

Unemployment Devotionals

[illegible]

What Will Be

No longer will there be any curse.- Revelation 22:3

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Revelation 22:1-5](#)

You and I have something in common. We live in a mixed-up, tarnished world and we have never known anything different. Adam and Eve, however, could remember what life was like before the curse. They could recall the world as God intended it to be—free of death, hardship, and pain (Gen. 3:16-19). In pre-fall Eden, hunger, unemployment, and illness did not exist. No one questioned God's creative power or His plan for human relationships.

The world we have inherited resembles God's perfect garden only slightly. To quote C. S. Lewis, "This is a good world gone wrong, but [it] still retains the memory of what ought to have been." Fortunately, the cloudy memory of what the earth should have been is also a prophetic glimpse into eternity. There, just as Adam and Eve walked and talked with God, believers will see His face and serve Him directly. There will be nothing between God and us. "No longer will there be any curse" (Rev. 22:3). There will be no sin, no fear, and no shame.

The past and its consequences may cast a shadow on today, but a believer's destiny carries the promise of something better—life in a place as perfect as Eden.

By: **Jennifer Benson Schuldt**

Reflect & Pray

Dear God, help me to remember that even though this world does not measure up to Your original design there is much to enjoy and much to do for You and others. Thank You for the promise of life with You in a perfect setting.

One day God will put everything right.

God-Sized Love

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?- Matthew 5:46

Today's Scripture & Insight: **Matthew 5:43–48**

I once visited an impoverished neighborhood of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Homes were made of corrugated iron, with electrical wires dangling live above them. There I had the privilege of interviewing families and hearing how churches were helping to combat unemployment, drug use, and crime.

In one alleyway I climbed a rickety ladder to a small room to interview a mother and her son. But just a moment later someone rushed up, saying, “We must leave *now*.” A machete-wielding gang leader was apparently gathering a mob to ambush us.

We visited a second neighborhood, but there we had no problem. Later I discovered why. As I visited each home, a gang leader stood outside guarding us. It turned out his daughter was being fed and educated by the church, and because believers were standing by her, he stood by us.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents a standard of love that's beyond comparison. This kind of love embraces not just the “worthy” but the undeserving (Matthew 5:43–45), reaching beyond family and friends to touch those who can't or won't love us back (vv. 46–47). This is God-sized love (v. 48)—the kind that blesses everyone.

As believers in Santo Domingo live out this love, neighborhoods are starting to change. Tough hearts are warming to their cause. That's what happens when God-sized love comes to town.

By: Sheridan Voysey

Reflect & Pray

How would you describe the difference between human love and godly love?

Who can you bless today who can't repay you?

Jesus, pour Your love into me so I may pour it out to others—even to those who can't repay the favor.

Children of God

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love.- Ephesians 5:1-2

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Ephesians 4:32-5:10](#)

I once spoke at a secular conference for childless couples. Heartbroken over their infertility, many attendees despaired at their future. Having walked the childless path too, I tried to encourage them. “You can have a meaningful identity without becoming parents,” I said. “I believe you are fearfully and wonderfully made, and there’s new purpose for you to find.”

A woman later approached me in tears. “Thank you,” she said. “I’ve felt worthless being childless and needed to hear that I’m fearfully and wonderfully made.” I asked the woman if she was a believer in Jesus. “I walked away from God years ago,” she said. “But I need a relationship with Him again.”

Times like this remind me how profound the gospel is. Some identities, like “mother” and “father,” are hard for some to attain. Others, like those based on a career, can be lost through unemployment. But through Jesus we become God’s “dearly loved children”—an identity that can

never be stolen (Ephesians 5:1). And then we can “walk in the way of love”—a life purpose that transcends any role or employment status (v. 2).

All human beings are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), and those who follow Jesus become children of God (John 1:12–13). Once in despair, that woman left in hope—about to find an identity and purpose bigger than this world can give.

By: Sheridan Voysey

Reflect & Pray

Is there someone in despair whom you can affirm as “wonderfully made” today? With whom can you share the offer of becoming a child of God?

Father, life in all its fullness is Yours alone to give. I open my hands to accept it.

