

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

4

ADVERSITY AND ACCUSATION: WEAPONS USED AGAINST US IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Job 1:1—2:10

By John Ebert

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers’.”

Luke 22:31-32

AIM OF STUDY

- To become aware of how adversity and accusations can be used against us in spiritual warfare and to learn how to defend ourselves

KEY VERSE

“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Job 1:9

PREPARATION

Read over the notes on “**how to teach the Bible in small group**” and “**some practical suggestions for leading a small group discussion**” in Vineyard Church of Columbus’ *Small Group Leadership Training Manual*. Before you read over the Scripture, pray that God would give you direction for leading your group and teach you something relevant. Then read the passage and the Bible study below. **You will need to go over the questions and choose which ones you want to emphasize and which you could eliminate if your time is limited.** Note that the application questions are marked with an asterisk (*). Rather than leaving these to the end of the study, ask one or two as you work through the passage so people are being confronted by Scripture’s truths and applying them to their own lives. If you find you are falling behind schedule and need to move ahead, you could summarize some of the passage and then go to the final questions.

These studies contain more background material and information on the passages than any group will cover in a meeting. The authors are providing this for the leaders’ benefit—to help reduce your study and preparation time; to help resource you for possible questions group members may raise; and to clarify some gray areas of doctrine that may be in your mind as you prepare. Obviously we cannot exhaust any one subject in a document like this, so you may want to do further reading and discuss doctrine with your pastor. We highly recommend *The New Bible Dictionary* or *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* as excellent resources for study.

OPENERS

Many people have heard of Joni Eareckson Tada who became a quadriplegic as a result of a diving accident when she was seventeen (Mathis, p.4). Probably fewer people have heard of Jim McLaren. He lost a leg in a motorcycle accident when he was 22. He worked hard in rehabilitation and ended up becoming the fastest one-legged endurance runner in the world. While participating in a triathlon, he was hit by a van that was mistakenly allowed on the course and he, too, became a quadriplegic. Interestingly, after his second accident, Jim read the book of Job about 10 times and started to see how God was working in his life (Gilbert, p.121).

Most of us have not faced such great adversity as Joni and Jim, but everyone faces various minor hardships. Loss of your job in an economic downturn; suffering from

allergies; rain during a vacation; and even getting stuck in traffic can leave us frustrated and wondering, “Why is this happening to me?”

Accusation is a specific form of adversity. Sometimes charges against us are false, but even untrue ones can cause problems. Many people have been accused, wrongly convicted, and imprisoned. But later they were found innocent and set free.

Although most of us do not face such serious accusations, we all are blamed for minor things—like not doing a task at work or failing to call a friend to let them know the event you were going to take them to was canceled. The accusation might be false—the task at work was assigned to someone else, or you tried to call the friend, but you couldn’t get through to him or her or his or her voice mail. Even a false allegation can make us feel guilty and wonder if we should have done something more. A true accusation is no better. In that case, we really are guilty and deserve to suffer the consequences of our actions.

How do most people understand experiences of adversity or accusation? Often we think that when bad things happen, it is because we are being punished for some wrong thing we did. Sometimes this is true. However, in spiritual warfare, our enemy often uses adversities and accusations, both true and false, to try to tempt us to question God’s goodness and to give up on Him. If we do not realize that Satan uses these weapons against us, we may fall into despair and lose our faith when such difficulties occur. By becoming aware of his strategies, we can better prepare ourselves to persevere in our faith in God in rough times. Consequently, adversity and accusations can test and strengthen our faith instead of driving us to despair.

Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to come and teach you through this study.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The book of Job is a timeless tale of an innocent man who suffers great adversity. Most of the book records a discussion between Job and three of his friends about why Job is suffering and what he should do about it. Job maintains his innocence and wants God to talk with him about this. At the end of the book (Job 38–42), God answers Job, not so much to explain why he is suffering, but to point out to him that there are many things that are beyond human understanding. The first two chapters of the book, the passage we are going to study, introduce Job and describe the adversity that he faces. These chapters also pull back the curtain on the spiritual realm and reveal that someone is accusing Job before God. God’s responses to Satan’s allegations show us that God sees Job as innocent and that Job’s suffering is not punishment for his sins, as his friends suggest. Although Job was not aware of this heavenly dialogue, studying it and Job’s responses to his difficulties can help us when we experience adversity and accusation from the enemy.

