

Job Chapter 3 – John Karmelich

1. As I read the chapter a few times, I kept thinking of a famous movie scene from my youth. In the opening scene of the movie, Bill Murray played a young man who just lost his girlfriend, then his car (repossessed) his apartment and his dinner. His reaction to all this was, "And then, depression set in". (From the Movie "Stripes".) As tough as all of that would be, it's not nearly as bad as what Job experienced in the opening two chapters of this book. To briefly recap those first two chapters they were about God and Satan making a bet. The bet was whether or not Job would curse God if he lost all he owned and he was in poor health. By the end of Chapter 2, his extensive wealth was gone, all of his ten children were dead and he had nothing to do but face his intense physical and emotional pain. Chapter 3 is Job dealing with all that pain. That's why my lesson title is that line from the movie Stripes: "And then, depression set in".
 - a) OK John, is your job to depress us with this lesson? No, my job's to teach us about dealing with pain from God's perspective. I can think of a good number of instances in the bible of people grieving with pain. There is nothing wrong or sinful about it. Paul effectively said we're to rejoice with those are joyful and grief with those who are grieving. (Romans 12:15 paraphrased). My point is times come in our lives where grieving is necessary. There is a lot to learn from Job's grieving about proper and improper ways of grieving.
 - b) For example, Job complains intensely about his situation in this chapter. At the same time, he never curses God for his fate. Remember that Job's got no idea about the happy ending that will come dozens of chapters from now. At this point, all Job knows is that he's living in tremendous physical and emotional pain and he's learning to deal with it.
 - c) The purpose of this chapter isn't just to say, "It's ok Job, it'll be over soon". First of all, I've never met anyone who truly gets over the loss of one of their children, let alone all of 'em. Then there is the pain of losing one's life savings especially if it was a lot. Finally there is physical pain of very poor health, which Job also had to deal with.
 - d) Imagine you're one of Job's three friends. You make plans with the two others to visit Job to "try to cheer him up". It's so bad, nobody says anything for a week. Finally Job decides to talk and essentially goes on for a whole chapter about how bad life is. What would you do other than just sit there and listen?
 - e) One of the unfortunate aspects of life, is people easily get in the "victim" mode. They think nobody is suffering as bad as them. Many adults get divorced as they see their situation as the worst it can be, and run away from problems versus facing them. By studying the life of Job, one realizes it's far worse than anything any of else have ever dealt with, it will put our own problems in perspective. If Job can still be a God-fearing man through all of this, then you and I can learn proper ways of grieving through whatever we're dealing with.
2. Before I begin, I also want all of us to realize, this chapter is more than a "woe is me" monologue. It actually breaks into a few sections that deal with Job's depression. I made the decision to make it a separate lesson from the back and forth debate dialogue that begins in Chapter 4. That way we get the perspective right before we get into all the "hot and heavy" debate which will go on and on for many chapters. Yes there is a lot to learn from that debate, but I figured I should put it off for one lesson so we can learn a little about "Godly grieving" in this chapter.
 - a) Also before I begin, realize from Chapter 3 to the end of the book we're reading poetry. It doesn't rhyme like English poems. First of all, it's translated from ancient Hebrew. Realize Hebrew poetry doesn't rhyme. The original language has a musical metric to it, but not in English. Also because it's poetry, exaggerations and illustrations are used to make points. Which reminds me I hold the view that I take my bible "seriously" but not literally. It just means that some points made are obviously exaggerations and illustrations.
 - b) Remember the bible interpretation rule, "If the literal sense makes perfect sense, seek then no other sense". If the literal doesn't make literal sense, then one can interpret.

3. OK then, onto a quick discussion of Chapter 3 before I get started. It opens with Job complaining about the day he was born. My first thought was, "Good thing he doesn't specify the date or else it'd be some sort of fast day for many religious Jewish and Christian groups." Then he ponders if it would have been better if he was aborted or came out dead. Finally he ponders if life's a waste of time given all the suffering that occurs.
- a) Now if that isn't a depressing chapter, I don't know what is. I consider this chapter as the bible's most depressing, along with Psalm 88. Read it sometime if you want to feel down. So why does the bible have such horrid chapters? If for no other reason, then to know it's ok to grieve. It's ok to feel down when dealing with pain as long as we don't mentally stay in that place forever. God does not tell us in effect, "I know that hurts, tough it out". God wants us to rely upon His power to have joy in spite of the pain, but when moments come like Job's got here, it's hard to blame him for feeling as bad as you do.