God-Paved Memories

Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me.- Deuteronomy 4:10

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Deuteronomy 4:3–10](#)

When my grown son faced a difficult situation, I reminded him about God's constant care and provision during his dad's year of unemployment. I recounted the times God strengthened our family and gave us peace while my mom fought and lost her battle with leukemia. Highlighting the stories of God's faithfulness stitched into Scripture, I affirmed He was good at keeping His word. I led my son down our family's God-paved memory lane, reminding him about the ways He remained reliable through our valley and mountaintop moments. Whether we were struggling or celebrating, God's presence, love, and grace proved sufficient.

Although I'd like to claim this faith-strengthening strategy as my own, God designed the habit of sharing stories to inspire the future generations' belief in Him. As the Israelites remembered all they'd seen God do in the past, He placed cobblestones of confidence down their divinely paved memory lanes.

The Israelites had witnessed God holding true to His promises as they followed Him (Deuteronomy 4:3–6). He'd always heard and answered their prayers (v. 7). Rejoicing and reminiscing with the younger generations (v. 9), the Israelites shared the holy words breathed and preserved by the one true God (v. 10).

As we tell of our great God's majesty, mercy, and intimate love, our convictions and the faith of others can be strengthened by the confirmation of His enduring trustworthiness.

By: Xochitl Dixon

Reflect & Pray

Who's invested in your spiritual growth by sharing what God has done in their lives? What creative ways can you share His faithfulness and love across generational lines?

Sovereign God, thank You for empowering me to walk with sure-footed faith that crosses generational lines.

Friendship Bench

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.- Exodus

33:11

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Exodus 33:9–11](#)

In the African country of Zimbabwe, war trauma and high unemployment can leave people in despair—until they find hope on a “friendship bench.” Hopeless people can go there to talk with trained “grandmothers”—elderly women taught to listen to people struggling with depression, known in that nation’s Shona language as *kufungisisa*, or “thinking too much.”

The Friendship Bench Project is being launched in other places, including Zanzibar, London, and New York City. “We were thrilled to bits with the results,” said one London researcher. A New York counselor agreed. “Before you know it, you’re not on a bench, you’re just inside a warm conversation with someone who cares.”

The project evokes the warmth and wonder of talking with our Almighty God. Moses put up not a bench but a tent to commune with God, calling it the tent of meeting. There, “the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exodus 33:11). Joshua, his assistant, wouldn’t even leave the tent, perhaps because he so valued his time with God (v. 11).

Today we no longer need a tent of meeting. Jesus has brought the Father near. As He told His disciples, “I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Yes, our God awaits us. He’s our heart’s wisest helper, our understanding Friend. Talk with Him now.

By: Patricia Raybon

Reflect & Pray

What worries consume your thoughts today? As you talk to God about these concerns, what good thoughts about Him can you focus on instead?

Dear God, thank You for encouraging our hearts with noble thoughts of You. When we’re sick with worry, point our minds back to You.

The Debt Eraser

**As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions
from us.- Psalm 103:12**

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 103:1–12

I blinked back tears as I reviewed my medical bill. Considering my husband's severe cut in salary after a lengthy unemployment, even paying half of the balance would require years of small monthly installments. I prayed before calling the doctor's office to explain our situation and request a payment plan.

After leaving me on hold for a short time, the receptionist informed me the doctor had zeroed out our account.

I sobbed a thank you. The generous gift overwhelmed me with gratitude. Hanging up the phone, I praised God. I considered saving the bill, not as a reminder of what I used to owe but as a reminder of what God had done.

My physician's choice to pardon my debt brought to mind God's choice to forgive the insurmountable debt of my sins. Scripture assures us God is "compassionate and gracious" and "abounding in love" (Psalm 103:8).

He “does not treat us as our sins deserve” (v. 10). He removes our sins “as far as the east is from the west” (v. 12), when we repent and accept Christ as our Savior. His sacrifice erases the debt we once owed. Completely.

Once forgiven, we aren’t defined by or limited by our past debt. In response to the Lord’s extravagant gift, we can acknowledge all He’s done. Offering our devoted worship and grateful affection, we can live for Him and share Him with others.

