**1. Motivate**

What significant events in your life have helped to shape your view of life and your view of God?

* education
* jobs

A video introduction to the Bible study is available. View it [here](https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_679ui97i). If you have no wi-fi, download it from this [link](https://biblestudiesbysteve.com/SundaySchool/FamilyActivities/Why%20Do%20We%20Suffer/index.htm).

* loss of loved ones
* sicknesses
* injuries, accidents
* places traveled
* watching historical events unfold
* military service
* certain spiritual experiences

**2. Transition**

Most everyone will list an illness or injury which caused suffering to themselves of someone close.

* A song from the 1940’s, “[Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayGkA-vxrMc)” expresses this.
* We may not know why we suffer, but God meets us in our suffering.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 We All Experience Suffering

Listen for Job’s complaint.

Job 30:26-31 (NIV) Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness. 27 The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me. 28 I go about blackened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. 29 I have become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls. 30 My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever. 31 My harp is tuned to mourning, and my flute to the sound of wailing.

Before his suffering, where do you suppose Job got his sense of security?

* his family
* his possessions
* his position in the community
* his affluence
* from God (he was a righteous man)

What are words and phrases that describe physical suffering?

* churning inside me
* skin grows black and peels
* body burns with fever

Which words or phrases may be describing emotional and spiritual suffering?

* hoped for good but evil came
* looked for light, then came darkness
* cry for help
* brother of jackals, companion of owls
* only music heard was mourning and wailing

What are some ways people try to cope with suffering?

* cry a lot
* binge eating
* strike out in anger
* go into a blue funk
* isolate themselves
* substance abuse

How did Job let his circumstances shape his perception of his life?

* he was in mourning
* he was depressed because of all the negative things that happened
* he questioned God

Note that Job let his circumstances affect his relationship with God and his relationship with others.

* Questioned God
* Doubted that God had done him right
* Wanted to confront God

Why do you think Job found his personal suffering so confusing and unfair?

* he had no idea what brought it on
* he was unaware of the testimony he was having for God
* he *knew* it wasn’t because he had done bad things to deserve punishment

Giving voice to our suffering-making a groaning lament-is sometimes good for us –

* It acknowledges our pain
* Helps us to remember that suffering is common to all humans,
* It doesn't last forever

3.2 Trust that God Is Sovereign

Listen for how Job responds to God.

Job 42:1-3 (NIV) Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

What brought Job to this point of response?

* previously he had expressed his desire to confront God
* finally, God had spoken to him
* God had confronted him
* now he realizes his improper attitude and confesses

What was the essence of Job’s confession concerning the Lord?

* You, God, are omnipotent all powerful
* When you pointed out my wrong accusations, you were right
* I assumed I knew the reality of the issues
* I did not – your plans are beyond my knowing and understanding

What realization enabled Job to not yield to these kinds temptations and caused him to repent?

* He was beginning to see God’s power and authority
* he began to realize that God is sovereign …
* God does as God pleases and need not answer to us, God is God … we are not
* at the same time, God is neither fickle nor capricious nor arbitrary
* in our limited perspective it may only seem so

Consider these strategies to learn to *listen* to God, rather than dictate to Him?

* When you read His word, consider first of all the facts that it is stating
* Then think about (maybe even write down) what it means to you
* Now ask God to tell you what you how you should be responding to or applying the Truth that you have found

Why is acknowledging the mystery and superiority of God a comfort and encouragement?

* we realize He is in charge
* we can be assured of His love for us
* we can realize that He is in charge and capable of handling the movements of the universe and the current world events
* furthermore, He is capable of handling current events in our lives and those around us
* God makes no mistakes
* even when we fail, He is still able to accomplish His good purposes for us
* it is only for us to submit to His will and trust in His power, authority, and love for us

3.3 Experience the Presence of God

Listen for evidence of Job’s humility.

Job 42:4-6 (NIV) "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' 5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

What two sources of knowledge about God did Job identify?

* he had heard about God
* he says now he actually “seen” God
* he certainly had now seen God at work
* he apparently had experienced God speaking to him and confronting him

What's the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Knowing About God | Knowing God |
| * heard about God * read stories that included God * heard other people’s opinion about God * read Bible stories about God * possibly use His name in vain | * personal relationship with God * placed faith in God * convinced/convicted of His love for you * received Jesus as Lord and Savior * communicate with God * pay attention to what He says, speak to Him in prayer |

What response did it generate from Job?

* confession of his sin
* regret of his actions and words
* repent in dust and ashes
* confession = agreeing with God that you have sinned
* repentance = turning away from your sinful actions

Now Job is expressing an attitude of faith. What can we do to express faith in the midst of suffering?

* read and claim God’s promises
* praise God for who He is
* thank Him that He is in charge, even when we suffer
* confess to Him your despair in your suffering
* tell Him you are going to trust in His power and authority and love for you
* make a practice of praying the scriptures, quoting or paraphrasing verses, applying them to your situation

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

A person standing on a qr code

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Confess.

* All suffering is not a result of sin, but sin can lead to suffering.
* Ask God to reveal any sin in your life.
* Confess that and thank Him for His grace and forgiveness.

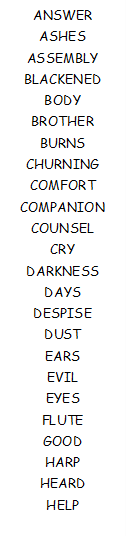
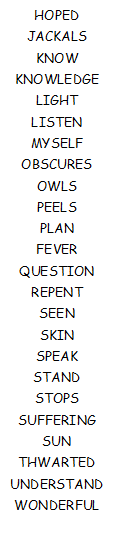
Honor.

* Ask God to show you how He wants to strengthen you during a time of suffering.
* While dealing with difficulties, look for ways to honor Christ.

Encourage.

* Everyone’s experience with suffering is different.
* Share with someone how God helped you, strengthened you, and brought glory to Himself during a time of hardship or suffering.

A close up of a word

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Word Search Puzzle

A cartoon of a person with glasses

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Well, humph! We don’t want you to *suffer*, so the words this time are only forward, down, and diagonal … but *no reverse !* That should make it easier for you *wimps* … humph! Find as many words as possible. The person who finds the most words will be excused from that book report you owe me! If you get stuck, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2vstymmc> Other great Family Activities are found there also.