

Believers, Bumpers, & Blessings Of God

Job 23:8-10



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FOCAL Read Responsively Job 23:8-10 Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him*: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him*: 10 **But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.**

Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima was born into abject poverty in Brazil. By the time he was 8 years old he had to work in the fields alongside his father just to earn enough money to help feed the rest of the family. There was only one thing that Vanderlei could do that set him above his fellows, and that was he could run. Somebody sent his name to the Brazilian Olympic Committee, and he ended up running the marathon in the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece. Just four miles from the finish of that race Vanderlei was in the lead. It looked as if he was going to bring home the gold medal for Brazil. As Vanderlei passed a crowd he was attacked by a defrocked Irish priest by the name of Nolan. Nolan pushed Vanderlei to the side, and tried to hold him down. Vanderlei fought and broke free, got up, and running he finished third, winning the bronze medal.

When the medal was given to Vanderlei he said, **“This is a festive moment, a unique moment. Most athletes never have this moment. I was able to medal for myself and for my country.”**

Vanderlei didn't utter a word of bitterness, nor a word of upset over the “bumper” who cost him the gold medal.

The Bible says that we who believe are in a race. The Bible says:

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In every race there will be “bumpers” who do their best to throw you off course. Sometimes these “bumpers” will be people from the “crowd of witnesses” that watch us run. Sometimes these “bumpers” will be malicious and evil people who just want to do everything they can to destroy your stride. In the 1999 Tour De France a man jumped out of the crowd into the middle of the cyclists and started pushing people over. This man had no intent other than to cause confusion in the race. There are people who are this evil – and I hope you're not one of them – who disrupt just to be disrupting. These “bumpers” are agents of Satan.

There are other “bumpers” who do what they do to build up their own ego. They are like the Pharisees and Sadducees who constantly watched and attacked our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry.

Then there are the “bumpers” who are well meaning people who believe that their actions – though

unnecessary – are helpful to you. Our Lord Jesus Christ also experienced this type of interference. As He told His disciples

Matthew 16:21 how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

... suddenly a “bumper” came from an unexpected source. Peter, one of Christ's most trusted lieutenants, spoke up and said “**God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You!**”. Jesus' answer to Peter is very illustrative. He said:

Matthew 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.**

Jesus recognized the *source* of Peter's action. Anytime a “bumper” jumps out to push a person out of the will of God that person is being motivated – not by care, not by love, but by Satan. He or she has become an unwitting dupe of the Prince of Darkness.

If you are a Christian then you are to “**run with patience the race set before you**”. Look to Jesus as you run. Look to His Word. Pray to Him, and seek His guidance continually. Do not allow the “bumpers”, whether they are people or situations, to cause you to stop running. Look unto Jesus, trust Him, and do His will wholly.

1. You, Dear Believer, Will Be Tried

There is a strange sort of Gospel that is being preached today, and this Gospel has absolutely nothing to do with the Scripture. This Gospel says that – if I am a child of God by faith in Christ – then I will *never* suffer affliction. May I repeat the words of Christ to the supporters of this so called “Gospel”? **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.**

The Bible makes it clear that those who love the Lord *will suffer*. We are told:

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and **all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

The *world* will cause you to suffer if you **live godly in Christ Jesus**. Jesus warns His disciples:

John 15:18-19 **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.**

The world **hates** the disciple of Christ who lives for Christ. If you'll compromise everything you believe in and *blend in* with the lost the world will accept you. But if you do as Jesus did and **stand in the will of God** then you will be hated. You will find “bumpers” even in your own family. Jesus said:

Luke 12:51-53 **Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.**

Your faith in God through Jesus Christ will be tried by the world. But listen, Beloved. No trial comes to the believer *apart from God's oversight*. God is greater than and in control of the trial. This is the teaching of Job.

Job was a righteous man. We don't know much about Job, but we do know that his

Job 1:1 ... **name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.**

Job was ... perfect and upright. One version translates this phrase as “**Job was ... blameless and upright**”. He was a child of God. When you come to God by faith in Jesus Christ you don't become *perfect* and *sinless*, but you do become “**blameless**”.

You are “**blameless**” because Jesus took the blame

for you.