STUDY THE PASSAGE: Job 1:1—Job 2:10

1. This passage contains two stories—a visible story of events we can see in the physical realm and an invisible story of events in the spiritual realm. Let's look at the visible story first. Read Job 1:1—1:5. What do we find out about Job?

Verse 1 says that Job lived in the land of Uz. There are several other references to Uz in the Bible, as either a place name or a person's name: Gen. 10:23, Gen. 22:21, Gen. 36:28, 1 Chron. 1:17, 1 Chron. 1:42, Jer. 25:20 and Lam. 4:21. Although these may not all refer to the same place, they generally seem to be associated with either Edom or Aram. Since both these areas are east of Israel across the Jordan River, most likely Uz was near there.

There is no indication in the book of Job as to when Job might have lived. The book begins with the Hebrew equivalent of "Once upon a time...." Outside the book of Job, there are two other references to Job in the Bible. James 5:11 refers to Job's perseverance. Ezek. 14:12-20 cites Job with Noah and Daniel as paradigms of righteousness. Since Noah is one of the earliest characters in the Bible, living before the time of Abraham, and Daniel is one of the latest, living after Judah was taken into exile in Babylon, this doesn't narrow the possibilities. However, since Uz does not appear to be in the land of Israel, it seems more likely that Job lived before God chose Abraham and his descendants as His special people. Like Noah and Abraham, Job served the true God before God made Himself known through Abraham and Moses. Thus, even though Job was not an Israelite, Job's story was known and preserved by the Israelites as part of God's dealings with humans.

Verse 1 gives a four part description of Job's character: "blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."

The Hebrew word translated as "blameless" is *tam* and generally means, "complete" or "perfect" or "having integrity." It probably does not mean that Job was free from sin. Note that in verse 5 he offers sacrifices for sin. The usage is probably similar to Paul's reference in Phil. 3:15 to "all of us who are mature." The Greek word translated as "mature" can also mean "complete" or "perfect." Paul is not saying that there are some who are free from sin, but is encouraging those who are doing well in resisting sin not to relax, but to continue to press on toward Jesus. In the same way, Job was a good man, but had not completely overcome sin.

The Hebrew word translated as "upright" is *yashar* and means "straight" or "right." Job is on the straight path of goodness, not wandering around making bad choices.

That Job "feared God" does not mean that he was afraid of God, but that he respected God. Sometimes we don't do something because we are afraid of what people might say about us if they found out. We are afraid because we

care what people think of us. In a similar way, Job cared what God thought about him, so he tried to do what would please God.

Finally, the Hebrew words translated as “shunned evil” literally means “turned from evil.” Repentance is often described as not just feeling sorry for what we have done, but actually changing our behavior, turning away from bad words and deeds and choosing good ones. So Job was continually turning away from any evil choices that came to him and choosing to please God instead.

Verses 2 and 3 describe Job’s large family and his many possessions. Job was a very wealthy man. Being the “greatest man” may have meant he was the richest. The report in verse 4 of his children gathering regularly for feasts indicates a happy family life—the children got along with each other and they were all enjoying life.

Finally, verse 5 shows that Job did not presume that his relationship with God was secure. As the head of his family, Job was concerned about his children’s’ spiritual welfare. He regularly offered sacrifices to purify them in order to protect them even from the consequence of the sin in their hearts.

*** How do you think you would feel if you were in Job’s position?**

Job seems to be living a wonderful life. He has great wealth, a happy family, and a right relationship with God. One would think that Job would be a content man enjoying his life.

2. Skip down and read Job 1:13–1:23 (at the end of Chapter 1). What happened to Job?

In verses 14–15 and verse 17, raiding parties stole many of his animals and killed many of his servants.

In verse 16 and verses 18–19, natural disasters destroy the rest of his possessions and his family, too. The “fire of God” may be lightning or perhaps volcanic activity and the “mighty wind” a whirlwind or tornado. Note that all these occurrences could be explained as natural dangers facing a man living in ancient times on the edge of the wilderness, as Job does. However, that all these things happen on the same day is highly unusual and might make Job suspect that they didn’t happen by chance.

