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 Green Run Baptist Church
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 Father's Day

JOB, GODLY FATHER

[Job] His heart was sound and his eye single (Matthew Henry)

JOB 1:1-22

INTRODUCTION

When the great preacher Alexander Whyte taught his congregation to pray for their children, these were the words of his own prayer for his children,

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, give us a seed right with Thee! Smite us and our house with everlasting barrenness rather than that our seed should not be right with Thee. O God, give us our children. Give us our children. A second time, and by a far better birth, give us our children to be beside us in Thy holy covenant. For it had been better we had never been betrothed; it had been better we had sat all our days solitary unless our children are to be right with Thee.... But thou, O God, art Thyself a Father, and thus hast in Thyself a Father's heart. Hear us, then, for our children, O our Father.... In season and out of season, we shall not go up into our bed, we shall not give sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids till we and all our seed are right with Thee.

This is Father's Day and my prayer is that as we look into the Scriptures, we will gain the same desire for our family's spiritual happiness as Alexander Whyte demonstrates by his prayer. Looking closely at Job 1 will enable us to determine how to better become this kind of man because Job 1 identifies 4 qualities which Job possessed that made him a godly father.

1. JOB WAS BLESSED BY THE LORD

(1.1) Job was blessed with a proper knowledge of God

The greatest blessing of Job's life was his experience of knowing the one true God. It was Job's knowledge of God that led to his blameless life, uprightness, fear of God and continual turning away from evil. In fact, the entire story of Job is designed to teach Job even more about who God really is. Job's knowledge of God enabled him to suffer without sinning and to stand against the foolish advice of his friends who claimed to know the true character of God. Job was a blessed man in many ways but his knowledge of God superseded all other blessings.

(1.2) Job was blessed with a wife

God had provided Job with a wife, but we do not know much about her. What we do know of her does not automatically communicate that she was a blessing to Job. But when she appears on the scene in 2:9, she encourages Job to curse God and die. In her defense, she has just lost her 10 children in one day. Perhaps her advice to Job is more characteristic of her anguish rather than her faith. Matthew Henry does not think so well of her; he writes, *She was spared to him, when the rest of his comforts were taken away, for this purpose, to be a troubler and tempter to him. If Satan leaves any thing that he has permission to take away, it is with a design of mischief. It is his policy to send his temptations by the hand of those that are dear to us, as he tempted Adam by Eve and Christ by Peter. We must therefore carefully watch that we be not drawn to say or do a wrong thing by the influence, interest, or entreaty, of any, no, not those for whose opinion and favour we have ever so great a value.*

(1.3) Job was blessed with children

Job and his wife had 7 sons and 3 daughters (1:2). Throughout Scripture, children are recognized as a sign of God's favor (Genesis 20:17-18; Psalm 127:3-5; Psalm 128:2-4).

(1.4) Job was blessed with riches

In Scripture, obedience and wealth are sometimes linked together (Proverbs 8:18; 10:22). This was the case with Job (1:3). Wealth is a curse upon those who do not fear God because it often further hardens their hearts against God (Matthew 19:23-24), but when combined with a proper fear of God, wealth is a great reward (Proverbs 22:4).

2. JOB WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN

In the midst of marriage, family life and great prosperity, Job demonstrates that he is a righteous man. Every man must learn to live righteously in the midst of such circumstances. Such blessings will ruin many a man, but not Job. He was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. We must pray that someone could accurately describe us in a similar way.

3. JOB WAS DILIGENT ABOUT CARING FOR HIS FAMILY'S SOULS**(3.1) Job cared for his children's relationships to God**

Job was not only righteous himself, but he was greatly concerned that the generations that would follow him be righteous as well. Job knew that children are a blessing, but not a guaranteed blessing. Obviously, Job has raised mature and responsible children. This is demonstrated in Job 1 where we see that these adult children owned their own homes and they were probably married (1:4), enjoyed one another's company (1:4) and celebrated a rotation of feasts with one another as they visited each other's homes. Job certainly enjoyed the happiness of his children, but Job did not assume that they were beyond sinning.

Job guarded the souls of his children with fervor. Job had a definitive way of caring for the souls of his children (1:5); when their feasts were over, he would send for them and once again consecrate them to God as he offered a sacrifice for each of them. Job did not see these feasts as sinful events, but he knew the temptation for his children to *curse God in their hearts*. Job lived before the Old Testament priesthood was established, therefore, he as the Father functioned as the priest who would intercede before God on behalf of his family. Job knew the effects that feasting and enjoying prosperity may have on the soul; one may forget to honor the God who ordained the feasting and provided the prosperity (Ecclesiastes 7:2; Proverbs 30:8-9). Therefore, Job sacrificed on behalf of his children. His primary concern was not their continued feasting and prosperity but their souls.

(3.2) Job cared for his wife's relationship to God

Job's wife may or may not have been a woman of faith. But this did not keep Job from speaking the truth of God to her. When she demeaned his integrity and demanded that he recant his faith, he responded with a bold proclamation of God's truth and goodness. Matthew Henry summarizes Job's explanation to his wife of his continuing faith, *He considers that, though good and evil are contraries, yet they do not come from contrary causes, but both from the hand of God, and therefore that in both we must have our eye up unto him, with thankfulness for the good he sends and without fretfulness at the evil*. Job is a rock when his wife is crumbling. Let it be true of every man here.

4. JOB WAS CONVINCED OF THE SOVEREIGN GOODNESS OF GOD

(4.1) In His sovereign goodness, God had blessed and protected Job and his family

Verse 10 clearly states that God was the source of protection around Job and his family. God was the source of Job's health and wealth. These were gifts given to a sinner who only deserved wrath and yet God builds a hedge around him and all he has.

(4.2) In His sovereign goodness, God removed that protection

Verses 11-12 indicate that in His sovereign providence, God removed the hedge that once protected Job and his family. Satan hates everyone who is happy in the Lord. Satan stands as a very real adversary to those who find the joy of the Lord is their strength. And so God agrees to remove the hedge to give Job an opportunity to demonstrate that he loves God more than he loves his children and his wealth. In other words, God has chosen Job to demonstrate that God is more precious than anything else one could possess. Satan unwittingly served God's purposes; he always does. Job knew that the righteous are blessed when they possess riches and when they lose them, for they still retain their God and He promises to work all things for their good and His glory (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

(4.3) In excruciating grief, Job never accused God of wrongdoing

Because of God's continued grace in Job's life, he never accused God of mismanaging his life. He recognized that both prosperity and suffering come from the same hand, and yet Job never believed that he was mistreated by God. The entire Scriptures support Job's understanding (Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:35). Job knew the meaning of Psalm 63:3.

CONCLUSION

Learning this kind of spiritual truth is not the result of study alone, but it results from humility and submitting to the grace and truth of God. Being sad that we have not lived like Job does not equal confession and repentance. May God's Spirit come to us now and grant us genuine sorrow, humility, confession and repentance. Like Job, let us teach our children both to enjoy the rich blessings of God and to set aside times (led by their father) when they confess their sins as they consecrate themselves to God. Like Job, let us teach our children that we worship a sovereign God who never mismanages our lives.