

Through the Pain

Job 42:1-7

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A. In His Strength (vs. 1-2; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10):

1. Then Job answered the Lord – After Job challenged the Lord and the Lord responded by describing His supreme power, Job responded with no intention ever to stop sharing with the Lord his renewed mindset.

a) But, as Elihu had pointed out, bitterness and pride had followed his loss of wealth, family, and health (32:2; 33:17; 35:12–13; 36:9; 37:24). At first, however, Job's response was proper (1:21–22; 2:10). Job now saw, as God had challenged him (40:10), that no one can stand accusingly against Him. Realizing that God is not obligated to man, Job's questions vanished and his resentment left. He was now satisfied, for God had communicated with him about His own person, not about Job's problems. Now Job was willing to trust the Sovereign, whose ways are perfect (Ps. 18:30), even when he could not understand. Undoubtedly God forgave him of his former sin of pride.^[1]

2. Then Job answered the Lord – Job is careful not to say God but Lord, meaning he is continuously committed to providing to the Lord God complete respect for His power and authority to rule over everything.

3. Said – Job verbally states what he intends to continuously say to the Lord with no intent of ever stopping. What Job is saying is now his disposition towards the Lord and the only way he would continuously view and respond to God.

a) This confession is the counterbalance to Job's complaint (ch. 3). It acknowledges the sinful rebelliousness which began with that complaint. It is not an admission of sins prior to his sufferings such as would support the friends' accusation. ^[2]

4. I know you are able – From everything Job has experienced in his relationship with the Lord, Job's experiences ultimately convinced him that the Lord has the ability to overcome whatever obstacles there is to encounter, and no matter what, He will continuously prevail.

a) Job's suffering in and of itself brought him no new awareness of God. In fact, it brought him into a foolish position of challenging God's actions. Only God's self-revelation deepened Job's relationship with him. He had known about God, but the pain of his suffering and the folly of his challenge provided the context into which God brought a revelation that opened up for Job a deeper and more personal experience with God. Having seen God as he was, Job humbly repented before him, not because of a sin committed before his suffering, but due to his critical and judgmental attitude toward God that he had allowed to develop during his suffering. Job never deserted or cursed God. Actually, the very intensity and focus of his complaints toward God showed his insistence and faith that God alone was the source of his past, present, and future hope for life. His complaint was

confirmation, not denial, of his faithfulness and integrity toward God. No greater passage than 13:15–16 can be found in the book to confirm that truth.^[3]

5. No purpose – The Lord can powerfully execute all of His well-thought-out, strategically designed plans to achieve His divine intent.

a) *No purpose of thine can be restrained (v. 2b, ASV)*. This is not bare resignation under omnipotent pressure, but praise of the living God and a trusting acquiescence in his wise purposes. In 42:3a, 4 Job quotes God’s words (cf. 38:2, 3b; 40:7), directing their convicting light upon himself, and then responds, “I am the man” (42:3b, 5, 6). Things too wonderful for me (v. 3c). Finite man may not pose as final arbiter, for in God and his ways there is mystery beyond human comprehension.^[4]

b) Since God has done such things in the past, Job recognized in the second part of this confession that “no plan” of God in the future “can be thwarted.” Job was learning the lesson Nebuchadnezzar learned centuries later (Dan 4:35):^[5]

6. Can be thwarted - Nothing or no one can diminish, interrupt, redirect, or destroy His plans.

B. My Wisdom Must Not Displace His Knowledge

(v. 3; 1 Corinthians 1:21, 25):

1. Who is it that hides counsel – After God reveals who He is to Job, Job accepts that he made an unconscious error, based on a hidden fault, that he did not give careful deliberation to all that the Lord is when dealing with all that he was going through.
 - a) Job repeats the question addressed to him in 38:2, for the purpose of admitting (lines 2 and 3 [= c, d above]) the justice of the rebuke implied in it.”—c. Cp. 38:4b, 18. **d.** Cp. Ps. 139:6.^[6]
2. Knowledge – Job admits that he lacks the technical understanding to discern the divine plans of God. This led him to question why God allowed the evil that took place against him.
3. Knowledge – Many times we can become angry at God, sometimes bitter towards God “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and this weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:25). Also because “*the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, “He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness.”* (1 Corinthians 3:19). “*None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*” (1 Corinthians 2:8-10; NIV)

4. I have declared I do not understand – In light of all God has said to Job, Job lacks the ability to make the distinctions necessary to differentiate between good and evil.
5. I have declared I do not understand – When all that takes place in the world or our lives does not make sense as to why the Lord would allow it, we must humble ourselves as Job has in respect to all that the Lord is.
6. Things too wonderful—What the Lord is doing is beyond Job’s ability or that of any other human being to accomplish. It is astonishing because it is a supernatural act that is, as a result, extraordinary.
7. I did not know—Job said all that has taken place and all that God revealed Himself to be has caused him to learn that he lacks the superior ability to distinguish good from evil in the manner in which God can.

C. Once Blind, Now I See (vs. 4):

1. Hear now. Job demands the complete undivided attention of his friends so that they may quickly gain a full understanding of what he has to say.
2. I will speak – Now that Job has heard from every one of his friends and then from the Lord God, Job says he will communicate what he understands he needs to say continuously.
3. I will speak – Sometimes we talk before we reckon with what the Lord is doing or saying (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2). The issue is when we learn what we need to learn from God, are we willing to change our focus and, with the circumstances still the same, trust God’s response?