Because you believed on the Lord the Bible says that you **were dead in trespasses and sin, but are now made alive together with Jesus. ..**

Colossians 2:13-14 ... having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Oh glorious day we called upon the Lord Jesus. I wish that every person in this audience would experience the joy of knowing Jesus as both Lord and Savior. King David said:

Romans 4:7-8 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

For Christ's sake the Lord God Almighty has **forgiven your iniquities, and has covered your sins.** He has given you His Spirit and His Heaven.

The day you called upon Jesus Christ in faith – believing that He died for you and rose again from the grave to lead you – was the day that God **regenerated** you. He made you alive from the dead, and held you **blameless** for Christ took the blame for your sin in your place. His

crimson wounds became pools of mercy which you willingly dove into. Glorious Savior, Grace Divine!

Job was **blameless** for Christ's sake. He believed God just as every Saint and Son of God believes God, and to him **God imputed righteousness.** Like Father Abraham:

Romans 4:20-25 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

Job was not only **blameless**, but he was also **upright.** This is the Hebrew word YASHAW (ישר pronounced yaw-shawr') which means “**straight**”.

Jesus said:

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

ILLUSTRATE When I was in the Air Force we used to

periodically go “night flying”. The aircraft would be launched on moonless and cloudy night, and the pilots would have to participate in mock bombing or strafing runs *using only their instruments to guide them*. I remember one night a terrible accident happened. A pilot got confused and crashed his aircraft into the ground. It was later determined that the pilot's equipment was working properly. The man just wasn't using it. He was flying by *sight* and was not *relying on his instruments*.

The Christian is given instruments by which he is to live his life. The instruments you are given are **the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and Prayer**.

When God – our Commander in Chief – sends us out on a night flight, it is critical that we use our instruments. The world doesn't use God's instruments. It **enters in at the wide gate**. The Christian, however, is to **enter in at the straight gate, because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life**.

This is the essence of being “**upright**” or “**straight**”. Job used his instruments. Job lost his farm equipment to the **Sabeans ...**

CONTEXT Farm Equipment Gone Job 1:14-15 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, **The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.**

... **ancient descendants of Abraham by his wife Keturah**. Next it appeared that God Himself removed Job's livestock, for he was told:

CONTEXT Herds Gone Job 1:16 While he *was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

Job has lost his farm equipment – there's not an ox, an ass, or even a John Deere left on his place. Job lost his herds by a rain of fire. What about the family cars? Another “bumper” came his way, saying:

CONTEXT Transportation Gone Job 1:17 While he *was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

The Cadillac is gone, and the Jeep, too. Every camel was taken – and I'm not talking about cigarettes! Next **Job lost his children when a great wind blew down the house they were in (Job 1:18-19)**. To those who would say to Job, “Well, at least you have your health”, the darkness was complete. The Bible says that:

CONTEXT Health Gone Job 2:7-8 So went **Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8** And he took him a potsherd to scrape

himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Who was left at Job's side?

2. You, Dear Believer, Will Have Your "Bumpers": Focus On The Lord, Not The "Bumpers"

Who was left at Job's side as he went through the **valley of the shadow of death**? Who was with him as he **practiced night flying by instruments**?

Several very special "bumpers", the first being the shrew of a wife that he had married. Can I say this: If you are a Christian and are planning on getting married, **please come and see me so we can go through premarital counseling**. Whoever you choose to be a life companion needs to be your helper, not your hurter. And you certainly don't need to marry an unbeliever as Job did. Job's wife told him:

CONTEXT Bumper Wife Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, **Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.**

Job lost everything he had – but this old nag that was riding him. Job responded as a man with his eyes still firmly on the race set before him, saying:

CONTEXT Job 2:10 But he said unto her, **Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his**

lips.

Job's greatest "bumpers" would be his friends.

Throughout the rest of the Book of Job these friends *take turns* in diagnosing what went wrong in Jobs life.

Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite all take turns looking for fault in Job's life. They accuse him of *secret sins* the Lord is punishing him for, for *self righteousness*, and for other stumblings. They meant well, but *they were not God*. Only God is God, and only God knows why the trial is placed on the believer.