 - b) I was seriously considering starting the "main dialogue" in this lesson, which begins with Chapter 4. Most of the book of Job is a debate between Job and his three friends over why this suffering occurs. An important point to remember as you read that debate is when it is over, God steps in and says in effect, "The arguments your three friends make is wrong" so keep that in mind as the debate begins in Chapter 4. Before we begin all of that it's very important to understand the real pain Job suffered so we can relate to the debate better.
 - c) Finally, if you're reading this and thinking, "I don't want to get all depressed by reading of Job's sorrows", then you're missing the point. The point is learning how to properly accept what life throws at us so when the day comes of our own misery, we can put see from His perspective and help us to better deal with our own issues.
 - d) Bottom line, it's time to get the "tears flowing" and read about Job's misery here.
4. Chapter 3, Verse 1: After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.² He said:³ "May the day of my birth perish, and the night it was said, 'A boy is born!'
- a) Job opens his sorrow with a request for a "national holiday" to forget the day he was born. Imagine feeling so sorry for yourself, that you regret even being born. I've met some who do think this way about themselves or others. I've met people who've got so much hatred of their lives they wish they never were born. I also know many of us in our low moments also have thoughts like this. If you've ever gone through a time in your life when it's "that bad", you start thinking, "I hate my life so much, I wish I was never born". Unfortunately, that type of thinking is common for many of us, especially when it seems like everything is really going wrong.
 - b) Stop and put your problems in comparison to Job's. Do you have health problems? Job is in so much pain, all he could do is sit in pain and try to scrape away at his skin thinking it would relieve the physical pain. Have you ever lost someone close to you? Job lost all his children in a single moment. Have you lost a "thing" you value tremendously? Job lost all that he owned. My point is no matter how bad our suffering, here was a man who relates to it and much more so. Even if we're joyful right now, we may in the future experience a time that's as hard as Job's. My point is the bible teaches us how to deal with pain that we wouldn't wish on our worse enemy and this is one of those places.
 - c) Let me throw in a moment of joy here. By the end of the book, Job gets his health back, his stuff back and new children. I have no idea what will happen in my future or yours, but I do know that Jesus promises the believer that we gain far more than whatever we did lose in this lifetime if we choose to follow Him. (See Matthew 19:29 for that reference.)
 - d) Another thought crossed my mind as I was thinking about this chapter. Why doesn't the bible just say, "Job sulked for a long time in misery". Why have a whole chapter dedicated to describing Job's misery? Stop and think what we're like when we're miserable: We'll go on and on about it. We wallow in our own mud for a long time. Besides all that, what else does Job have to do all day except pick at his sores? Besides now he's got his three friends there, he's got someone to listen to him gripe! With that said, back to the text.

- e) The main thing Job tries to communicate here is that the day he was born was a bad day! He doesn't want to make it a national day of mourning as much as he's now got so much self-hatred of his life due to his misery, in a sense he blames God that he was ever born in the first place! He's not blaming God for creating the world. He's saying given all that he has lost, it would have been better if he had not lived, then to have all that he had and lose it all! Obviously, this isn't the stories end by a long shot, but it is a way of communicating to us how much Job was hurting at this point in the story.
- i) Again Job had no idea about the "bet" and he doesn't blame either God or Satan for the situation he's in. He just knows he's in lots of pain and needs to preach it out of his system. Therefore, Job's getting colorful way by complaining about the day he was born as a "truly miserable day".
 - ii) We know he's not being literal, because until the bet took place, it appeared that he had a pretty successful life by most people's standards. He had ten children who're raised to trust God by Job. He had more wealth than most could ever imagine. I'd say that's a pretty good life. My simple point here is that when Job cursed the day of his birth, it was pretty short sided as all he could see was his current pain.
 - iii) That of course is the lesson for us. When we're suffering for some reason, all we're aware of is the pain. We can't be joyful for other's success. We can't be grateful for what we've had until that suffering began. Why do we think the suffering will last for an eternity when we've had moments of joy in our lives and more importantly God promises us a wonderful future if we trust Him through whatever it is we are dealing with at the present moment.
 - iv) OK then, enough happiness for one verse, time to get back to Job's suffering!
5. Verse 4: That day--may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine upon it.⁵ May darkness and deep shadow claim it once more; may a cloud settle over it; may blackness overwhelm its light.
