



Growth Group Discussion Questions

Series: FACTS NOT FEARS

Lesson: Seek Growth, Not Vindication

Primary Scriptures: Job Chapters 33 & 34

Lesson 8 - Week of May 24, 2020

DISCUSSION

Have you ever been wronged or accused of doing something that you didn't do? Well, most of us probably have; even Jesus experienced this. So, consider yourself lucky if you've never been blamed for something that you didn't do. For those of us who have, how did it feel being "the accused"? Did you feel the need to prove your innocence? Did you want to "get even" with the accuser? Did you pray that God's wrath would be upon them for lying on you? As humans, if we tried to defend every accusation that we are faced with, it could become a full-time job. Can you imagine answering every question, addressing every piece of gossip, and responding to every allegation? This could be very consuming and completely take over your life. Your focus would be on proving your innocence and clearing your name, and nothing else would matter. We often hear that there are two sides to every story. Have you ever considered that there may be three sides to a story – your side, the accuser's side, and God's side? It could play out like this:

- I didn't do it... (your side of the story)
- You must have done something because... (what others believe must have happened)
- God then looks down and thinks...what had happened was... (what God knows as truth)

In our third lesson of Facts NOT Fears, and from our study of the first two chapters of Job, we know Job's side of the story and God's side of the story. Now we'll examine the response from Job's friends who believed he was suffering because he had done something wrong. Can you imagine being with your friends for a full seven days, thinking that they believed you and had your back? They cried with him, tore their robes, sprinkled dust on their heads and sat in complete silence for seven days and nights (Job 2:11-13). Then after Job breaks his silence, in chapter three, his friends are compelled to tell Job how they really feel. For 22 chapters (Job 4-25), Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, repeatedly encouraged Job to admit his wrongdoing and repent so that God would bless him again. They believed that God only sent suffering to bad or wicked people. Eliphaz said, "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it." (Job 4:7-8 NIV) Then his second friend, Bildad said, "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of evildoers." (Job 8:20 NIV) Lastly, Zophar continues with much of the same by saying, "If you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear." (Job 11:14-15 NIV) While there are many cases in the Bible where God sends calamity as a punishment, this was not the case for all suffering.

In the end, Job erred in overstating his righteousness. This is perhaps one of the hardest lessons to keep in mind – being righteous in our own eyes. Job wanted God to vindicate him in the eyes of his friends. People ridiculed him (Job 30:1, 9-11), and that can be hard to take. When Elihu began to answer Job on behalf of God in chapters 32 through 37, he pointed out that Job had been wrongly focused during much of his trial. In Job 33:12–22, Elihu explains that God instructs and chastens in various ways. God has His reasons for how He deals with us. And sometimes they are beyond our

understanding. Job was so certain of his innocence and of the injustice of his afflictions that for a long time he was unable to see beyond that. He tried to defend himself from the false conclusions of his friends and, in so doing, he was unable to see areas of needed growth in his life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Fact #1:

Job 35:4-8 MSG says, "Well, I'm going to show you that you don't know what you're talking about, neither you nor your friends. Look up at the sky. Take a long hard look. See those clouds towering above you? If you sin, what difference could that make to God? No matter how much you sin, will it matter to him? Even if you're good, what would God get out of that? Do you think he's dependent on your accomplishments? The only ones who care whether you're good or bad are your family and friends and neighbors. God's not dependent on your behavior." **Remember, our sin or righteousness does not require vindication from God. It doesn't help God if we do either.**

Fact #2:

John 15:2 NIV says, "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." **Remember, our trials can make us bitter or they can make us better.** Which will yours do for you?

Questions:

1. Based upon what you've read about Job, have you ever requested or desired in your heart that God's wrath would come down on your accuser? Do you still feel the same way?
2. If your actions are right in the sight of God, then why is it important to be right in the sight of man? Is righteousness in the sight of God not enough? If not, why not?