

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song:

Ephesians 5:1-2
"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 12:

God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan

God has promised His people that though they will suffer in many ways here on earth, they will only suffer according to His good and perfect plan. God promises to only use their sufferings to do good to them and bring glory to His name. He will use their sufferings to make them holy and to strengthen their faith, their love and their dependence on Him. God's people don't like to suffer, but they trust in God's good purposes in allowing them to suffer and in His promise to use it for their good and His glory. They know that God's Holy Spirit will always give them the strength they need to endure the suffering He allows. God's people count it an honor to suffer for Jesus, the One who suffered most of all, when He took the punishment for their sins upon the cross. But, they also look forward with great excitement to the day when they will live with God and their sufferings and sadnesses will be gone forever.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 12 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 1:6-7, NIV 1984

"...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

CASE STORY

The Book of Job

Our story is called:

The Case of the Surprising Sufferer.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Surprising Sufferer? Why would people think it surprising that he suffered?
2. What good plans of God were accomplished through his suffering?

No one really knows when this story takes place, but we do know that it was some time, thousands of years ago, in Old Testament times, in the land of Uz, a flat, dry, treeless lowland, south of the Dead Sea.

In the land of Uz there lived a man named Job who was extremely rich. He wasn't rich the way we might think of riches: with a mansion, a big car, and lots of money in the bank. He was rich the way people in his land were rich: with animals and servants. The Bible tells us that he owned 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, 500 donkeys and lots of servants. Job had more animals than some whole countries did back then! That is how rich he was.

But Job was blessed in a more important way than riches. Job was a blameless and upright man. It didn't mean he was perfect, but it did mean he tried to please God in everything he did. He feared God; that is, he loved and obeyed God. And when he sinned, asked God's forgiveness and repented of his sins.

Job even tried to make sure that his grown children lived pleasing lives to God, too. Job's sons used to take turns holding feasts at their homes they would invite the three sisters to eat and drink with them. After each big party, Job would send for them and have them purified for any sins they might have committed by accident. Job himself offered a worship gift to God on their behalf, too, just to be on the safe side. This is how much Job longed for God and his whole family to be pleasing to God.

Job was honored by everyone. He was often asked to settle arguments or give his advice at the city gate where important business matters took place. People listened to what Job said. And why wouldn't they? Between his riches, his love for God and his great wisdom, Job was considered to be the greatest man in the world back then.

But Job's greatness wasn't known just on earth. His love for God was known even in heaven, this godly man, Job,

came under discussion. The angels, as well as Satan, presented themselves before the Lord. The Lord said, "Where have you come from, Satan?"

"From roaming the earth," he replied.

"Have you considered my servant, lobi?" The Lord ask Satan. "There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears me and turns away from evil."

"Does lobi fear you for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not completely protected him and everything he has? You have blessed him with great riches. He doesn't really love you. He loves the things you've given him. Take all of these things away and he will curse you to your face!"

"Very well, then, everything lobi has is in your hands, but do not hurt the man, himself, in any way," the Lord replied. Yes, the Lord would allow lobi to suffer, but only, always, according to his perfectly good and wise plan.

Soon, lobi felt the fierce blast of Satan's work against him. Messenger after messenger brought him terrible news! His children had all died; his crops were all ruined; his servants and animals were all carried off by robbers or destroyed. Everything was gone!

What terrible suffering Satan had brought upon lobi! Surely this would crush his fake faith, Satan thought. But it didn't. lobi got up, tore his robe and shaved his head (what people used to do to show how sad they were.) He fell to the ground and worshipped the Lord. "I was born into this world with nothing and will take nothing with me when I die," lobi said. "All these things were gifts the Lord gave me and now he is taking them away. Either way, may the Lord's name be praised!"

Satan's plans had been frustrated! How could this be! But what Satan did not understand was God's good purposes and perfect power in the sufferings of His people. Yes, they would suffer for their faith in Him, but God would always use these sufferings for their good and His glory. He would always put limits on their sufferings. He would always give them strength to overcome. Satan would never be victorious. All these things would turn out to be for lobi's good as well as God's glory. That is God's promise to all of his people.

Satan wasn't finished yet, though. Once more, Satan presented himself before the Lord after roaming the earth and once more lobi was discussed.

"Have you considered my servant lobi?" the Lord asked

Satan. "There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still worships me, even though all his good gifts have been taken from him without reason."

"Ah, yes, but bring suffering to his own body, then he will curse you," Satan proposed.

"Very well," the Lord replied. "You may bring suffering upon his body, but you may not take his life."