How did Job handle the "bumpers"? He *examined himself and his faith*.

Starting at **Job chapter 4** we see a *pattern* throughout the Book. In **chapters 4-5** Job's first friend **Eliphaz the Temanite** tries to explain the trials in his friend's life. In **chapters 6-7** Job *examines* what his friend says, then *defends himself* against the charges made. This pattern is repeated with the second friend (**Bildad the Shuhite**) accusing Job in **chapter 8**, and Job defending himself in **chapters 9-10**. In each instance a "bumper" strikes Job. He examines their charge, *shakes them off*, then moves forward in his faith.

If you are saved you cannot become unsaved in the midst of the trial. If you are saved by your own works, then you can be lost by your own works. But if you are saved by faith in Jesus Christ then God ...

Jude 24 ... is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ...

God keeps those whom He saves. Make sure you are saved. In the midst of the trial *examine yourselves*. Is God there or not? Is Jesus Christ in you? Do you have evidence that He is going with you through the trial?

There are so many people in the various local Churches today that look good on the outside, but who quickly fold when a trial comes. The Bible commands:

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?**

The word translated "examine" in our Corinthian text is the Greek PIRADZO (πειραζω pronounced *pi-rad'-zo*), which means "to objectively test or scrutinize, to assay (as if gold or diamond), to examine carefully".

Job used the "bumps" of his friends to **carefully examine** his faith. How confident was Job of his salvation? Look at his words:

CONTEXT **Job 23:3-6** **Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come *even* to his seat! [4] I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth**

with arguments. [5] I would know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. [6] Will he plead against me with *his* great power? No; but he would put *strength* in me.

Job said - in essence - "If I could go before God's Throne I'd be ready to defend my case. And I KNOW how my God would answer me, and UNDERSTAND EXACTLY (בִּינָי Hebrew BENE, pronounced *bene*) what My God would say to me. Would He be against me? NO! He would strengthen me!" Job examined his faith in the light of the "bumpers". He knew God intimately.

Do you know God intimately? How would you answer God if He asked you "Why should I allow you to enter into My Heaven?"

Would you say "Because I've been good. I've kept your Law. I gave to the Church and to missions. I did good things with other good people." Jesus said:

Matthew 7:21-23 **Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

If you say anything other than: "I believed on Jesus, and

believed He died for my sins and rose again for my salvation. I believed your promise, Lord - and this alone is what I cling to to get into your Heaven"; then you will not enter God's Heaven. Only the **redeemed** shall enter Heaven. Job said in another place:

CONTEXT Job 19:25-26 For I know *that* my Redeemer liveth, and *that* He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: [26] And *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Job knew Jesus! That was what the examination of his life in the light of these "bumpers" brought out.

There was something else Job discovered in the examination of His faith. He said:

FOCAL Job 23:8-10 Behold, I go forward, but he is not *there*; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: [9] On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him*: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him*: [10] But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job was not relying on **feeling**, but on **faith**. When the new believer first comes to Christ there is a *great feeling* that accompanies your salvation. Study the Bible. Pray. Seek God's face in the Light, because eventually God will turn out the lights! He wants you to live by faith.

God turned out the lights for Job. He was in a dark place. Job looked, and could not see the hand of God - neither forward, nor on the left hand, nor on the right hand. Yet **Job trusted the Lord**. He said "**God knoweth the way that I take**".

A Christian will be *certain* - regardless as to the circumstances - that God is there. **Dr. Adrian Rogers** once said:

"Never doubt what God told you in the light just because you're in the dark."

The Bible says that **God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13)** - He cannot be otherwise. When you're running the race for God *trust in His faithfulness* no matter how great the trial. He will see you through.

ILLUSTRATE When that great man of God, **G.W. Truett** passed away, another young man was called to Pastor the legendary **First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas**. This young Pastor had a terrible problem. Dr. Truett's widow just didn't like him, and she did everything she could to get that Church to fire him and hire another pastor. She influenced some of the Deacons, and drove a wedge between the Pastor and the men he desperately needed to help him. One young and well to do Deacon decided to support Mrs. Truett. He actively stood against that Pastor in every Deacon's Meeting and every Business Meeting of the Church. He went to the Chairman of the Deacons - a man who had been Chairman for *thirty four years* - and demanded that the

Pastor be fired. He said "We've got to do something about this young Preacher. Mrs Truett isn't happy, I'm not happy, I don't like the things he is doing, all these new things that are happening - he's got to go!" This Chairman of the Deacons told the young man, "I supported the last Pastor, and I support this Pastor. If anyone needs to go, you need to go - and I recommend you go soon."