*** How do you think you would react if you were Job?**

Shock and grief would be natural reactions. Anger is another possibility; perhaps anger at God for taking away His blessings or for failing to protect them. One might also feel self-pity and despair, as in “everything has gone wrong; why should I even try anymore?”

3. What does Job choose to do?

Verse 20 says that Job “tore his robe and shaved his head.” In Job’s time, these were cultural ways of showing grief. This reaction is what one would expect from a man who had lost all his children at once, besides servants and the rest.

What is unexpected is Job’s acceptance of his loss. He acknowledges that God gave his family and all his wealth to him, and he would lose it all when he died anyway. He trusts that God is still in control of things and does not sin by accusing God of doing something wrong. He does not show an attitude of entitlement as if God had cheated him of what he deserved for being a good man.

Note: that the next three questions, for Job 2:7 – 2:10, are similar to the questions for Job 1:13 – 1:23; the two passages could be read together and the questions asked just once.

4. Let’s move on and read Job 2:7–2:10. What else happened to Job?

After losing all his children and all his wealth, Job now loses his health. He suffers from some disease that causes painful sores on his whole body, from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. The description of his sickness is so terse that it is impossible to diagnose what the disease is.

5. What is his wife’s response?

Job’s wife abruptly appears in the narrative in verse 9; no mention was made of her before. We don’t know why she wasn’t killed along with the rest of the family. It’s hard to tell whether she is trying to comfort Job or to discourage him. Her statement could be taken two different ways, depending on her tone of voice, but we don’t know how she said it. She might be reacting out of her own anger and grief and telling Job to give up and die. This is the common assumption. Some believe Satan is using her to tempt Job to turn his back on God (Smick and Youngblood, p.736). Or she might be concerned about Job’s suffering, suggesting that death is the only realistic way out. In either case, she does recognize that he had held on to his integrity and is not falling into sin as a result of his misfortunes.

* Now how do you think you would react if you were Job?

Anger, resentment, and frustration all might result from this painful sickness. While loss of possessions or family is difficult to accept, physical pain without relief may be even worse. All these things together would be very difficult to handle. It would be very challenging to maintain faith in God’s goodness or His benevolent participation in your life.

The comment by Job's wife might also call forth an angry reaction, depending on how it is taken. When we are already suffering, insensitive words from other people can make our suffering more intense because we feel that they don't understand or care how we are feeling. We might feel isolated, alone, and abandoned by everyone.

6. What does Job do? How does he respond to his wife's comments?

In verse 8, Job "scraped himself" and "sat among the ashes." Ashes were often associated with mourning in ancient times, so this might be a further expression of grief appropriate to Job's culture. It might also be an attempt to get some relief from the sores.

Regardless of how his wife meant her remark, Job attributes it to foolishness, not malice. He encourages her to accept the good as well as the bad. He does not give up on God and refuses to fall into sin and despair.

7. Now let's go back and look at the story from another perspective: the spiritual realm that is normally invisible to us. Read Job 1:6 —1:12. Where does this scene take place? What do we find out about Satan in this passage?

The image of the angels presenting themselves before the Lord indicates a royal court scene with the Lord as the king on his throne. The angels are His loyal subjects coming before him. Some translations render "angels" as "sons of God" because that is a literal translation of the Hebrew text. The only other place this phrase appears in the Old Testament is in Gen. 6:2-4 and it is even less clear what it is referring to there. Given the context, it seems clear that these are spiritual creatures that are serving the Lord, so "angels" is a reasonable translation. For a fuller description of a similar scene of the Lord's presence and the beings surrounding Him, look at Rev. 4.

Although the text refers to "Satan," in the Hebrew this word has a definite article and would be more accurately translated "the satan". In a similar way, the New Testament has many references to "the Christ." "The Christ" (or the Messiah, *Christ* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah*) was the person whom the Jews were expecting God to send to save them. For a few of the many examples, see Mark 8:29, Mark 12:35, Mark 13:21, Mark 14:61, John 1:20, Acts 5:42 and Acts 18:28. As believers came to understand that Jesus was "the Christ" whom God had promised, the definite article was dropped and "Christ" was used interchangeably as a name for Jesus. For some examples of this, see Mark 9:41, Rom. 5:8, Rom. 6:8, Rom. 8:10, 1 Cor. 1:12, Heb. 5:5 and 1 Pet. 4:1.

