

Day One: Job 5

1. What questions does Eliphaz pose (1)? What do the foolish suffer (2)? What scenario does Eliphaz describe (3-5)? What broader truth does this address (6-7)? What advice does Eliphaz give to Job (8)? Summarize all the reasons why he thinks Job should do this (9-16, 19-26). How does even God-given hardship point to it being worthwhile to lay one's case before the Lord (17-18)? How does Eliphaz conclude his advice (27)?
2. Read Daniel 9:17-19. How does that passage relate to this chapter from Job, especially verse 8 and following? Re-read verses 17-18. How do those words make you feel? In what ways do they present a fuller picture of the reality people often face? What about the reality you face; which parts of this text echo your life today? What do you want to say to God about this? Ask him to help you remember that appealing to him is always worthwhile.

Day Two: Psalm 19:7-14

1. What topic does David address in the second half of this psalm (7)? How does he describe God's law (7-9)? What four things does it do for people (7-8)? How else does David esteem God's law (10-11)? How does he describe "the fear of the Lord" (9)? Why and how does David need God in order to be "blameless" (12-13)? How does he conclude this psalm (14)?
2. Re-read verse nine. Why do you think this sentence about "the fear of the Lord" is sandwiched between several verses that praise God's written law? How are those two topics related? Ask the Lord to reveal some practical ways he wants you to pay closer attention to his word, the Bible. Make a plan to walk this out. How do you think this will equip you with a better ability to deal with reality? As you ponder this, meditate on verse seven.

Day Three: Psalm 51

1. What characteristics of God reflect his mercy (1)? From what does David want cleansed (2)? How (7-9)? How does he describe his sin (3-5)? What does he think of God's judgment (4)? What does the Lord expect of us (6)? Describe David's picture of a repentant life (10-12). What fruit does he expect from this transformation (13-15)? What sacrifices matter to God (16-17)? What is David's hope for all the Lord's people (18-19)?
2. This is a moment of radical honesty and confession for David. Imagine exposing your own sin in this way. How would that feel? In verse one, meditate on the phrases "unfailing love" and "great compassion." Visualize these qualities of God manifesting during times of true repentance. What impact would that have? This week, memorize verses 10-12. Recite them whenever life feels overwhelming. What fruit do you think will come of this?

Day Four: Psalm 107:23-32

1. Who is the subject of this excerpt of psalm 107 (23)? What did they see (24-25)? Describe their experience of the storm; what were they going through both inwardly and outwardly (26-27)? What did they do about it (28)? How did the Lord react (28-30)? How did this make the people feel (30)? What response do they owe the Lord (31-32)? Why (31)?
2. How do you feel when you desperately need God to answer a prayer? Is the experience at all like what's described in verses 26-27: perilous, void of courage, reeling, staggering, and at your wit's end? Explain. Then, how does it feel when the Lord "brings you out of your distress"? What words or imagery capture the sensation of that moment? How do you think God wants you to respond to his acts of deliverance? Ask for faithfulness to do so.

Day Five: Luke 18:9-14

1. Who is the intended audience of this parable (9)? Who are the characters of the parable (10)? Describe the Pharisee's prayer (11-12). What about the tax collector's (13)? Contrast the two men's postures while praying (11, 13). What did Jesus proclaim about these two men (14)? Why is the tax collector the one who was justified before God (14)?
3. Day three addressed true repentance, an important part of dealing with reality. Today we consider the step that must precede it: facing ourselves. When it comes to acknowledging your true self, who are you more like: the Pharisee or the tax collector? Why do you think this is the case? Ask God about his plan to make you more like the tax collector: humble and honest about your sin. What do you sense him speaking, and how will you respond?