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**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): There are now 25 hours in the day. How would you spend your extra hour?

**INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever walked into a room and immediately noticed the vibe? Maybe it’s an excited buzz or the opposite, a feeling of awkwardness! You might not know the why behind it, but you can pick up on the feel in the room. There’s a phrase you might have heard that relates to this - it’s what people call, “reading the room.” The general idea is that by being a bit aware of the people around us, we can pick up on helpful clues from our environment that let us know what’s going on. While this can definitely be a helpful in social situations, there are some things our circumstances *can’t* and shouldn’t tell us. When it comes to following Jesus, one of the significant truths we see in the Bible is that our circumstances are not always a good indicator of God’s faithfulness to us. In our lesson today, we’re going to zoom in on the life of a guy named Job. If you know anything about Job, you probably know that he didn’t have an easy life. He faced the kind of challenges and tragic losses that hopefully most of us will never have to experience. But Job was also a man of deep faith in God. And in his story, we get to see how Job’s faith impacted the way he responded to those tragedies in some surprising ways. Where we might expect Job to question God and get angry about his suffering, we see how he chooses to worship and trust beyond his own understanding. Through looking at Job’s story, we see how God’s faithfulness to us is not dependent on our circumstances, and though it may seem challenging, it is possible to maintain a godly witness in the face of great adversity.

**Has there ever been a season in your life that felt hard or full of challenges? Share if willing.**

**Read**

Read Job 1:1-12.

1. **In these verses, Satan accuses Job of only following God because it was easy to do the right things. And not only that, but he also accuses him of only being faithful out of a desire to get things from God. If we’re honest, we might find ourselves relating to that sometimes. Have you ever felt like following God should always be easy, or do you expect God to bless you for being a “good Christian”? Why is this not accurate?**
2. **God** **had confidence in Job because Job placed his trust in God. How does this encourage you in your own relationship with Jesus?**

Continue the story by reading Job 1:13-22 & 2:7-10.

1. **When faced with something hard, what is your most common reaction? Who do you typically turn to for advice and why?**
2. **We see that Job’s response to his suffering is not without emotion, yet he remains steadfast in trusting God. What is the difference between having emotions and getting stuck in our emotions? Why is it important that we learn to trust God and his Word over the things that we feel?**
3. **Have you ever faced a time when others made fun of you for keeping faith in God? How did you respond? What makes this so difficult?**
4. **Job was faithful to worship God when he lost everything because he had put into practice a habit of praising God when he had everything. In your own life, what are some ways you can make it a habit to praise God regardless of your circumstances?**

**WRAP UP**

As we follow God, the truth is we’re not promised a problem free life. In fact, Jesus tells us the opposite is true: we WILL have trouble. But in the midst of hard things, we are not without hope. Like Job, we can choose to trust that God is good and faithful, even when we go through hard things.

* How can we support and encourage one another to trust God, even when we go through hard things?
* How can what we learned from Job’s story, help us to better care and have compassion for our friends?

*Ask for any prayer requests, and pray for one another.*

**EXTENDED CUT**

1. **In these verses, Satan accuses Job of only following God because it was easy to do the right things. And not only that, but he also accuses him of only being faithful out of a desire to get things from God. If we’re really honest, we might find ourselves relating to that sometimes. Have you ever felt like following God should always be easy, or do you expect God to bless you for being a “good Christian”? Why is this not accurate?**

It’s easy for us to subtly adopt these expectations, sometimes without even realizing it! We live in a world so focused on earning things through our own hard work and efforts. We’re told with enough hard work, we should be able to achieve whatever we desire. And in fact, we *deserve* to achieve whatever we desire. And this way of thinking can subtly influence our relationship with God. We can start to think that if we just work hard enough to live the right kind of life then surely he’ll bless us. And not just that, but we *deserve* to blessed! The problem is, this doesn’t line up with what God tells us in his Word at all. Jesus tells his disciples in John 16:33, “In this world you *will* have trouble.” We all go through hard things. It’s part of living in a world that is broken, sinful, and not how God originally intended. But Jesus reminds his disciples in the other half of that verse to, “Take heart! I have overcome the world.” That’s the good news and blessing that can never be taken away from us, no matter what hard things we go through. In the midst of hard things, we are not without hope, because God is with us. And just like we can’t earn God’s blessing through hard work, we can’t lose it by not doing or being good enough either. Our relationship with him rests securely in the work of Jesus on the cross.