There are only a couple other references to Satan in the Old Testament. Zech. 3:2 includes the definite article ("the satan") and Zech. 3:1 and 1 Chron. 21:1 omit it ("Satan"). In the New Testament, there are many more references to Satan. For a few examples, see Matt. 4:10, Mark 1:13, Mark 4:15, Luke

10:18, John 13:27, Acts 5:3, etc. By the time of the New Testament, “Satan” had developed into the name of the one who opposes God and the definite article was not used. Jesus revealed much of what we know about Satan as the enemy of God and our tempter. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Old Testament, which rarely refers to Satan, does not include many details about him (Page, pp. 23–37).

In Hebrew, *Satan* means “adversary,” so a better translation of “the satan” might be “the adversary.” It is clear from this passage in Job that “the adversary” or “Satan” has access to God’s presence. He comes along with the angels before God. Satan does not immediately address God, but waits for God to address him, as a good servant would. The conversation between Satan and God is polite and it is not clear from this exchange that they are enemies. In fact, some commentators have suggested that “the adversary” in this text is actually God’s servant and has the role of prosecuting attorney, that is, of examining people to determine whether their faith is sound or not. However, it is also possible that Satan and God are actually enemies, but are using polite, “courtly” language because that was the way one talked in a royal court.

Satan also has access to the earth. He reports to God that he has been roaming around the earth. He does not explain why or what he was doing, so we don’t know. Since God asks if he has noticed Job, one might suppose that Satan has been roaming around examining people’s behavior. While this might fit with his role as God’s “prosecuting attorney,” it might reveal a more sinister purpose.

Finally, Satan takes a dim view of human righteousness. He does not think much of Job and suspects that Job has ulterior motives for serving God. While this may seem cynical in light of God’s positive assessment of Job, in view of the motives that most of us have, it may actually be a fairly realistic view. Nonetheless, Satan does not portray Job in a positive light but assumes a self-serving attitude in Job’s actions.

In summary, we see that Satan has access to God’s presence and that God draws his attention to Job as an example of righteousness. Some would say we couldn’t clearly tell whether Satan is a servant of God or an enemy; their relationship appears to be cordial, even when they disagree about Job’s motives. Could this be a genuine respect or a shrewd move on Satan’s part? But Satan’s attacks on Job seem to be attempts to entice Job to turn his back on God, indicating that Satan does have evil intentions towards God’s creature, and indirectly towards God Himself (Page, p.29). Our understanding of Satan as the head of evil powers becomes clearer in the New Testament.

8. What does Satan accuse Job of?

Satan accuses Job of fearing God for what he can get from God. He sees Job acting like a person who pretends to be a friend to a co-worker, but is really only using them to better their position at work, or like someone who marries another person for their money, but doesn't really love them.

If Job doesn't really love God, but only pretends to because it is profitable, Job would be a hypocrite. That is what Jesus accused the Pharisees and other religious people of in his day; see for example, Matt. 6:1-21 and Matt. 23 (all). Jesus was concerned about an outward form of hypocrisy – of practicing religion in order to be seen and respected by people. The form of hypocrisy that Satan accuses Job of is an inward form which is more subtle. Satan claims that Job is serving God for the rewards God will give him, not for the sake of God Himself. The first commandment is “you shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3). Satan contends that Job is breaking this first commandment by valuing the rewards he gets from God more than he values God.

Note that the next two questions, for Job 2:1–2:7, are similar to the questions for Job 1:6–1:12; the two passages could be read together and the questions asked just once.

9. Let's move to 2:1–2:7 and read them. What else do we find out about Satan in this passage?

This section begins with an almost exact repetition of the previous encounter between God and Satan. In the previous encounter, Satan does not do anything except roam the earth and talk to God. God puts everything Job has in Satan's hands (Job 1:13), but there is no report of Satan himself taking any action against Job. The next few verses record all the disasters that befall Job (Job 1:14-19). This juxtaposition implies that Satan is responsible for Job's misfortunes, but the Bible does not state it directly.