- a) I probably need to emphasize a lot in this lesson that we're reading poetry. He didn't want a big national holiday to commemorate his suffering. It's just his way of "wallowing in the mud" of the suffering. So how should we handle people like that? The next whole bunch of chapters deal with that, and I'll remind you now that all the advice we'll read for many a chapter is wrong simply because God says so. Yes there's a purpose for all the negative criticism Job will receive for about thirty chapters, but I'm jumping the gun. For now, the issue is how should one deal with misery or how should one deal with someone who is in so much pain, that all they want to do is complain? My first thought, is we need to let 'em get it out of their system. As the old saying goes, "Misery loves company" and Job has the need right now to express his misery, for a good chapter or so. A positive way to see this chapter is to realize Job doesn't go "on and on" for say 40 chapters. We only have to deal with Job's horrid attitude for one chapter.
 - b) Imagine being in so much pain, you cry out, "May the day I was born be blotted out as if it never occurred. May it be a day ignored by history and darkness overwhelm it". No Job is not being literal. It's just his way of dealing with the pain.
 - c) If you were Job's friends listening to all of this, would you say, "Hey Job it's not the end of the world, you're just going through a tough time right now". Unfortunately those friends will get tough on Job and not comfort him. Still, what do you say to someone who is in so much pain, he's going on and on about how the day he was born should be cursed? Yes, it is melodramatic, but again, we're reading poetry and Job's pouring it on and on as to get it out of his system.
 - d) Still, the question I keep wondering is what does one say when a person is that low? Is it a matter of trying to cheer him or her up, or just let them hit emotional "rock bottom" all on their own so they could see the futility of what they're dealing with. I'm guessing that if I was there, I'd let Job go on and on for a bit to let him get it out of his system. Therefore:

6. Verse 6: That night--may thick darkness seize it; may it not be included among the days of the year nor be entered in any of the months.⁷ May that night be barren; may no shout of joy be heard in it.
- a) I'm sure Job's well aware what he's saying can't literally come true. This isn't a prayer for God to change history. It's a regret that Job ever was born. It's easy to criticize and say he needs to recall all the blessings he had before this. It's another thing to be in his shoes and try to relate to Job's pain. The reason I'm going on and on about this is when we must deal with someone who's in a lot of pain and there's nothing we can do to change the situation, sometimes the best thing we can do is just listen and let them "cry it out". Someone in that much pain can't be helped unless they first want to be helped. I suspect Job's friends can't think of anyway to help him and therefore just sat and listened.
 - b) Let me try to put Job's situation in a way we may have to relate to one day: Suppose we're dealing with someone who wants to commit suicide. They're life's a mess and they do not see any solution except to end it all. That's where Job's at right now. I figure a reason why Job won't do that, is he figures he can't do that to God. All he can do now is wallow in his misery. Still, what do we say to someone who's seriously considering it? Like Job, we've got to realize that no matter how bad it is, "this isn't it". Next we owe it to God that we're to be a witness for Him no matter how bad it gets. It's hard to feel sorrow for someone if they aren't interested in changing their situation. Still if one is a friend, one listens and at a point where they're tired of talking, then we can give advice. The most important thing to emphasize is we can't change the past, just learn from it. Even if we're in major debt or facing a life ending disease, wallowing in pity is no way to live out whatever time that we have left. All I'm saying despite whatever problem we're facing, we don't have to curse the world because it is horrid right now.
 - c) Dealing with depression is a tough thing. One of the best things I've ever heard on it is to attack it 1) Mentally (get the medical help one needs) 2) Physically stay in shape and don't just "wallow" through it and 3) Spiritually. The most horrid depression can come to end if we're willing to let God help us deal with it. God still loves us as much as ever even when we're dealing with the worst of life. Speaking of people dealing with the worst of life:
7. Verse 8: May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.
- a) This is Job saying, "You want to be in a bad mood? You need something to complain over at the moment? Well, use the day I was born as an example of the worst day one can ever imagine." Yes that's low, but that's where Job's mentally at, at this moment. This story will get better, but right now we need to focus on how to deal with suffering.
 - b) OK, what's Leviathan? I'll start by saying Jewish and Christian seminaries are full of ideas on what it could be. It literally means, "twisted one". It's used about a half dozen times in the bible including one more time later in the book. Looking at the other times that word's used, it seems to be some sort of sea creature, such as a white shark, or some creature that is now extinct. Some even suggest some sort of dinosaur. The point of using that word is that Job's saying, "If you want to think of something horrid associated with my birthday, a Leviathan comes to mind as something horrible." Whatever Leviathan actually was, it's to be feared and avoided. Job uses "it" to say, don't mess with whatever caused my downfall, as it should be a curse on all mankind.
