

WHAT IF YOU SUDDENLY LOSE EVERYTHING?

SELECTIONS FROM JOB 1 AND 2



The Heart of the Matter

When we suddenly lose someone or something important to us, the loss often feels unbearable. For example, on September 11, 2001, we in the United States suddenly lost our sense of security and many of our freedoms when thousands of people perished. On May 20, 2013, many individuals living in Moore, Oklahoma, suddenly lost everything when an EF5 tornado ripped through their town. And these are only two of hundreds of disasters we could name—hurricanes that devastated entire shorelines; earthquakes that collapsed freeways and buildings; and floods that lifted homes off their foundations and sent families rushing for safety. And if acts of terror and natural disasters aren't enough, we can all think of the cruelest tragedies of all—schoolchildren randomly gunned down by their very own classmates.

It's easy for us to sit on the sidelines and think, *disaster will never happen to me*. But in reality, we don't know that for sure. Let's turn to the biblical account of Job, the righteous man who suddenly lost nearly *everything*, and prepare ourselves to trust God in the midst of the most unbearable circumstances.



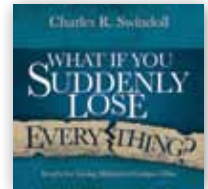
Discovering the Way

1. Let's Learn about Job's Tragic Losses (Job 1:1–12; 2:1–9)

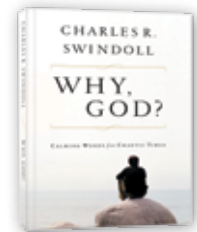
The man slipped onto the scene of Scripture inconspicuously: "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job" (Job 1:1). For the first five verses of Job chapter 1, we learn about Job's character, his faith, his family, and his wealth. Job had at least 11,000 head of livestock, many servants, a loving wife, and ten adult children for whom Job prayed continually. Job was the kind of man we all would have loved to have as a neighbor, a father, or a friend. But two seemingly innocuous words changed everything: "One day" (1:6 NLT). With these words the biblical scene switched from earth to the heavenly throne room as the angels and Satan came and stood before God. After God and Satan discussed Job's integrity, God gave Satan permission to take away Job's children and belongings (1:12) and even Job's health (2:4–6). In what seemed like the blink of the eye, Job lost *everything*!



Tools for Digging Deeper



What If You Suddenly Lose Everything?
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD



Why, God? Calming Words for Chaotic Times
by Charles R. Swindoll
hardcover book



The Secret to Facing Hard Days
by Insight for Living Ministries
softcover book

To order any of these related resources, call
0800-787-9364
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2. Let's Observe How Job Responded (Job 1:20–22; 2:10)

When calamity struck, Job experienced profound grief. He didn't deny his pain but freely expressed his sorrow before the Lord. Then Job fell to the ground in heartfelt worship. Job didn't blame God or develop bitterness against Him but accepted God's sovereign plan (Job 1:20–22). And when Job's wife told him to curse God and die, Job rebuked her. In the midst of sudden loss and extreme emotional and physical pain, Job maintained his discernment, stayed rooted in his theology, and submitted himself to the Lord who alone determines the course of our lives (2:10).



DOORWAY TO HISTORY

Tell the Lord How You Feel

Job was a man of genuine piety and well-deserved prosperity. He lived as a godly gentleman, a wise businessman, a fine husband, and a faithful father. But a quick and brutal sweep of back-to-back calamities reduced Job to a twisted mass of brokenness. After losing his kids, his livelihood, and his health, Job reached the end of his rope. Job lamented the day of his birth: “Let the day perish on which I was to be born, / And the night which said, ‘A boy is conceived’” (Job 3:3).

Job's outburst in chapter 3 did not flow primarily out of his physical suffering but out of his emotional anguish; he had lost touch with God. For many years, Job had experienced intimacy with God . . . until that awful day when everything broke loose and Job lost nearly everything. Then, the real darkness came. The heavens became silent, impenetrable and unyielding. Against God's silence, Job opened the floodgates, pouring out his internal turmoil on God. Job even cursed the day he was born! But in spite of Job's fit, God didn't blast Job into oblivion. God didn't even say, “Shame on you, Job.” God can handle our tough questions and emotional outbursts. When we face pain too deep for words, we can share it with God. We'll never get over grief until we express it fully to Him. So don't hold back—the Lord can handle it.

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Starting Your Journey

In this study we have learned four lessons from Job that will help prepare us for tomorrow:

- *The Truth*: Everything starts with what kind of people we are—our character. We can't quickly prepare for sudden loss. We must spend time *daily* cultivating our dependence on God, developing solid theology, living in obedience to God's Word, and learning how to handle periodic tests from the Lord.
- *The Future*: Let's begin to believe the words of James 4:13–16, which remind us that we have no idea what tomorrow holds. But we do know the God who holds our future. And in that knowledge, we can rest.
- *The Warning*: Just as Job's wife gave him bad advice, when tragedy strikes, some people will give us poor counsel—about God, about the reason for our trials, and about what we should do next. But as we stay rooted in sound theology and spend intimate time with the Lord, He will enable us to recognize bad counsel.
- *The Response*: When the unthinkable happens, let's remember Job's response. Job freely grieved his losses—he allowed his tears to flow. He didn't throw a pity party and invite everyone he knew. Job accepted the fact that God was in control, even though Job didn't understand God's plan.

How will you respond when tragedy strikes? Will you blame God and become bitter, or will you grieve your loss and worship God for His sovereignty in your life?