In the second encounter, God says that Satan incited Him to ruin Job without any reason (Job 2:3). Without resolving the question of whether it was God or Satan who sent the disasters against Job, it is clear that God holds Satan in some way responsible for Job's suffering. Job 2:7 is even more direct; it states that Satan “afflicted Job with painful sores.”

While God seems concerned about the unfairness of Job's suffering “without any reason” (Job 2:3), Satan shows no compassion at all. In fact, he simply repeats his claim that Job is only concerned about himself and does not really fear God. Satan's lack of compassion and his direct responsibility for Job's painful sickness indicate that Satan is more malicious than he appeared in the first encounter. However, he still talks politely with God and doesn't act without seeking God's permission, so it is clear from this passage whether he is under God's sovereign control.

Note that after Job 2:7, Satan is never mentioned again in the book of Job. In particular, although Job and his friends spend most of the book discussing the cause of Job's misfortunes, they never bring up Satan as a possible cause. The important topics in the book of Job are Job's relationship with God and how one should handle suffering. While Satan clearly has a role in the bad things that happened to Job, Job does not need to fight Satan or even know of his existence in order to deal with his difficulties. This reminds us that although we should be aware of Satan and his weapons (2 Cor. 2:11), we should concentrate on drawing near to God rather than fighting Satan (Jas. 4:7-8).

10. Now what does Satan accuse Job of?

The meaning of the phrase "skin for skin" is uncertain. The rest of Satan's accusation seems to be that Job values his own life and health more than anything else, even than his family and possessions. Satan claims that if he loses his health, then Job will have nothing and will no longer have any reason to love and serve God. If Job is only serving God for the rewards God gives him, then if Job loses everything, he will show his true feelings and abandon God as useless.

One might think of a "reality" television show in which a number of young women compete for the affection of a supposedly wealthy young man. Part of the "twist" to the program is that the young man is really poor. One of the questions raised by the show is whether the women were pursuing the man for love or for money. If a woman were only after the man's money, one would assume she would abandon the relationship when she finds out that he is really poor. That is the argument that Satan makes here—since Job only serves God in order to get wealth and health, when he no longer has those things, he will abandon God.

11. Look back through the passage (Job 1:1–2:10) to see what we learn about God. How does God view Job?

God is the one who calls Satan's attention to Job. Twice, in Job 1:8 and Job 2:3, God confirms the description of Job given in Job 1:1, that "he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." God also says that Job is unique in his righteousness, that "there is no one on earth like him" (Job 1:8 and Job 2:3). Furthermore, after Job loses his family and his possessions, God points out that Job has still maintained his integrity despite these adversities (Job 2:3).

12. How does this report on the invisible events behind Job's experience change your perspective on what happened to Job?

God's statements about Job confirm that he is truly righteous. Consequently, we know that Job's afflictions are not punishment for some hidden sin, as his friends suggest later in the book. The adversities Job faces appear to be a test of Job's faith to disprove Satan's accusations. In the book we learn that Job really does love God for God's sake and not because of the benefits God gives to Job. (See 1 Pet. 1:6-9 for a description of such trials.) If we continue the metaphor from the television program about the women seeking the attention of the supposedly rich man (who was really poor), a woman who really loved that man would stay with him even when she found out he was poor. Likewise, Job remains faithful to God despite the loss of all his earthly benefits.

Note that Job is not aware of the conversations between God and Satan about his condition. He does not know that his difficulties are not punishment for sin or that they might be a test of his faith. He perseveres through his suffering without seeing the spiritual battle in which he has become involved. For the readers, however, this passage takes us behind the scene to see what is going on in the spiritual realm between God and Satan. Perhaps this will give us a different perspective on the troubles that we experience in our lives.

APPLYING THE TEXT

***In Job 1:9, Satan asks, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Based on your study of this passage, why do you think Job fears God?**

The Hebrew word translated as "for nothing" is *chinnam* and it is related to the word for "grace." *Chinnam* could also be translated as "without cause" or "gratuitously." A more concrete use of this word appears in Ex. 21:2 in reference to a slave going free without having to pay anything. We usually think of "grace" in terms of the undeserved gifts, most notably salvation that God gives to us. Thus, we are saved by grace, freed from slavery to sin without having to pay anything. God has purchased it for us (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

The same word also appears in Job 2:3, when God says that Satan has incited Him to ruin Job "without any reason." Just as we think of our salvation as an undeserved gift from God, this seems to indicate that the misfortunes that befell Job were undeserved, that is, not punishments for something Job did.