 - c) Well, if you ain't depressed by now, there is no hope for you. ☺
8. Verse 9: May its morning stars become dark; may it wait for daylight in vain and not see the first rays of dawn,¹⁰ for it did not shut the doors of the womb on me to hide trouble from my eyes.
- a) Again we're reading poetry. Job's purposely exaggerating not to condemn God's creation, but to make the point that he's felling so low, it should be a crime to honor his life. It's just Job's way of saying, "nothing's going to make this better". It's Job realizing he can't go kill himself as he can't do that to God. What he can do is cry out in sorrow and curse his own life in colorful ways. Now if this isn't a "pity party" I don't know what is.

9. Verse 11: "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?
- a) This is Job saying, why wasn't I born dead? Why didn't I come out of my mother's womb as one who's "dead on arrival"? Again, stop and realize how good Job's life was up until all of this began. Think of all the lives he blessed while God made him successful, as well as the lives of his family and his servants. Job provided jobs for lots of people. Yet if one is in that much pain, one can't even recall the good things that occurred in our lives. It is only sorrow that Job can focus upon given the loss of everything.
 - b) I know when I'm having my own "pity party", my wife encourages me by asking me what am I grateful for? By making a simple list of what we're grateful for, can get us out of the worst of depressions. As the old saying goes, we can't always change our circumstances, but we can always change our attitude going through it. Let's face it, no matter how bad of a situation, we may be in, I doubt anyone of us has ever experienced all the pain Job is going through at this moment.
 - c) OK, we're almost half way home. Let's keep trudging along!
10. Verse 12: Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed?
- a) One has to admit, it's strange that Job keeps focusing on his birth. This verse is essentially saying, "Why was my mom there to take care of me so I could have life?" Of all the things that Job could complain about, why bring his mother into this? It was not her fault all this is happening. I doubt Job meant this as a knock on his mother, but just a colorful way that he is cursing his own life through the pain he's dealing with at this time.
 - b) OK if Verse 12 isn't weird enough, Verses 13-15 are really out there:
11. Verse 13: For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest¹⁴ with kings and counselors of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins,¹⁵ with rulers who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.
- a) In effect, this is Job's plea to God to take his life. Job believed he'd be in heaven. What he's saying here is that if he were dead, he'd be in the same place as other famous people who died and like Job was very financially successful. Just like those long dead famous people and kings, they've got nothing left but a pile of ruins where their great palaces once stood, Job himself feels like he has nothing left to show for his life.
 - b) Let me pause here to say that riches aren't a requirement to be saved. Wealth is neutral as far as God's concerned. It's what we do with whatever wealth we have that's an issue. Job is bringing up past "dominant" players, because Job saw himself as one of them before the disaster struck that is his life. Job knew enough of history to date that there were kings as well as other powerful rulers that have come and gone and all that's left is a big waste pile from where they once ruled. It's amazing how the ruins of former kings can still stand for thousands of years after they're gone. In Israel there are ruins of King Herod the Great as one travels all over Israel that's leftover from 2,000 years ago.
 - c) Sorry, I drifted off topic. The point here is Job wishes he was dead. However, Job will not sin in order to accomplish that. It's as if Job's saying, I still refuse to sin, but God I'd love to die right here and right now, so please God, end my life now as that will end my misery.
 - d) So if Job was in that much pain, why didn't God end it the way Job wanted to? Obviously there is a purpose to this story. My point is God never wants to leave us that way, but He needs us to realize we must accept His will for better or worse. We may not be able to fix our situation, but we can always learn from it and trust God to help us through it. All I'm saying is God didn't end the story here because there is a lot more God wants to teach Job and us about life than to just end his life in that misery.
12. Verse 16: Or why was I not hidden in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?
- a) Translated: Why wasn't I aborted by my mother? Or why didn't I die while I was still in my mother's womb? It's a cry that his life is so horrid right now, Job sincerely believes his life wasn't worth living based on the outcome to this point in time.

