

**Day One: Job 2**

- Who presented themselves to the Lord (1)? Summarize Satan's conversation with God (2-6). Picture this scene in your mind's eye. How does it make you feel? Satan couldn't afflict Job without the Lord's permission. Perhaps this churns up questions about God's sovereignty, hardships you've endured, etc. Process through them with the Lord and allow him to minister to you.
- Describe the suffering Satan brought into Job's life (7-8). Keep in mind this is preceded by the horrific losses of chapter one. What conversation did Job and his wife then have (9-10)? While the word "bitter" certainly captures his wife's feelings on the matter, what one word would you use to sum up Job's outlook?
- How did Job's friends enter the scene (11)? How did they react to his plight (12-13)? How do you think Job felt about receiving support in this way? Read 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 and ask the Lord to reveal Godly ways to support friends in crisis. How can you help keep bitterness from taking root in their lives?

**Day Two: Psalm 77**

- Describe the way Asaph seeks the Lord (1-3). How does he involve his whole being in the process? How do you typically lament? Do you use your thoughts, emotions, voice, body, a pen, etc.? How do the psalmist's efforts seem to be paying off (2-3)?
- What are Asaph's thoughts like (4-6)? Re-read the questions he asks in verses 7-9. What makes it possible to ask such honest questions about the Lord? What spiritual practices help you to maintain such candor before him? Pray this aspect of your relationship with him would blossom into fullness.
- How does Asaph grasp the bigger picture of what God is doing (10-20)? List all the ways he reflects on history, theology and creation in order to practice gratitude and branch out from bitterness (10-20). Which point speaks most to your heart? Why?

**Day Three: Psalm 139**

- Describe God's deep familiarity with David (1-5). How does David react to it (6)? Describe the Lord's expansive presence (7-12). Meditate on verses 1-12. How does God's presence – both within and around you – foster gratitude? How can you harness awareness of his presence to practice gratitude on a regular basis, even in the mundane of life? Make a plan, such as doing the Daily Examen prayer, and put it into action.
- What is God's role in our beginnings (13-16)? Why does David praise him (14)? What does he write about God's thoughts (17-18)? Summarize David's proclamations about the wicked (19-22). Why do you think he includes this lament?
- What is David's concluding prayer of petition (23-24)? Here he invites God to bring his loving conviction. Pray this for yourself, asking the Lord to specifically bring any bitterness to light. What is he speaking to you?

**Day Four: Lamentations 3**

- In this very personal take on Jerusalem's destruction, who is the alleged source of the author's affliction (1)? Describe his torment (1-18, 52-54). How does he sum up this recollection (19-20)? What do you make of his perception thus far? Lift any confusion or discomfort up to the Lord. What response do you sense?

- Like Psalm 77, what turn does the lament take (21)? Summarize the author's description of God's love, and the hope it produces (22-36, 55-57). Which of these truths most reflects your life? Give thanks to God for revealing his love and sparking hope in this way.
- What are the author's confession guidelines (37-42)? Summarize the less personal section of his lament (43-51). What does the author want God to do about his enemies (58-66)?
- Conclude by writing your own lament. Taking inspiration from this week's lament readings, be as honest and vivid as possible about your hardship and don't forget to include expressions of gratitude.

#### **Day Five: Romans 8:18-30**

- How do "present sufferings" compare to future glory (18)? If this is a hard word to receive because your situation is quite bleak and you can barely grasp the hope of eternity, take a moment to ask God to powerfully meet you as you reflect on this entire passage.
- Describe the way creation waits (19, 22). In what ways do you feel "eager" for future glory? How is it painful like childbirth? What exactly is creation awaiting (19-21)? What about believers in particular (23)? What does it mean to hope in the Lord (24-25)? Would you say you're a person of Christian hope? If not, ask God to root out what may be getting in the way, be it bitterness, etc.
- What role do both prayer and the Holy Spirit play in nurturing hope (26-27)? Think of a few ways to enrich your prayer life along these lines. Make a plan to put it into action this week.
- Finally, what alternative does Paul offer to those tempted to remain bitter (28-30)? Bring to mind a few people struggling in this way and pray verses 28-30 out loud, personally for them.