

WHEN GOD DISAPPEARS: RELEASE

Big Idea: We may not find resolution in our suffering, but we can release some things to continue seeking God.

Big Question: What should we release in our suffering?

Main Scripture: All over Job

Job 42:7 ⁷ After the Lord had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.”

1. We should release our questions
2. We should release our complaints

Job 10:1-3, 8-9 ¹ “I am disgusted with my life. Let me complain freely. My bitter soul must complain. ² I will say to God, ‘Don’t simply condemn me—tell me the charge you are bringing against me. ³ What do you gain by oppressing me? Why do you reject me, the work of your own hands, while smiling on the schemes of the wicked? ⁸ You formed me with your hands; you made me, yet now you completely destroy me. ⁹ Remember that you made me from dust—will you turn me back to dust so soon?”

Job 30:20 ²⁰ “I cry to you, O God, but you don’t answer. I stand before you, but you don’t even look.”

Job 31:35-37 ³⁵ “If only someone would listen to me! Look, I will sign my name to my defense. Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser write out the charges against me. ³⁶ I would face the accusation proudly. I would wear it like a crown. ³⁷ For I would tell him exactly what I have done. I would come before him like a prince.”

Yes, Job complained, but he complained to God. He doubted, but he doubted to God. He screamed and yelled, but he did it in God’s presence. No matter how much in agony he was, he continued to address God. He kept seeking him. And in the end, God said Job triumphed. — Timothy Keller (Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering)

Job 38:1-3 ¹ Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind: ² “Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? ³ Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.”

Job 38:3a (KJV) ^{3a} Gird up now thy loins like a man;...

This phrase “answered,” as generic as it looks to us in English, is significant. In Hebrew idiom, to “speak to” someone indicates a one-way communication of an authority to an inferior, while to “answer” or “reply to” expresses a dialogue between two parties. It is striking, then, that when God shows up, he enters into a dialogue—he does not come to simply denounce. In other words, God is inviting Job into a relationship. — Timothy Keller

Job 38:4 ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.

Job 38:12 ¹² Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused the dawn to rise in the east?

Job 38:19-21 ¹⁹ "Where does light come from, and where does darkness go? ²⁰ Can you take each to its home? Do you know how to get there? ²¹ But of course you know all this! For you were born before it was all created, and you are so very experienced!

Job 38:22 ²² Have you visited the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of hail?

Job 38:34-35 ³⁴ Can you shout to the clouds and make it rain? ³⁵ Can you make lightning appear and cause it to strike as you direct?

Job 39:1 ¹ Do you know when the wild goats give birth? Have you watched as deer are born in the wild?

Job 40:1-5 ¹ Then the Lord said to Job, ² "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?" ³ Then Job replied to the Lord, ⁴ "I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. ⁵ I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say."

Job 40:9-10 ⁹ Are you as strong as God? Can you thunder with a voice like his? ¹⁰ All right, put on your glory and splendor, your honor and majesty.

Job 42:1-6 ¹ Then Job replied to the Lord: ² "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. ³ You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. ⁴ You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.' ⁵ I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. ⁶ I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance."

Nietzsche said a man can undergo torture if he knows the why of his life. But here at Dachau, I learned something far greater. I learned to know the Who of my life (God). He was enough to sustain me then and is enough to sustain me still. — Christian Reger

3. We should release our control

We must feel that to obey God will bring us no benefits at all. It is at that point that seeking, praying to, and obeying God begin to change us. — Timothy Keller (Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering)

God is God. If He is God, He is worthy of my worship and my service. I will find rest nowhere but in His will, and that will is infinitely, immeasurably, unspeakably beyond my largest notions of what He is up to. — Elizabeth Elliot

Could the author have been silently hinting at the eternal perspective? From an eternal view Job did indeed receive double, ten new children here to go with the ten he would one day rejoin in eternity. — Philip Yancey (Where Is God When It Hurts?)