



Shattered Mom's Club

Session Two

Job's Wife: Too Close to the Fire



It's not easy to introduce this woman that we call, Job's wife. We find very little in the Bible about her, but we find her story throughout the book of Job, because what affects a husband in turn affects a wife. We know just by fate of circumstance that Job's wife was right there up close and personal with the fire of attacks that Job was receiving from Satan himself.

Who was this shattered woman?

I sometimes refer to Job's wife as Mrs. Job, as this shattered mom isn't even named by name in the Bible. Some people speculate on what it is from other historical books, but I'm not going to presume. We will leave her nameless.

Even though we aren't told too much about Job's wife in the Bible, I think she gets a bad rap. I've heard sermons over the years of how evil and terrible she was. I've

heard how she was a temptress to Job and all these other things, but as I look at her life and study Job's life and who he was, I don't agree with that at all.

Sorry, maybe I'm not in the majority here, but we know Job was above reproach. We know he walked and talked with God. And we know Job put God above everything. Can I see this man marrying a evil and vile woman? No, I can't. So, I see her as a woman above reproach and a woman of good character. Sorry, just can't see Job marrying any other type of woman. Look in verse one of the book of Job and see what kind of man he was.

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job 1:1

Job and his wife had ten children together. This tells me Job stayed with her. Tells me that Job and Mrs. Job spent some time together. Tells me although they probably had a nice size home, because they were wealthy, that they weren't living at other ends of that home. Some people do that you know.

And when we look at all the blessing God did in Job's life, do we really think that God is going to direct him to have a terrible wife? No. I think she was one of Job's blessings. God blessed Job in every way possible. Look at the wealth God gave Job. He had the blessing of all those sheep. He had the blessing of all those cattle or oxen. He had the blessing of all those camels. He had the blessing of all that land. Do we really think that God is not going to bless Job with a good wife?

Mrs. Job was connected to her husband.

When we see a couple of which one is sick, one is financial straits, one has lost their children, or any other type of pain and suffering, we know it isn't just that *one* person going through it all. A married couple is made up of two people making a unit. Job didn't suffer alone!

When Job was attacked by Satan, who do you think was stuck with the consequences? We think when we study this story that Job lost this and Job lost

that, and he did. We just always seem forget that in reality Job's wife lost everything too. It's just not talked about much. Job's wife wasn't in control of the situation. Her children died too! Those weren't just Job's kids. They had all those children together.

We sometimes think, well, how could Job's wife say that to him? You know, that so oh so often quoted line of hers...."curse God, and die".

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

I know there is a big question among theologians old and new concerning this passage and what is really meant by what Job's wife says in this verse. We are not going to delve into that. You can go off and study that on your own. We are merely looking at Job's wife as a person and as a mother today.

When a husband and father has financial troubles, then the whole family has financial troubles.

Let's look at that matter of those finances. Job and his wife lost everything. All those oxen, sheep, and camels that was their livelihood was gone. All gone. Bank account wiped out in a single swoop. All in a single day. Not just in a single day, but within minutes, because we know as each servant told the misfortune of one thing to Job, another servant came up to tell the next.

What must have Job's wife thought when all of a sudden, after living with one of the most blessed men in the world at the time, and the "greatest of all the men of the east", they lost it all. Look how the Bible describes Job's wealth.

"His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." Job 1:3

I'm not sure why so many people think that there is a great woman behind every great man, except when it comes to Job in the Bible. Hello! There was a woman involved in the marriage. Even though their culture was much different than we live in today, I still think Mrs. Job was part of the marriage team. She was raising ten children. I'm sure she was helping everywhere she was able. Even though there were servants involved, if you are a mother of ten kids, even with servants, you are going to be busy and contribute to the home and to your situation.

Job and his wife lost it all. I have seen people in this situation. Financial woes can cause such a dramatic impact on a family. Ever had those medical or hospital bills pile up? Had a loss of a house that wasn't insured? Lost a family owned business? Your car was totaled and not covered by insurance? Couldn't pay your college loans? Had a husband with gambling issues? Invested poorly and lost your life savings? You or your husband lost your job? Had your hours cut so that you couldn't meet your bills?

Life happens and financial problems can cause you to be desolate. It can cause depression and desperation. Job's wife I'm sure was thinking more of other losses she was facing at the time, but when you think of how much she lost alongside of Job in the way of wealth and security in one day, it is staggering.

