



Sunday School Lesson for January 18, 2004.  
Released on January 15, 2004.

Study Job 27:2-5; 31:5-15, 24-28. Integrity in Everyday Life  
Questions and answers below.

TIME: about 2000 B.C.  
PLACE: Land of Uz

Job 27:2-5

2 As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;  
3 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;  
4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.  
5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

Job 31:5-15, 24-28

5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;  
6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.  
7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;  
8 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.  
9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor's door;  
10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.  
11 For this is a heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.  
12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.  
13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;  
14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?  
15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?  
.....  
24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;  
25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;  
26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;  
27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:

28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

## Lesson Background

The text for this week's lesson records portions of Job's final discourse to his three friends. After "The words of Job are ended" in Job 31:40, Job will not speak again until he addresses the Lord in chapter 42 (included in next week's lesson). Job has heard three discourses from Eliphaz, three discourses from Bildad, and two discourses from Zophar. These discourses, filled with accusation and harshness, could have worn Job down. A lesser man might have simply thrown up his hands and said, "Okay. Okay. Whatever you say. I'm guilty." Not Job!

Job responded to Bildad's last discourse (Job 25) with a resounding acknowledgment of God's power (Job 26). Job's faith is intact. Job will not, however, surrender to his friends' requests for confessions of guilt.

## Honest Speech (Job 27:2-5)

### 1. Why did Job begin his defense with the oath "As God liveth" (Job 27:2)?

Job viewed himself as a falsely accused victim. For that reason, he based his statements of defense on an oath beginning with "As God liveth" (v. 2). Since everyone present believed in the existence of God, this was an effective device. It was equivalent to saying that just as certainly as God lives, so what Job was about to say was the absolute truth.

Nevertheless, Job does not feel that he has been given his "day in court." He has been denied the appropriate opportunity for just judgment. He will not accuse God of some fault in finding him guilty.

Job does, however, call out to God and decry his lack of opportunity to defend himself. The God who hath taken away my judgment is the God whom Job believes has denied him justice (19:7).

Job does not deny that he is suffering and vexed. He cries out to know why he is suffering. He mistakenly attributes his suffering solely to God. It apparently does not occur to him that Satan could be involved in bringing about such agony.

People still react as Job did. When something bad happens, they immediately question God. Why do people never give proper credit to Satan? He is the maker of mischief and sower of sorrow in people's souls.

Job's steely resolve is expressed in these words. Even to his last breath he will remain steadfast in his denials (Job 27:3). Even though Job does not understand why God is permitting such evil to come to him, Job will acknowledge God as the One who created and sustained his life.

### 2. Insurance companies refer to natural disasters as "acts of God" in their insurance policies. Is this fair to God? Why, or why not?

For many, blaming God for almost any disaster just seems to be the easiest thing to do. Even blameless Job thought God solely to have been behind the "misfortunes" in his life.

But human suffering got its start when Adam and Eve voluntarily sinned in the Garden of Eden through the temptation of Satan (Genesis 3:1-19). And while God permitted a test of the faithfulness of His servant Job, God did not initiate the action or take pleasure in the pain caused by Satan. Too often God gets the blame for the pain caused in our world because simple thinkers do not stop to ponder the nature of God, the implications of sin, or the power of Satan. Your class can profit from a discussion regarding the contrasts between God and Satan.

3. What did Job mean by "My lips shall not speak wickedness..." (v. 4)?

Whether they believed him or not, Job promised he would never lie to their faces and mislead them from the truth (v. 4).

After this reassurance, Job firmly stated that he would never admit to what his three friends had been accusing him of. Until he died he would maintain his integrity (v. 5), which meant he could not say they were right in their accusations. To admit that what they were saying was true would be a lie, and he had just told them he would never lie. He therefore had to continue to deny that he was covering unconfessed sin. As far as he knew, he was honestly free of such and would not be charged by God if he appeared before Him.