Soon, lobi's body was full of pain. From the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, this body was covered with sores. There were so many that his friends couldn't even recognize him! Then lobi took a piece of broken pot and scratched his itchy sores with it as he sat among the ashes. He couldn't even eat. And when he tried to sleep he had terrible nightmares.

lobi's wife only added to his problems. "Curse God and die!" She told lobi. She had had enough!

What terrible suffering Satan had brought upon lobi! Surely this would crush his fake faith! But still it wasn't enough! lobi would not curse God and die. The Lord sustained lobi. He would be with him and help him through all this suffering. And He would use it all for lobi's good and for His own glory. He helped lobi have faith even then.

"You are talking like a woman with no faith in God!" lobi told her. "Will we accept good from God and not trouble?" God helped lobi hold on to his faith in Him. He did not sin in all he said.

lobi's wife was the first one to respond to His suffering but she was not the last! News spread quickly about the terrible things that had happened to him. Many people decided lobi must be suffering as God's punishment for some secret sin. Some people called him bad names and spit up on him and discussed. Others urged lobi to confess his secret sins to God, even his friends. lobi cried out to God for help, but sometimes it seemed like no one was listening. He didn't think he was suffering for some secret sin, but how confusing his life seemed.

"God, You reveal mysterious things that are hidden from everyone else. Perhaps You are punishing me for something You think I've done wrong, but I don't know what it is. I wish You would speak to me and tell me. I want to argue my case with You," lobi said.

But God was listening and He was with lobi, helping him keep on enduring those terrible days of suffering. He

placed limits on his suffering and planned to use it all for lobi's good and His own glory. And at just the right time, He answered lobi, from out of a storm.

"lobi, you speak about things you don't understand. In your suffering have you forgotten who I am? I'm the Lord – creator and sustainer of all things. My wisdom and power are perfect there is nothing I do not know, nothing I cannot do. My plans are always perfectly just, good and wise. You are just a man and cannot possibly understand what I am doing," the Lord replied.

"You're right, Lord. I spoke about things I didn't understand. I forgot who You are what You're like. I had heard of You before. Now I've seen you. I've misjudged You. Please forgive me," lobi humbly said.

The Lord forgave lobi and did a lot more. The limits of this time of suffering had come. The Lord blessed lobi again. He restored his health, his riches and his good name. He gave him more children. The Lord's good purposes had been accomplished. The Lord showed Himself to be faithful to sustain His people through even the fierce sufferings. He allowed lobi to know Him in a new and much deeper way. He even has given this man the honor of being an example before all of heaven of a godly man. And his story has encouraged God's people through thousands of years, as they have seen God's faithfulness to him.

The Lord allowed lobi to suffer greatly, but not a drop was wasted. It was used, every bit for lobi's good and for His own glory. lobi understood that a bit while he lived here on earth. But now in heaven, where he lives in God's presence always, he understands it even more and rejoices over God's plan. There is not even one bit of his suffering that he regrets. God is that perfectly good and wise!

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.

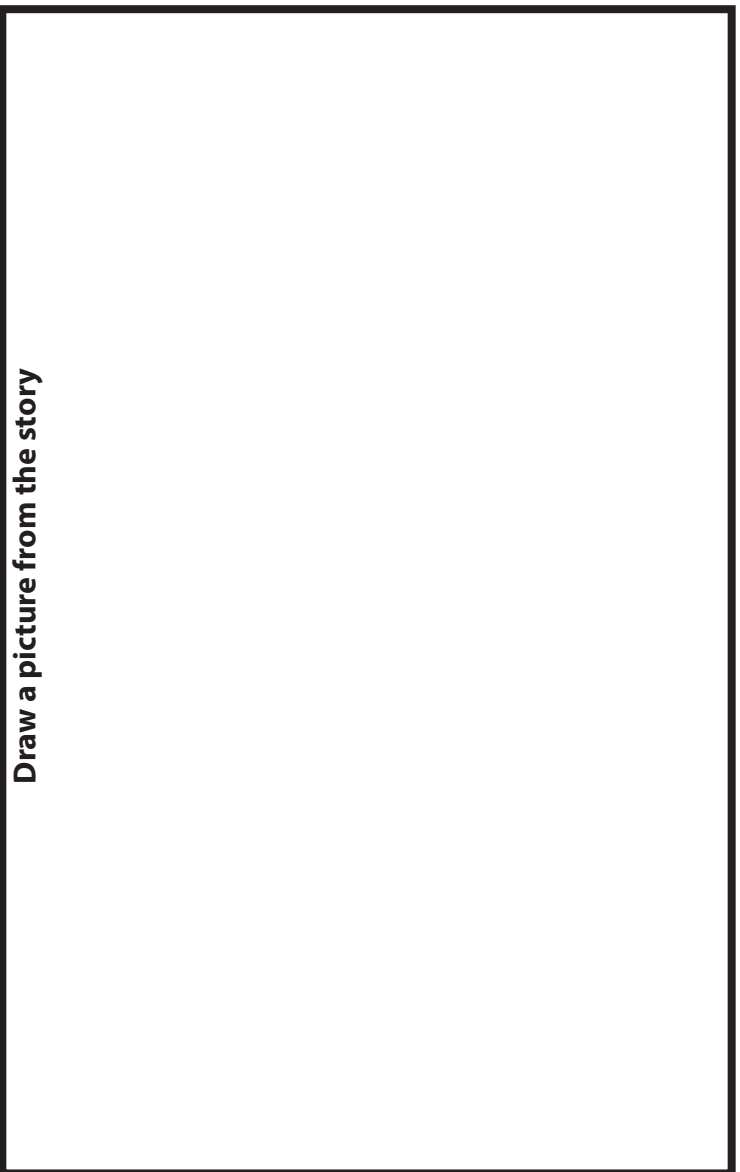
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 1:6-7