How much pain can a woman suffer anyway?

Financial issues hitting a family is hard, but look at the most terrible thing of all that Job's wife suffered—the loss of the children.

These were adult children. The Bible talks about them having feasts in the children's houses. So these were children who Job and Mrs. Job has raised and nurtured. I'm sure they loved their children. They had seven boys and three girls.

“And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.” Job 1:2

What pain Job and his wife must have felt when they were all gone at once. In sermons and Bible studies we always hear about how Job suffered the loss of his children. We have to realize though, that Job didn't suffer this loss alone. Job's wife

lost all of her children in one day too!

As a mother, I know that financial issues were probably not at the top of Job's wife's mind. I'm sure she was only thinking about her loss as a mother. Can you imagine the hurt and pain of this mother's heart? To me, it is just mind-blowing of how much pain was dealt to Mrs. Job.

I can't even come up with words to describe what this woman must have went through with the loss of her children—all of her children. That's all of her children in one day. As a mother, I imagine I would have wanted to see their bodies. I'm not sure what the house those children were in was made up of, but apparently it was made of pretty strong material in order to kill so many people at once. I can imagine the shape the bodies must have been in.

We don't know what state of mind that Job's wife was in when she heard the news that all of her children were dead. Perhaps it was shock. Perhaps it was disbelief. Perhaps it was denial.

What we do know is that it must have been intensely painful. It must have been overwhelming. It must have been shattering to say the least.

The health issues of one spouse affects another.

Let's look at another thing that Job's wife had to go through. When Satan next attacked Job, it was his health that Satan messed with this time.

“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.” Job 2:7

I imagine Job's wife loved him and it was probably hard to see him in such pain and suffering. Just think about the physical pain he was in alone. I have friends who have had husbands that have been terribly sick or had a terminal illness, and it is hard for them to see the men in their life in such pain. Think about the pain those women are in themselves when they see their husbands suffer.

So, I think that Job's wife probably had a hard time just looking at Job. He was covered from head to foot with boils. I'm not saying she couldn't look because it wasn't a pretty sight, but to know that your husband, the man you love, the man you had ten children with, was in such pain and agony. That alone must have been hard for Job's wife.

We have all probably had a little skin irritation at one time or another. Maybe you came back from camp as a kid with poison ivy or you got a rash on your hand? Maybe a case of mosquito bites? We all know how annoying that is. We scratch. We try not to scratch. Maybe you have had athlete's feet or have a husband who has. We moan and complain over those things, and they are really annoying and basically uncomfortable.

Think about that for a minute. Then think about what Job encountered. A thousand times worse. He was covered with boils from his head to his feet. We aren't talking a little case of rash here. We are talking major pain and discomfort. I'm sure it itched because the Bible talks about him scraping his skin with that "potshard" or piece of pottery. It must have hurt Job's wife to watch him.

*"And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal;
and he sat down among the ashes." Job 2:8*

We all know how painful and uncomfortable just a little bit of skin irritation can cause. Just think about Job and his predicament. What anguish he must have been in with those boils. I wonder if he sat around and counted them. Yeah, I probably would have and then told everyone how many so they could feel sorry for me. Job though, just kept worshipping God as his wife looked on his pain.

And who was going to take care of Job? Have you ever had a husband that was sick? Wives have to help take care of them. Don't they? Just before this Job was rich. He did have a lot of servants, but only a few escaped death. I supposed they would have helped Job with his boils. Maybe they would have put some type of salve on those boils, but Job had lost those servants by the minute. I wonder if Job really had anyone to take care of him.

We all need the comfort of another human being when life hurts.

Have you ever thought about the sheer loss of contact with her husband that Job's wife had during this time? I'm not really sure how much time elapsed from the day that Job lost everything to the day that Satan attacked him with boils, but no matter if it was a short time or a long time in between, I am sure Job's wife was still in pain. I'm sure she needed the comfort of her husband.

I realized when reading this story last, that Mrs. Job didn't have the ability to hug her husband and have a good cry of grief with him over those children they lost. She couldn't. Job was covered in boils and in such terrible pain. He probably couldn't bear to be touched.

I know some people are just not huggers. I get that, but overall, humans like contact, especially when we hurt. We will reach for someone's hand for comfort or to comfort. We will put an arm on a shoulder. We will pat someone's arm. We put our arm around someone for comfort or to be comforted. Hey! Some of us just hug! When pain strikes us, we sometimes have a sheer need for that contact.