4. I will ask You, and You instruct me – Job literally continuously begs God, in respect of recognizing the superiority of God’s knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, to teach him so that he comes to a vivid understanding of how the Word of God works in and through his daily life.

5. I have heard Job said he had given his undivided attention to gaining a complete intellectual understanding of God.

a) The complainer was not an eyewitness of the act of Creation, a fact God called to his attention near the beginning of His first speech (38:4–11). Nor could Job even view firsthand many aspects of natural Creation (38:16–24; 39:1–4). His perspective of God’s total workings was therefore limited and secondhand.^[2]

6. Healing of the ear – Job emphasizes that he has intentionally made every effort to listen to the voice of the Lord.

7. I have heard by the hearing of the ear – Knowledge alone can leave us puffed up (1 Corinthians 8:1-2), practicing God’s Word grow us to know good and evil (Hebrews 5:11-14) and to gain wisdom and discernment (Colossians 1:9-12) so that we **live** powerfully in this world. The Word of God, even though powerful (Hebrews 4:12), not returning void (Isaiah 55:11), is designed as a Word of life (1 John 1:4) so that it becomes “a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.” (Psalm 119:105).

8. But now my eyes have seen – Job admits a different kind of learning is taking place.

a) Job – and his three friends and Elihu had only heard of God, but now Job has seen God (Isa. 6:5) with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding. He can, therefore, accept God’s plan for his life (vs. 2) – which includes suffering. (NASB study notes)

9. But now my eyes have seen—Job says his circumstances heightened his sense of urgency and intense desire to learn the Lord God in a whole new way, not to turn from God in bitterness but to lean towards God so that he could come to a clear, and complete understanding of what the Word of God means under these circumstances.

a) *My eyes have seen* – A down payment on the hope expressed in 19:26 (He is absolutely certain, however, that death is not the end of existence and that someday he will stand in the presence of his Redeemer and see him with his own eyes (19:27; Mt. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:2). (NASB study notes)

10. But now my eyes have seen – It is one thing to know intellectually what the Word of means, but it is another thing to come to wisdom and discernment once we know what it is saying (1 John 2:2-6). The only way is when we abide in His Word and remain committed to it when the circumstances of life are overwhelming. Those who keep loving Him will bear fruit (John 15:1-4), experience His love (John 15:7-10), gain a friendship with Him (John 15:13), and be blessed (Romans 8:28).

11. Therefore I retract – Job rejects what he once said to the Lord to the point of despising his actions.

a) God has accomplished His purpose in the life of Job. Job evidently realizes that the reason God has permitted him to suffer is to bring him to repentance. He sees himself in the light of the presence of God. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6–7).^[8]

12. Therefore I retract – When we learn and grow spiritually, we move forward in our spiritual maturity and walk with God when we develop a spirit of disdain for who we were.

13. I repent—Job, because he disdains what he says, changes his heart, mind, and conduct towards the Lord God. Thinking of the manner in which he approached the Lord God brings him deep, uncontrollable sorrow.

14. I repent—When we learn more about our Lord and see what we have done, our determination to walk with Him comes from our heart and a true desire to have a sincere, genuine relationship with Him.

a) God does not charge Job with the sins that his friends accused him of committing, but God does charge him with not seeing himself in the light of the greatness and majesty of God. Job’s religious experience is no longer second-hand; he has met God personally, and this makes all his sufferings worthwhile.^[9]

b) Then he “repented in dust and ashes,” an outward demonstration of his inward contrition and the death of his own opinions. He deeply regretted the presumption of his foolish words. ^[10]

15. Throwing dust in the air so that it came down on one’s head (cf. Job 2:12) and sitting in or near ashes or with ashes on one’s body (cf. 2:8; Isa. 58:5; Dan. 9:3) were signs of a humbled condition. Having grieved over his losses, Job now grieved over his sin. ^[11]

a) Typical to ancient Israel, the idea of the link between honor and shame is at play here. Job honors God and acknowledges his shame by repenting in dust and ashes, which are linked with mourning in 2:8, 12 (cf. sidebar on “Mourning” at 2:12). ^[12]

^[1] Zuck, R. B. (1985). [Job](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 774). Victor Books.

^[2] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#) (Job 42:1). Moody Press.

^[3] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 197). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[4] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#) (Job 42:1). Moody Press.

^[5] Alden, R. L. (1993). [Job](#) (Vol. 11, p. 408). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[6] Driver, S. R., & Gray, G. B. (1921). [A critical and exegetical commentary on the book of Job](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 371–372). T. & T. Clark.

^[7] Zuck, R. B. (1985). [Job](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 774). Victor Books.

^[8] McGee, J. V. (1991). [Thru the Bible commentary: Poetry \(Job\)](#) (electronic ed., Vol. 16, p. 188). Thomas Nelson.

^[9] Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#) (Job 38:1–42:6). Victor Books.

^[10] Alden, R. L. (1993). [Job](#) (Vol. 11, pp. 408–409). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[11] Zuck, R. B. (1985). [Job](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 774). Victor Books.

^[12] Walton, J. H. (2009). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary \(Old Testament\): The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs](#) (Vol. 5, p. 300). Zondervan.