1. **God had confidence in Job because Job placed his trust in God. How does this encourage you in your own relationship with Jesus?**

Despite Satan’s accusations, God had confidence in his servant Job and gave Satan permission to attack Job within certain parameters. But God’s confidence wasn’t based on Job’s own good works or abilities. Rather, God’s confidence was based on Job’s faith and the trust he placed in God. There’s a verse we often hear quoted, but rarely within the full context that it was written. It’s Philippians 4:13 that says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Paul writes just before that in Philippians 4:11-12, “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.” What Job and Paul knew, and we can too, is that our ultimate hope and ability for remaining steadfast in the midst of hard things comes from trusting in Christ’s strength and not our own! Praise God for that!

1. **When faced with something hard, what is your most common reaction? Who do you typically turn to for advice and why?**

Maybe it’s your friends, a coach, your parents, a small group leader, or someone else. We all have people we go to for help and advice. But it’s important to consider who and why we go to the ones we choose to ask for advice! Sometimes we’re drawn to the friend we know will take “our side” of things and sympathize or get angry on our behalf. But this isn’t always helpful if we really want to respond with wisdom and in a way that honors the Lord! When we go through hard things, we especially need to have people around us who will remind us of the one we can trust. Who will encourage us to stay faithful to the Lord, no matter what. Proverbs 13:20 reminds us that the company we keep plays a big role in shaping who we become, “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” If we want to become someone like Job, who faced hard things without sinning against the Lord, we should seek the kind of company who will always point us back to God’s character and faithfulness.

1. **We see that Job’s response to his suffering is not without emotion, yet he remains steadfast in trusting God. What is the difference between having emotions and getting stuck in our emotions? Why is it important that we learn to trust God and his Word over the things that we feel?**

It might come as a surprise when we first read that Job responded to his initial losses with faith and godliness. We are told of his mourning, but he did not sin. Job could have chosen to stay focused on his circumstances and allowed himself to wallow in the emotions of sadness and grief. But instead, Job assessed his situation in a godly and wise way. He didn’t ignore his feelings, but he didn’t let them overrule his faith in God either. We can be comforted by the fact that God doesn’t expect us to go through hard things and NOT have any emotion! Trusting the Lord doesn’t mean you will not be sad, broken- hearted, and devastated over hard things. We’re human and emotions are part of how God intentionally designed us. But at the end of the day, it’s important that we learn how to trust God over the things that we feel. When we choose to trust God over the things that we feel, we declare our trust in him over our own wisdom or understanding. And He will always be much more reliable than our ever-changing emotions.

1. **Have you ever faced a time when others made fun of you for keeping faith in God? How did you respond? What makes this so difficult?**

It’s one thing to stand for the Lord when others are helping and encouraging you, but when those closest to you start pushing you the other direction, it is increasingly difficult to remain faithful! Job’s response to his wife’s challenge of his integrity and faith showed even more wisdom. Regardless of who tempted him to lash out at the Lord, Job remained faithful, and he made the Lord’s opinion the one that mattered most. This isn’t an easy, but Job’s life shows us that it is possible!

1. **Job was faithful to worship God when he lost everything because he had put into practice a habit of praising God when he had everything. In your own life, what are some ways you can make it a habit to praise God regardless of your circumstances?**

Sometimes we think that worship happens only on Sunday or when we’re at church. But worship is simply acknowledging God’s goodness! Job declared that everything he had was a gift from God. He recognized that his wealth and prosperity was a blessing from God that was undeserved. By cultivating an attitude of gratefulness and praise, he was able to trust the Lord in the absence of these things. For most of us, we aren’t naturally bent toward doing this. In fact, it’s probably the opposite. That’s why we have to intentionally think about ways we can make it a habit to offer God our praise not just on Sundays, but throughout the rest of our week too. Maybe it’s taking time once a day to think about what you’re grateful for and make a list on your phone. Maybe it’s making more time to thank God for who He is when you pray, rather than simply asking him for the things you need. Get creative and ask God to show you how to make praise a habit in your life!