By: Xochitl Dixon

Reflect & Pray

Thank You for erasing our debt completely when we place our confidence in You, Lord.

Our greatest debt, caused by sin, is erased by our greater God.

It’s Okay to Lament

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him.- Lamentations 3:25

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Lamentations 3:19–26](#)

I dropped to my knees and let my tears fall to the floor. “God, why aren’t you taking care of me?” I cried. It was during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. I’d been laid-off for almost a month, and something had gone wrong with my unemployment application. I hadn’t received any money yet, and the stimulus check the US government had promised hadn’t arrived. Deep down, I trusted that God would work out everything. I believed He truly loved me and would take care of me, but in that moment, I felt abandoned.

The book of Lamentations reminds us it’s okay to lament. The book was likely written during or soon after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 bc. It describes the affliction (3:1, 19), oppression (1:18), and starvation (2:20; 4:10) the people faced. Yet, in the middle of the book the author remembers why he could hope: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (3:22–23). Despite the devastation, the author remembered that God remains faithful.

Sometimes it feels impossible to believe that “the Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him” (v. 25), especially when we don’t see an end to our suffering. But we can cry out to Him, trust that He hears us, and that He’ll be faithful to see us through.

By: Julie Schwab

Reflect & Pray

What's making it difficult for you to trust God today? What will help you feel comfortable enough to cry out to Him?

Father, I need You right now. Please help me to trust You to come through for me in my difficult situation.

*To learn more about suffering and the Christian faith, visit
ChristianUniversity.org/CA211.*

From Mourning to Dancing

He has sent me . . . to bestow on [those who grieve] a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning. Isaiah 61:1, 3

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Isaiah 61:1–4](#)

“We’re cutting your job.” A decade ago those words sent me reeling when the company I worked for eliminated my position. At the time, I felt shattered, partly because my identity was so intertwined with my role as editor. Recently I felt a similar sadness when I heard that my freelance job was ending. But this time I didn’t feel rocked at my

foundation, because over the years I have seen God’s faithfulness and how He can turn my mourning to joy.

Though we live in a fallen world where we experience pain and disappointment, the Lord can move us from despair to rejoicing, as we see in Isaiah’s prophecy about the coming of Jesus (Isa. 61:1–3). The Lord gives us hope when we feel hopeless; He helps us to forgive when we think we can’t; He teaches us that our identity is in Him and not in what we do. He gives us courage to face an unknown future. When we wear the rags of “ashes,” He gently gives us a coat of praise.

When we face loss, we shouldn’t run from the sadness, but neither do we want to become bitter or hardened. When we think about God’s faithfulness over the years, we know that He’s willing and able to turn our grief to dancing once again—to give us sufficient grace in this life and full joy in heaven.

By: Amy Boucher Pye

Reflect & Pray

**Father God, You turned Jesus’s pain on the cross into our best gift ever.
Deepen my faith that I may welcome Your life-changing love into my life.**

God can bring times of growth out of our times of heartache.

A Purpose in Suffering

I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.- Job 42:7

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Job 42:1–9](#)

“So what you’re saying is, it may not be my fault.” The woman’s words took me by surprise. Having been a guest speaker at her church, we were now discussing what I’d shared that morning. “I have a chronic illness,” she explained, “and I have prayed, fasted, confessed my sins, and done everything else I was told to do to be healed. But I’m still sick, so I thought I was to blame.”

I felt sad at the woman’s confession. Having been given a spiritual “formula” to fix her problem, she had blamed herself when the formula hadn’t worked. Even worse, this formulaic approach to suffering was disproved generations ago.

Simply put, this old formula says that if you’re suffering, you must have sinned. When Job tragically lost his livestock, children, and health, his friends used the formula on him. “Who, being innocent, has ever perished?” Eliphaz said, suspecting Job’s guilt (Job 4:7). Bildad even told Job that his children only died because they had sinned (8:4).

Ignorant of the real cause of Job’s calamities (1:6–2:10), they tormented him with simplistic reasons for his pain, later receiving God’s rebuke (42:7).