Job went further in verse 6, stating that he was holding fast to his claim of righteousness and would never let it go. To do so would be a violation of his conscience, and that he refused to allow as long as he lived. There are evidences in Job's speeches that he, in fact, tried to live the way he described. One example can be found in 31:1, where he claimed that he had made a covenant with his eyes to never look lustfully upon a woman. In this and all other areas of life, Job was doing his best to keep his integrity intact.

Honest Lifestyle  
(Job 31:5-8)

4. Why did Job feel he could confidently say he was willing for God to weigh him "in an even balance" (Job 31:5,6)?

In verse 4 Job asked, "both not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" He realized God was fully aware of everything he did and everywhere he went. In Psalm 139 David expressed that thought this way: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (vs. 1-4).

Since that was the case, God certainly would know if Job had ever walked in falsehood or if his feet had ever carried him into deceitful pathways (v. 5). Since he was so certain he had never strayed from the pathways of the Lord, Job was willing for God to weigh him in a balance, weighing his righteousness against falsehood and deceit (v. 6). In such a test it would be proved without question that Job had maintained his integrity consistently.

It is easy for us to be deceitful. Of course we understand that as God's children we should always tell the truth. Perhaps we make every effort to do so; but do we realize at the same time that sometimes we can be deceptive in what we leave unsaid or implied? We can hedge on the complete truth ever so slightly in order to make ourselves look good and in that way mislead others. As we grow in the Lord,

we should desire to be such people of integrity that even such seemingly small improprieties do not exist within us.

5. Job was willing to "be weighed in an even balance" so God would know of his integrity. Would you be willing to have your integrity tested in this way? Why, or why not?

Personal motivation will be important in answering this question. God is certainly not impressed with any "look how good I am" attitudes, and He does not save us on the basis that our integrity "outweighs" our sins.

But a balance-scale approach can be useful as a personal check on our progress in spiritual maturity. If a person can see that his or her "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22, 23) continues to gain ground against "the works of the flesh" (5:19-21), day by day, then that is a good thing indeed!

6. How did Job express that he did not want a single impurity clinging to his life (vs. 7,8)?

Job's desire was that he walk on God's path and never step off it. He did not want his eyes to cause him to walk astray. He did not want a single impurity on his hands.

The word "cleaved" in verse 7 is from a Hebrew word that means to cling or adhere to. Job was thinking of impurity coming from any improper action or thought. He felt that anything done contrary to God's holy standards would leave a dirty spot on his life, and he did not want that to be true of him. We have to admire the high aspirations of this godly man-and even more so as we realize the depths of the trial he was going through at the time.

Job went so far as to say that if he was indeed guilty of the things he had mentioned, he was willing for God to withhold from him the fruit of his labors. He would want the crops he had planted to be harvested and used by others. Can we who are God's children dare to state our integrity so strongly?

7. Job knew where the boundaries of sexual purity were (vs. 9-12). How have these lines been blurred today, and why should we care?

The lines get blurred when an "enlightened" culture views God's instructions as relics of a bygone era. Personal freedom then becomes a license to do anything as long as it "doesn't hurt anyone else."

In America much of this thinking started with the so-called "sexual revolution" of the 1960s; this revolution also involved a rebellion against traditional authority. Groups such as COYOTE (which stands for "Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics") actively work to "promote the rights of all sex workers." Postmodern thinking, which sees truth existing only within each individual, makes the problem worse.

But sexual immorality does indeed hurt us. In a practical sense we all pay the bills for teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In an eternal sense, sexual immorality is one of the most harmful of all sins against ourselves, as well as God (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

## Honest Relationships (Job 31:13-15)

### 8. How did Job treat his servants (v. 13)?

We know that Job had been a wealthy man with many servants. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys. He would have needed many servants to care for all these animals and the crops in his fields. Since he had ten children (1:2), we can surmise that there were many servants to care for them as well. Job had "a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east" (v. 3).

Not only did Job exercise care and concern for his animals, but he also was careful to treat his servants well. He referred to this in Job 31:13 when he said he did not "despise," or reject, his servants when they came to him with complaints, which they apparently had the freedom to do. This alone shows he maintained a civil relationship with them instead of being a heartless taskmaster. Job treated his servants with respect.