- b) Here's a question. If Job died say a year earlier when his children were still alive or all his wealth was still in tact, would Job still be complaining to God about his life? One thing we must accept is the length of time we get to live is fixed by God and there's nothing we can do to change that. I've known people who've died very young. I've also recently visited a relative who's 91 years old and still going strong. If we accept that God's in control of our time, we might appreciate life all the more, even if we lose everything and wallow in pity as Job's doing here.
- c) Let me try this from another perspective. Let's suppose we had a great life at one time but it's all gone now. What if we have nothing and lost everything? Would we also complain that life's not worth living and we need to end it now? Part of accepting the fact that God's in control of our time is accepting our fate of the moment. Yes we should do what we can to relieve whatever suffering we're in or change our fate if it's bad. If we just curse the day we were born, it doesn't make the misery any better.
- d) So what does one do if one is as low as Job? First I assume he has some way of continuing to live. It may be a simple life, but he can continue. Then one must be grateful for all that we did have and realize that following Jesus is worth any suffering we must face in life. I would then work on saying, "ok, what can I do to relieve the pain and go on living?" Yes it is horrid at the moment, but one must remember, "This too shall pass!"
- e) Meanwhile, it's not going to pass for many a chapter, so let's finish Job's misery speech:
13. Verse 17: There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest.
- a) Job is continuing his plea that his life would be better if he was dead. Notice that he didn't go jump off a cliff. As much as he wanted his life to end, he didn't make any suicide effort. It's as if he realized in his misery that his life is still in God's control and ending his life by some means of suicide would be a sin as one is taking away a life God created. Therefore, all Job can do is sulk in his misery as he realizes his life is still on "God's timing". Still we can see he wishes he was dead, which is what this verse is communicating to us.
 - b) Job is making the point that even the wicked cease being wicked when they die, so there is a good point to wicked dying. Our world benefits when those who've killed multitudes are themselves gone. No Job's not saying he's a mass murderer or a wicked person. All he is saying is there is some good that comes from the death of people. It's Job's colorful way to say, "Hey, the world would be better off without me, just as it's better off without those who are wicked." It's effectively a plea for God to end his life. I've met people who think this way. They're in so much pain, they're effectively begging God to end their lives. We have to realize at times like that, that our time is in God's hands, not ours despite the pain we're facing at the present moment. Sometimes if we're just willing to live out the day we will find the next day or sometime soon, it does get better.
 - c) The good news is this lesson is going to be shorter than most of them. So let's get through the grief and onto the "great debate" that'll take place for many chapters in this book.
14. Verse 18: Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver's shout.
- a) Meanwhile Job's still going on and on about how death is a benefit to many people. Here in this verse, Job thinks about those who were born into slavery or sold into slavery. He's saying in effect, "Wouldn't their lives as slaves be better if they were dead?"
 - b) We got to admit, when it comes to felling sorry for one's self, Job's trying to think of every way possible. He's essentially thinking, "Hey situations exist where it's better to be dead than to go on living in this or that situation".
 - c) Since Job brought up slavery, let me discuss it quickly. Unfortunately that's been a part of history for most of the time man existed. The bible doesn't expressly condemn the act, but at the same time it doesn't really condone it either. It's as if the bible is saying, "I know as God that slavery exists and if I could wave a magic wand, I'd make it end today. What I'll do instead is limit the use of slavery and effectively make it an undesirable choice so most people would choose to avoid being a slave master.

- i) For example, "slavery" was used to pay off debts. One would go into slavery as a way to pay what one owns. The bible obviously teaches forgiveness and says that after a specific number of years all slaves must be set free. (See Deuteronomy 15.) Just as God forgives all our sins, so we must (note that) forgive others. My point is simply that the bible "tolerates" slavery as it was so common back then, but it also works to end that practice by requiring us to forgive those who've hurt us.
 - d) The reason I deviated into that topic, is because Job's using slaves as an example of people who might be hurting so badly, they can't see past their slavery and want to end their life. Slavery can be a way of saying, "My life is so bad, I wish I were dead". Thinking that way is effectively a sin because we're desiring to be in charge of how long we have to live and not letting God be in charge of that aspect of our lives. That's one reason why Job's being so miserable at this point in his life. Speaking of Job:
15. Verse 19: The small and the great are there, and the slave is freed from his master.
- a) Notice that Job believes in an afterlife. He's saying whatever the afterlife is like, there will be small and great people there. Those who lived as slaves are no longer under slavery as death has freed them from that obligation. Job is not claiming he knows what the afterlife is like, just that it exists and all types of people are there. There are clues coming up later in the book that Job believed he'd be resurrected despite all he's going through. For now, it's pure "misery" as Job's essentially thinking he'd be better off like all those dead people, then to continue living as he's living now.