It appears that if anyone deserved to be blessed by God, Job would. God testified that Job was uniquely righteous and God had richly blessed Job. Satan accuses Job of loving God's blessings more than God. How could God's assertions about Job's faithfulness be vindicated? Just as a woman's love for a man instead of lust for his money can be proved only if the man loses his money, so Job had to lose all God's blessings to prove that he truly loved God. From this passage, the answer to Satan's accusation is "yes," Job really does fear God for nothing, gratuitously and without any cause other than his love

for God. So Satan's accusation was proved false and God's assertions about Job's righteousness were demonstrated to be true.

We often wish to live in a just world, a world in which people get what they deserve. If someone works hard, they get rewarded. If someone does good deeds, they deserve to go to heaven. On the other hand, if someone is lazy, they get fired and if they do bad things, they go to hell.

What we find in this passage in Job does not seem to fit our idea of a just universe. God testifies that Job is righteous and yet he suffers terrible misfortunes. The Sabeans and the Chaldeans steal Job's herds and kill his servants, yet there is no record of punishment for them. While this offends our sense of fairness, we might want to consider more carefully our desire to live in a just world. All of us have sinned (Rom. 3:10, Rom. 3:23) and the wages we deserve is death (Rom. 6:23). In a just world, there would be no hope for us. However, we have a God who is not only just, but gracious. He has given us the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Thus, while it is true that God is just and punishes sinners, God relates to us primarily by grace. He forgives our sins and blesses us with health, possessions and family even when we do not deserve them. Since God relates to us by grace, it does not seem unjust for Him to expect us to relate to Him by grace. Just as Job experienced, sometimes we suffer trials and adversities that test our faith. These may give us an opportunity to prove that we love God for Himself and not simply for what He gives us. It may also be a powerful testimony to those observing us that God is real, God is the greatest treasure we can find, and that nothing can separate us from His love.

Therefore, rather than a world that is focused on justice, God has given us a world that is based on relationship and on grace. God loves us, so He forgives our sins and blesses us by grace even though we don't deserve it. Sometimes bad things happen to us that we don't deserve. By grace, we are to fear and love God anyway. Job expresses this in Job 2:10 when he says, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" Paul has a similar perspective. In Phil. 4:11b-13, he writes, "... for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

***What about you, do you fear God for nothing?**

Since we are sinful people, we should not be surprised to find that our motives are mixed. While we might love God for Himself, we also like the benefits He gives to us. It is okay for us to enjoy the good things that God gives to us. If we love someone, we want to give them things that they like and we take pleasure in their enjoyment of these gifts. In the same way, God

takes pleasure in our enjoyment of His gifts. However, we must always be on guard that we do not love the gifts more than the Giver. If the gifts become our god instead of the Giver, then we need to repent and perhaps even give up these good things so that they do not dilute our love for God. If we are not able to let go of our love for God's good gifts, adversity and trouble may be God's way of helping us to love Him more than we love other things.

***Would anyone like prayer because you are suffering difficulties?**

Pray that God would develop godly character in them through these difficulties (Jas. 1:2-4, 1 Pet. 1:6-9). Also pray that their faith would not fail (Luke 22:31), and that God would deliver them from the evil one (Matt. 6:13).

***Some of us may want God to develop in us the integrity we see in Job. Let's pray that we will have integrity like Job, that we would be blameless and upright, fearing God and shunning evil (Job 1:1).**

WRAPPING IT UP

When bad things happen to us, we should be aware that they might be punishment for sin. This is the spiritual weapon of accusation that the enemy uses against us. If the accusations are true, then the weapon we can use to fight against them is repentance. We should repent of our sin, asking God to forgive us (1 John 1:9), turning away from sin and shunning evil (Prov. 3:7; 1 Pet. 3:11). However, we should also consider that God might be using such events to give us opportunities to demonstrate or develop our character. This is the spiritual weapon of adversity that the enemy uses against us. In that case, we should pray that our faith will not fail and that the Holy Spirit will help us persevere and not lose heart.

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