Suffering is a part of living in a fallen world. Like Job, it can happen for reasons we may never know. But God has a purpose for you that goes beyond the pain you endure. Don’t get discouraged by falling for simplistic formulas.

By: Sheridan Voysey

Reflect & Pray

How else do you see the “suffering = sin” formula being used? Why do you think it’s still so prevalent?

Great Physician, give me words to heal, not hurt, in times of pain.

Remembering My Father

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.-

Colossians 3:23

Today's Scripture & Insight: [Job 38:1–11](#)

When I remember my dad, I picture him best outdoors hammering or gardening or downstairs working in his cluttered workroom, stuffed with fascinating tools and gadgets. His hands were always busy at a task or project—sometimes building (a garage or a deck or a birdhouse), sometimes locksmithing, and sometimes designing jewelry and stained-glass art.

Remembering my dad prompts me to think of my heavenly Father and Creator, who has always been busy at work. In the beginning, “[God] laid the earth’s foundations . . . [and] marked off its dimensions . . . while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy” (Job 38:4–7). Everything He created was a work of art, a masterpiece. He designed a breathtakingly beautiful world and pronounced it “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

That includes you and me. God designed us in intimate and intricate detail (Psalm 139:13–16); and He entrusted us with and instilled in us (His image bearers) the goal and desire to work, which includes ruling and caring for the Earth and its creatures (Genesis 1:26–28; 2:15). No matter the work we do—in our job or in our leisure—God empowers and gives us what we need to work wholeheartedly for Him.

In everything we do, may we do it to please Him.

By: Alyson Kieda

Reflect & Pray

What has God worked out in your life recently? How does it change your view of even mundane tasks to see them as opportunities to serve and honor Him?

Dear God, thank You for equipping us to do the work You've called us to do.

A Hundred Years from Now

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth.

--Job 19:25

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 19:21–27

“I just want people to remember me a hundred years from now,” said screenwriter Rod Serling in 1975. Creator of the TV series *The Twilight Zone*, Serling wanted people to say of him, “He was a writer.” Most of us can identify with Serling’s desire to leave a legacy—something to give our lives a sense of meaning and permanence.

The story of Job shows us a man struggling with meaning amid life’s fleeting days. In a moment, not just his possessions but those most precious to him, his children, were taken. Then his friends accused him of *deserving* this fate. Job cried out: “Oh, that my words were recorded,

that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!” (Job 19:23–24).

Job’s words *have* been “engraved in rock forever.” We have them in the Bible. Yet Job needed even more meaning in his life than the legacy he’d leave behind. He discovered it in the character of God. “I know that my redeemer lives,” Job declared, “and that in the end he will stand on the earth” (19:25). This knowledge gave him the right longing. “I myself will see him,” Job said. “How my heart yearns within me!” (v. 27).

In the end, Job didn’t find what he expected. He found much more—the Source of all meaning and permanence (42:1–6).

By: Tim Gustafson

Reflect & Pray

Why do you think Job wanted his words preserved forever? How do you want people to remember you one hundred years from now?

God, everything is fleeting except for You. We praise You for Your unshakable character. Show us what is truly important.

Why Me?

Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?--Job 7:20

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 7:17–21

***The Book of Odds* says that one in a million people are struck by lightning. It also says that one in 25,000 experiences a medical condition called “broken heart syndrome” in the face of overwhelming shock or loss. In page after page the odds of experiencing specific problems pile up without answering: What if we’re the one?**

Job defied all odds. God said of him, “There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil” (Job 1:8). Yet Job was chosen to suffer a series of losses that defied all odds. Of all people on earth, Job had reason to beg for an answer. It’s all there for us to read in chapter after chapter of his desperate struggle to understand, “Why me?”

Job’s story gives us a way of responding to the mystery of unexplained pain and evil. By describing the suffering and confusion of one of God’s best examples of goodness and mercy (ch. 25), we gain an alternative to the inflexible rule of sowing and reaping (4:7–8). By providing a backstory of satanic mayhem (ch. 1) and an afterword (42:7–17) from

the God who would one day allow His Son to bear our sins, the story of Job gives us reason to live by faith rather than sight.