"...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Does the story sound familiar? It's the story of the man we called Job –lobi, as they say in Hebrew. Do you think lobi ever found out why he is gone for all the sufferings? He certainly did in heaven. How great must be the praise, glory and honor the Lord received through Job!

What about you and me? This is scary to think about Satan wanting us to supper? We don't need to be scared. The Lord, the Almighty God over the whole universe, it's perfectly good that is in perfect control of even Satan and his plans. God's people can always trust God to only allow them to suffer according to his good plans. There may be plenty of times when they don't understand why they suffer, but in heaven it will all be made clear. There God's people was will have nothing but praise for what the Lord allowed in their lives. They will see it truly was all but only for their good and his glory.

Let's praise God for wisely choosing sufferings for His people's good and His own glory. Let's ask him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, so we can be His people. Let's ask Him to help us endure sufferings in such a way that they would be for our good and His glory.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

All people have rebelled against God and deserve His just punishment for their sins.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was the Surprising Sufferer? Why would people think it surprising that he suffered?

Answer: Job. Because he was so godly and many people in his day seemed to think only someone who had done something bad would suffer like Job did.

b. What good plans of God were accomplished through his suffering?

Answer: God showed that His people only suffer in ways that He allows. He showed that He can help His people endure everything they must suffer. And, God has given us Job's story to encourage God's people that even if they don't know why they suffer, God has good reasons for it.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 Peter 1:6-7

"...for a little while you may have ___ grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater ___ than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved ___ and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Answers: suffered; worth; genuine.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being completely powerful over Satan and over Your people's sufferings.

C God, we confess that many times we grumble and complain as we go through sufferings. We don't turn to You in them. We don't care that You plan to use them for our good and Your glory--we just want them to be over!

T God, we thank You that You will always, only, allow Your people to suffer according to Your good and perfect plan. Thank You that You will always give Your people the strength they need to endure them.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Use all of the sufferings in our lives for our good and Your glory. Give us strength to endure sufferings. Help Your people around the world who may be facing terrible suffering even today.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 41,42

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Words: John Rippon's Selection of Hymns

Music: Joseph Funk's Genuine Church Music

God's people know all God has an unbreakable plan to use all things in their lives for their good. He has planned that even their "fiery trials"—the hardest things that happen to them—that God will use them all to make them like Jesus. They do not have to like the fiery trials, but they can praise God for how He will use them for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For a Little While

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 43

For a little while you may have suffered
Grief in all kinds of trials.

These have come that your faith,
May be proved genuine, be proved genuine.

Refrain:

Faith! Faith! Which is of greater worth than gold,
Which perishes though refined by fire.
Faith! Faith! Which is of greater worth than gold,
Which perishes though refined by fire.

For a little while you may have suffered
Grief in all kinds of trials.

These have come that your faith,
May result in praise, glory and honor. *Refrain*

First Peter One, six through seven.

Words: 1 Peter 1:6-7, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

God's people suffer, but only according to God's perfectly wise and good plan. He will only use their sufferings for His glory and their good. What kind of good? He will use their sufferings to grow their faith in Him, making it stronger, truer, and deeper. That's what this verse calls proving faith genuine. What other kind of glory? God has planned for all their sufferings to result in praise, glory and honor. That's because God is the one who perfectly planned their sufferings and gave them the strength to endure them. We may think gold and riches are worth a lot in this world--and they are because we can get many things with them. But, how God's people will thank God and praise Him for all the great things He did through their sufferings! For through them, God will give them something worth far more than all the gold in the world could get them.