### 9. What motivated Job in his relationship to his servants (vs. 14, 15)?

The main reason Job treated his servants well was the relationship he had with God and his understanding that God had made all human beings. Job understands that he is accountable to God for his treatment of others (v. 14). For God watches and knows how people in authority treat those in "lesser stations." The apostle Paul addresses the same issue in Ephesians 6:9. See also James 5:1-6.

Job shows remarkable humility. He understands that class positions in society are inventions of man, not God. God is the Author of all life, regardless of earthly position. All humanity is precious to God! Jesus provided a powerful reminder of this truth in Matthew 25:31-46. We should be very careful how we treat people who may be in a so-called "lesser station" in life.

Despite his prominence as one of the great men of his time (Job 1:3), Job does not mistreat those who are less fortunate. Job's servants even have remarked about his generosity to them (Job 31:31).

## Honest Finances (Job 31:24,25,28)

### 10. Where did Eliphaz accuse Job of having placed confidence (vs. 24,25)?

In Eliphaz's third speech, he implied that Job was greedy for gold and therefore had placed his confidence in that instead of God (Job 22: 25).

Job, however, maintained that Eliphaz was wrong to imply that he was trusting in his wealth. He was not materialistic. Gold was not his hope and confidence, and he did not rejoice over the riches he possessed. He did not even view what he owned as evidence that he had successfully achieved a great goal. He recognized that what he had was due to the blessings of God upon his life and not to his own merits or achievements.

#### 11. How serious an offense was confidence in riches in Job's mind (v. 28)?

Job seemed to equate the sin of greed for wealth with that of the worship of the sun and moon (vs. 26,27). Such worship would certainly be idolatrous, and so is the excessive desire for wealth. In His Word God has a lot of instruction about the handling of money. He knows our human tendency to continually want more, and He gives warning and instruction about the proper use of things He sends our way. Job ranked the desire for wealth and worship of the luminaries as equally sinful.

Either of these activities can replace devotion to God as one's top priority in life. Idol worship replaces the worship of God. Sun worship was common in Old Testament days (Ezekiel 8:16) and even remains a practice in some cultures today. However, the Old Testament law is quite specific in forbidding the worship of such things (Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3). In modern society it is easy to focus our attention on material gain and relegate God to a perimeter of life. We should remember that idolatry takes many forms. Anything or anyone taking precedence over God in our lives becomes an idol to us. Job recognized these things as iniquity worthy of judgment because they were a denial of God. His thoughts put a proper perspective on how we should view material gain.

We cannot change everyone's attitudes about these matters, but we can each examine our own heart and check our own level of integrity. Even small things are important.

#### CONCLUSION

What pressure Job was under! His tragedies, his unanswered questions, and his friends' accusations could have driven him to irrational, and even evil, retaliations. He could have given up and decided that living a righteous life was simply not worth the effort. He could have become a different man, emboldened to sin by the seeming lack of reward for doing good.

He did not do any of that. Perhaps he felt his integrity was all he had left. Job truly understood and respected the sovereignty of God. Job loved God for Who He Is. For him, that was enough. Would the same be true for you?

#### PRAYER

Father, help us treasure our integrity-not as a cornerstone of self-righteousness, but as our means of showing You that we are truly devoted to living as You want us to live. When people falsely accuse us and knowingly lie about us, help us remember the example of Job. Help us remember that Your Word tells us to repay evil with good. Empower us to maintain our integrity in every situation. Strengthen us through the Holy Spirit's power within us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

#### THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

We are to combat falsehood and ignorance with grace and truth.

## ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

In our lesson next week, we will see that one day we will have to stand before our Maker. We are to be prepared for that day. Study background Scripture: Job 38-42.

I hope you enjoyed this week's lesson !

Visit us on the web at:  
[www.JesusIsAll.com](http://www.JesusIsAll.com)