This young man left the Chairman of Deacons, and - as he was affluent - he hired as many taxi cabs as he could and had them line up outside of First Baptist Church. He led a large group of members away from that Church across town to start another Church. Who was this young Pastor that was so sorely tried at First Baptist Church in Dallas. He was none other than the great Preacher **Dr. W. A. Criswell**.

When you are in a trial and the "bumpers" come - KEEP ON DOING what God told you to do!

When he was attacked by the "bumpers" Dr. Criswell *kept on doing what God told him to do*. This is exactly what Job himself did. Look at your context:

CONTEXT Job 23:11-12 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. [12] Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.

When the "bumpers" hit you in the midst of the trial,

shake them off. Do what **Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima** did, shake them off, get back on the racetrack, and *run the race*. Keep doing what God tells you to do. Run patiently, and do as God commands.

Finally, *rest in the faithfulness of God*. Know that God is in control no matter what comes your way.

Job said:

CONTEXT Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: *when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*.

Job knew that every trial that God allows in the life of the Believer is given to us to *refine us*. The Apostle Peter wrote the persecuted Church, saying:

1 Peter 1:6-7 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though *now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [7] That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

Trials are necessary. No Christian is born into the faith whole and perfect, fully suited to serve the Lord. The Bible says that **we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10)**. Trials come so that we as Christians can - in the

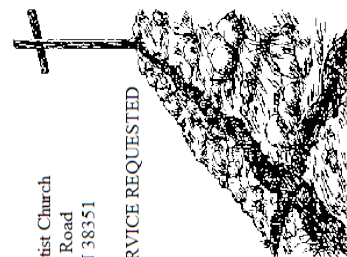
words of Job - **come forth as gold**. An untried faith is an unstable faith. When **David Jeremiah** had been only one year as Pastor at Shadow Mountain Church he was told by several Deacons "this will be your last Deacon's Meeting". When **Adrian Rogers** led Bellevue Baptist to move to where it is located now *thirteen families tied to the founding of that Church* stood against him.

God uses trials to make us what He wants us to be. You will never grow without pruning.

ILLUSTRATE There are several things that you *cannot do* no matter how hard you try. You cannot dribble a football. You cannot barbeque pancakes. You cannot lift a bald man by the hair of his head. And you cannot grow in your Christian faith without trials.

God's trials prune us so that we can grow. Trials are a crucible of fire that make us more and more precious and more and more usable for the glory of God. There will come a day when we will look back on this life and it will be but a momentary thing in the light of eternity. Every trial - no matter how bad it may seem - will pale in comparison to the glory that we experience when we enter into the Presence of Jesus. Look up, dear believer. Trust God. Know that He is controlling the trial, if you are His Child by faith in Christ.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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FOCAL Read Responsively Job 23:8-10

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Hebrews 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 16:23

1. You, Dear Believer, Will Be Tried

2 Timothy 3:12; John 15:18-19; Luke 12:51-53; Job 1:1; Colossians 2:13-14; Romans 4:7-8; Romans 4:20-25; Matthew 7:13-14; Job 1:14-15; Job 1:16; Job 1:17; Job 2:7-8

Job was not only **blameless**, but he was also **upright**. This is the Hebrew word YASHAW (ישר pronounced *yaw-shawr'*) which means _____

2. You, Dear Believer, Will Have Your "Bumpers": Focus On The Lord, Not The "Bumpers"

Job 2:9; Job 2:10; Jude 24; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Job 23:3-6; Matthew 7:21-23; Job 19:25-26; Job 23:8-10; Job 23:11-12; Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Ephesians 2:10

- Who was left at Job's side as he went through the valley of the shadow of death? Who was with him as he practiced night flying by instruments? _____

- When you are in a trial and the "bumpers" come -