 - b) What Job is essentially asking is "How can I die now, without committing suicide or even not sinning?" It's effectively a long plea for God to take his life now, as he doesn't want to go on living with all the pain he's going through right now. What Job doesn't realize now is God has a great purpose for him to go on with his life, just as God has a purpose for us to continue being a witness for Him despite whatever we might be dealing with!
 - c) While you're contemplating what that might be for your life, let's get back to Job.
16. Verse 20: "Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul,²¹ to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure,²² who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?
- a) Time for another paraphrase, "Hey God, how come you allow death for others who suffer but won't end my life here and now?" Let's be honest, there are people out there who are so miserable, they cry out for death, but don't do anything to speed up that process! I've met people who want death as they think it's the only solution for what they have to deal with at the moment. When we think, "I want to be in charge of my time, and not God", it is one way we're not trusting Him and not fully turning our life over to Him.
 - b) Now imagine being in so much pain, that death not only seems like the only option but is a better "life" than to go on living! These verses remind us that most people have no idea what the next life is like. Most people wrongly think, "they're good deeds outweigh their bad ones" so they get to go to heaven. The essential message of Christianity is that none of us can ever be good enough for God. He wants us to trust in His complete payment for our sins and not try to prove our worth to Him. The reason we should obey His laws is to show gratitude, not to prove our worth to him. I state that essential message here, as Job's saying many people think death will solve their problems, when it won't. People who are miserable in this life, will not get "rest" in the next one (with the obvious exception for the people who are trusting in Jesus for relief of their pain).
 - c) The reason I'm going on and on about this, is I want us to see that even though Job thinks that death will solve his problem, it won't. Remember that the bible is always to be read in context. What I mean is if one reads this chapter by itself, one might think that suicide is an acceptable way to die. That's why I'm making such a big deal about "context" as we are reading about those who are suffering and want to end it. A great quote on this idea is "One should never read a bible verse out of context". (From Greg Koukl.)

- d) That leads me back to the last sentence Job gives, which is the last three verses. Job thinks that death is a "welcome opportunity" versus continuing to live in sorrow. Again to read that sentence out of context of the whole book or the whole bible makes us think to go kill ourselves is "biblical" when obviously it is not. I suspect most of us know that, but I desire that we grasp the rule of "never read a bible verse out of context" which again, is why I'm going "on and on" about this.
 - e) Meanwhile, we've only got four more verses of Job's suffering to get through. Hang tight, we're almost there!
17. Verse 23: Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in?
- a) Let's start with the question of what does Job mean by "a man whose way is hidden"? I'm sure Job believed in a God who knows all things, so it's not about hiding from God. What I believe it means is we can't read people's thoughts, so others are unaware of what we are thinking at any moment.
 - b) That leads to the phrase "What God has hedged in". If no one knows what we're thinking unless we tell them, then in that sense God has hedged our thoughts in.
 - c) There is also another way to look at this verse. Back in Chapter 1, Job complained to God that He put a "hedge" around Job, so Satan couldn't touch him. It's about the realization of God protecting those who are called to be His. I've talked to people who realize that even though they didn't accept Jesus as God and being in charge of their life until they were "x" years old, they can still look back at their life before that moment and realize God had His hand on their lives since the beginning. It's the classic idea that God knows all things and we don't so God knows who will be saved, even though we have no idea.
 - i) Anyway, some see this verse as Job knew God had put a protective hedge around him, but didn't understand why God would do that if life can be so miserable! Yes it's a depressing thought, but again, this is a depressing chapter. When a person is miserable, all they can do is think miserable thoughts. That's what we have here!
18. Verse 24: For sighing comes to me instead of food; my groans pour out like water.
- a) I can tell I had way too much time to think about this chapter. I wondered if Job's friends ever stopped to eat or sleep while they were with Job for seven days. I wonder if Job had any sort of food, or just starved himself while he sat there in misery! We only know what the text tells us. Here it says that Job "sighed" instead of eating food.
 - i) By the way, the Hebrew word translated "groans" isn't like a small moan we might let out if say part of our body is hurting when we move it a certain way. The word in Hebrew is like yelling in pain because it's that bad. I recall a few times in my life where I was in so much pain, all I could do is yell out. The point is to realize Job is really physically suffering here, and we're not to forget that as we read the "misery monologue" of Chapter 3, or "the great debate" that'll begin in the next chapter.
