulnerable populations: He helped them all. The poor. The blind. The lame. The fatherless. The widows. The orphans. And the strangers.

Anyone who has run or witnessed a large food distribution program or charitable organization knows the considerable logistics this would involve. It would require structures to house the operations. It would entail obtaining enormous amounts of food, tirelessly preparing meals, communicating to the villagers the distribution hours, erecting tables, and creating assembly lines to serve the food. It would require finance systems to purchase supplies and pay the workers. It would require clean-up operations, too.

---

to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger.”

57. Job 31:18 (KJV): “For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother’s womb . . . .”



For “anyone needing clothes,” his servants would have to shear the sheep,<sup>58</sup> sew the clothing, ensure that the sizes were right, and distribute each piece. To be eyes to the blind, Job might have assigned personal assistants to meet their needs. For the lame, he might have instructed couriers to bring food to their homes. To house every traveler, he would need plenty of bedrooms.

Imagine the operations this would require—coupled with boots-on-the-ground intelligence to locate every needy, blind, lame, fatherless, widowed, and traveling person.

Job’s representations of his own benevolence raise multiple questions.

First, what happened to his charitable operations after the disasters that took away Job’s herds? The servants who died in the disasters were tending the animals. Where were those running Job’s feeding, clothing, and housing programs? In contrast to the feeding programs of the Biblical Patriarch Joseph,<sup>59</sup> for which the source and method of storing food was described, the Bible contains no references to how Job’s massive operations were organized or how they were dismantled when disaster struck.

---

58. Job 31:19-20: “If I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments, and their hearts did not bless me . . . for warming them with the fleece from my sheep . . . .”

59. Genesis 41:47-49: “During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.”

Second, after the disasters, why didn't Job express concern about the people he could no longer help? People who manage charitable operations connect emotionally to those involved. They know their names. They know their stories. They know their families. Such a massive operation would have been Job's "baby," something he invested in since . . . well, from the time he was born. And when the operations suddenly shut down, one would expect that he would have worried about the fates of those he no longer served. Why did he not lament the loss of his mission—that he could no longer be used by God to serve these suffering people?

In contrast, the Apostle Paul, amidst his suffering and impending death, spent his time in prison fixated on what would happen to those entrusted to his care. With great passion for others, not for himself, Paul guided the churches and gave instructions on everything from putting on the armor of God to staying in prayer at all times.<sup>60</sup>

Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch woman who lost her family to the horrors of Nazi Germany, worried continuously about the souls and fates of the inmates who suffered with her in the horrific conditions of the concentration camps. She was gripped also with concern about the Jewish refugees hidden in her home when the Nazis invaded it.<sup>61</sup>

---

60. Ephesians 6:11-12: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

61. Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Chosen Books), 25th Anniversary Edition, 143.

Yet Job, in all his laments, never once expressed concern for the welfare of those he had been blessed to have helped.

Third, and most telling of all, why did not one of the vast numbers of people he helped appreciate him enough to send a note of condolence or bring a dish of stew when he faced his own suffering? Why didn't they rally around him? Except for four friends, who vigorously challenged his claims of blamelessness, and his wife, who encouraged him to die, Job was universally deserted. As we shall learn, not one person took his claims of benevolence at face value.



Job's claims of righteousness have a familiar ring. In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, as follows:

*To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

It is difficult to conceive that any humble, God-fearing man or woman could believe that he or she has done everything right. Every time we step out of the flow of the Spirit, every stray word of gossip we utter, every time we withhold forgiveness, every proud thought we think, every time we act unkindly, and whenever we walk in fear, anxiety, or despair instead of faith, we fail to meet the standards of righteousness.

Galatians 6:3 states, “If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.” 1 John 1:8 says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Proverbs 20:9 states, “Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure. I am clean and without sin?’”

Like King David, who was blinded to his sin with Bathsheba until Nathan the Prophet helped remove the veil,<sup>62</sup> evidence suggests that Job saw his world through spiritual blinders.

---

62. 2 Samuel 12:1-7: “The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, ‘There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.’ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.’ Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’” In his subsequent confession of sin in Psalm 51:5, King David said, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Compare that confession to Job’s belief that he guided widows from his birth.

Job was gripped by a powerful delusion about himself, others, and God.

As Job's friend Bildad asked, "How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?"<sup>63</sup> Bildad was right. When Job professed to be pure and universally benevolent, he was claiming the impossible. As William Gurnall states in his book, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, "Hypocrisy is the loudest lie, because it is given to God himself."<sup>64</sup>

---

63. Job 25:4.

64. Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*. The reprint does not provide page numbers.