Job and Mrs. Job had been together a while as they had ten kids, so I can imagine normally when tragedy would have stuck at them, that they would be the kind of couple that would be clinging to each other and in each other's arms, crying into each other's chests. This wasn't going to happen with Job struck with boils from his head to toe. I see this loss of contact with her husband as one more thing that came to shatter Mrs. Job.

It was after Job is struck with the boils that Job's wife tells him to curse God.

“And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.” Job 2:8-9

Aside from all the controversy of how this passage of Scripture should be interpreted, whether the word should be translated as “curse” or “bless” or what is in its original meaning, I still don't see Job's wife as the evil of all evils.

I see her as a mother that is hurting and raw to the point that she probably can hardly function. You know she had to go to those “ashes” (Job 2:8) to see Job. He wasn’t in the house. I’m not sure if it was a garbage dump or just outside on his property somewhere, but we know he picked up a piece of pottery to scrape himself from the ashes. So anyway, we aren’t talking in their home.

If I had just lost all those children, I wouldn’t have left my house. I would have been behind closed doors that is for sure, but Job’s wife went to where Job was apparently. This woman had more strength than I would have had. This woman went to see her husband even though she was in terrible pain. Me? I probably couldn’t have walked that far. I would have been lying down on my bed, my head buried in my pillow, and I would have my door locked.

A river of pain runs through it.

This is not a trickle-down pain and suffering result. This is a *slap it on ya* in your face kind of pain. It’s not rubbing off onto Job’s wife. It is her pain too! She was definitely too close to the fire, insomuch that her pain was great and terrible too. She was burnt badly. She felt the fire. She felt that intense burning pain of loss and grief.

We don’t really know the ending of Job’s wife story. She isn’t mentioned again after Job chapter 2. We know in the end God blessed Job with ten more children and blessed him with more livestock and wealth than before. We can assume he didn’t marry again and that this wife we are talking about got to enjoy those blessings and those children that the Bible mentions in Job 42. We just don’t know the end of Job’s wife story because the Bible doesn’t tell us. We are just left to wonder.

A mother’s heart has the ability to be deeply wounded.

This whole story of Job and his wife reminds me that we just never know what another person is going through. We can’t feel their pain. We can’t understand why people say the things they do while they are going through such pain and tragedy in their lives. And above all, we never know how much a mother can be hurting because of their children.

I’m not talking just about death and the loss of a child, but there is so much tied to

our children that as mothers we grieve about. When our children go through things or when our children stray from the godly paths, we hurt. We suffer with them. We grieve for them. It's part of being a mother. Our hearts feel every bump and strain that we know our children go through.

Look at mothers with special needs children. Wow. How much they hurt to see their children grow up that way, and look at the strength that they must expend to take care of those children. What about mothers who have children that are addicted to drugs or alcohol? How much grief, frustration, and pain that must cause a mother's heart.

We can learn from this shattered woman's story.

I think the thing I learned most about studying Job's wife is that you just never know the weight of another person's burden. Job's wife had to bear a tremendously heavy one.

When we see women going about their daily life, we may not know the connections that those women may have with a husband or with her children. Like Job's wife, those women may be entangled with pain. We can't see what troubles and grief they may be bearing. I know women who have adult children that are living in sin or living in abusive situations and these mothers have no power over it. All they can do is advise their children and pray to God with a mother's broken heart. They are close to those flames but have no control over the fire.

So, next time you are tempted to pre-judge or look down on someone for what they say, like Job's wife in Job 2:9, just pray for them first. They might be too close to the fire of a loved one. They might be going through pain you might not know or ever know about. They might be feeling the flames of the fire like Job's wife.

Reasons like this shattered mom's story is why we need to follow that "love" command of Christ more closely.



What shattered Job's wife?

Have you ever had to deal with the health issues of someone close to you? If so, how did it make you feel?

Have you ever had to deal with dire financial issues because of the circumstances of someone in your family such as a spouse or your children? If so, how did it make you feel?

When someone goes through the loss of a child, what are some of the emotions that you think they go through?

What lesson (s) did you learn from studying about Job's wife?

Dear Lord,

*Help me to learn from Job's wife story. Help me to meet people that are close to the fire with the cold water of loving actions. Help me to rub on some healing ointment for their burns with encouragement and compassion.
Amen*