 - b) Job's pain is so bad, he compares the groans he makes as being as thunderous as that of a waterfall. It doesn't read that way in the English, but the idea of the original language is it is saying Job's emotional pain is so bad it's very noticeable and it comes out of him just as one eats food and drinks water, "it goes into him". (It loses something in the translation.)
19. Verse 25: What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.
- a) This verse leads to questions: Did he fear losing his health, his children or his business or maybe all three? Did he fear asking for death because his life is so bad? Obviously there's no way to know what Job's being specific about. I'm sure he loved all those things and all of us can fear losing what we have, as "that's human". We can speculate all day over what we don't know. We just know Job was in a tremendous amount of emotional and physical pain. Like most people he "feared the worst" and the "worst has hit"!
 - b) Stop and think, what's the worst thing that could happen to us? What if we lose the place where we live? What if we lose our family? What if we lose our health? Would we think of suicide if we were that low? Would we react much differently than Job would?

- i) Years ago I heard a lecture on this topic. I suspect that after I wallowed in pain for a period of time, I'd "pick up the pieces and move on". That is what life's all about. I suspect most of us experience moments like that in our own life or in the lives of people close to us. Once we stop "wallowing in the mud", we realize all we can do is again, "pick up the pieces and move on". God doesn't want us in the mud for the rest of our lives as He called us to use our lives as a witness for Him.
 - ii) OK on that positive thought, we've only got one more verse to tackle:
20. Verse 26: I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."
- a) Here Job wraps up this one chapter speech by saying he has no peace, etc. The point is his pain is so bad he can't rest comfortably. He can't get a good night's sleep. He can't work to rebuild a new business. His life is pure turmoil due to the physical and emotional pain he is in at this moment. I could go on, but after 8 pages of this, we get the idea by now.
 - b) Since there are many more chapters to go, I'll just say this "misery speech" gets referenced many times in the rest of the book. Now you know.
 - c) If you're a regular reader of my lessons, this one is shorter than most of them. Let's face it, after eight full pages of listening to Job complain about life, that's enough for one lesson. Therefore, I'll wrap it up after a few final thoughts:
21. Something occurred to me that I want to mention before I finish. If Job wasn't Jewish and he lived around the time of Abraham as most scholars think, how is it this book is in Hebrew? The answer is we don't know. Some say it was translated into Hebrew. Others argue that Hebrew may have been the "original language" before different languages exist. The truth is we don't know, but it's one of those debate issues that no one can resolve.
22. More importantly I want to "beat over our heads" that it's ok to cry out to God in our misery. It's not ok to remain that way forever. "Crying it out" may make us feel better for the moment, but it won't solve our problems. God calls us to use our lives to make a difference for Him regardless of whatever problems we're dealing with. That doesn't mean we ignore our problems, it just means we have a joyful attitude about life in spite of our problems.
- a) By "coincidence", I listed to one of my favorite teachers (Dennis Prager) address the issue of making the choice to end one's life because they're in so much pain. First, he suggested that all adults should make a Living Will that instructs others that if we're a "vegetable", it is ok to "pull the plug". He also said that it should never be legal for children to end their parent's lives if they felt like it, because "it's a slippery slope" and some children would do it to quickly gain their inheritance or not have to spend money taking care of their elderly parents. Bottom line is it shouldn't be legal, but if we're essentially a "vegetable", then we should make a living will so it'd be easier for our loved one's to carry out that desire.
 - b) OK, this lesson has been gruesome enough, time to wrap it up for a week.
23. With that said, time to close in prayer. Let's lift those up who are at "rock bottom" wallowing in a state of misery. Let's also remember that in our own low moments, it's not "the end" as God has a wonderful plan for our eternal life and He desires we use our life as a witness for Him.
24. Heavenly Father, we all know this life can be horribly painful at times. Help us to rely on Your strength to get us through such times. Help us to remember that such moments are not forever, but just there to teach us things. Help us to deal with depression mentally, as well as physically and spiritually. Help us to be responsible adults and make decisions to benefit the lives of our loved ones. Finally, help us to remember that You (not us) are the only one in charge of our time. Therefore, we ask You guide us so that we use our time as a living witness for You. We can't change our past, but we can learn from it. Guide us as we use our lives as a living witness for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.