By: Mart DeHaan

Reflect & Pray

How do you feel about a God who sometimes allows suffering without explanation? How does the story of Job help you understand this?

God of creation, Giver of life, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, please help us to trust You more than our own eyes and hearts.

Understanding Life's Trials

To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.--Job 12:13

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 12:13–25

My friend's father received the dreaded diagnosis: cancer. Yet, during the chemo treatment process, he became a believer in Jesus and his disease eventually went into remission. He was cancer free for a wonderful eighteen months, but it returned—worse than before. He and his wife faced the reality of the returned cancer with concern and questions but also with a faithful trust in God because of how He saw them through the first time.

We won't always understand why we're going through trials. This was certainly the case for Job, who faced horrendous and unexplainable suffering and loss. Yet despite his many questions, in Job 12 he declares that God is mighty: "What he tears down cannot be rebuilt" (v. 14) and "to him belong strength and insight" (v. 16). "He makes nations great, and destroys them" (v. 23). Throughout this extensive list, Job doesn't mention God's motives or why He allows pain and suffering. Job doesn't have the answers. But still despite everything, he confidently says, "to God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his" (v. 13).

We may not understand why God allows certain struggles in our lives, but like my friend's parents, we can put our trust in Him. The Lord loves us and has us in His hands (v. 10; 1 Peter 5:7). Wisdom, power, and understanding are His!

By: Julie Schwab

Reflect & Pray

What struggle are you going through? How does it help to know that God is with you?

Lord, help me to trust You, even when I don't understand what You're doing. Thank You that You hold me in Your loving hands.

Being There

They sat on the ground with [Job] for seven days and seven nights.--Job 2:13

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 2:11–13

When Jen, a theme park employee, saw Ralph collapse in tears on the ground, she rushed to help. Ralph, a young boy with autism, was sobbing because the ride he'd waited all day to enjoy had broken down. Instead of hurrying him to his feet or simply urging him to feel better, Jen got down onto the ground *with* Ralph, validating his feelings and allowing him the time to cry.

Jen's actions are a beautiful example of how we can come alongside those who are grieving or suffering. The Bible tells of Job's crippling grief after the loss of his home, his herds (his income), his health, and the simultaneous deaths of his ten children. When Job's friends learned of his pain, they "set out from their homes . . . [to go] comfort him" (Job 2:11). Job sat on the ground in mourning. When they arrived, his friends sat down with him—for seven days—saying nothing because they saw the depth of his suffering.

In their humanness, Job's friends later offered Job insensitive advice. But for the first seven days, they gave him the wordless and tender gift of

presence. We may not understand someone's grief, but we don't need to understand in order to love them well by simply being *with* them.

By: Kirsten Holmberg

Reflect & Pray

Who has been with you in difficult times? Who needs your presence today?

God, I thank You for being with me always—in good times and bad. Help me to offer that gift of presence to those You put in my path.

To learn more about helping hurting people, visit ChristianUniversity.org/CC205.

Bigger than Our Problems

Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you.--Job 40:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 40:15–24

What do you imagine dinosaurs looked like when they were alive? Big teeth? Scaly skin? Long tails? Artist Karen Carr recreates these extinct creatures in large murals. One of her panoramas is over twenty feet tall and sixty feet long. Because of its size, it required a crew of experts to install it in sections where it resides in the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

It would be hard to stand in front of this mural without feeling dwarfed by the dinosaurs. I get a similar sensation when I read God’s description of the powerful animal called “Behemoth” (Job 40:15). This big guy munched grass like an ox and had a tail the size of a tree trunk. His bones were like iron pipes. He lumbered through the hills grazing, stopping occasionally to relax at the local swamp. When floodwaters surged, Behemoth never raised an eyebrow.

No one could tame this incredible creature—except its Maker (v. 19). God reminded Job of this truth during a time when Job’s problems had cast ominous shadows over his life. Grief, bewilderment, and frustration filled his field of vision until he began to question God. But God’s response helped Job see the real size of things. God was bigger than all his issues and powerful enough to handle problems that Job couldn’t resolve on his own. In the end, Job conceded, “I know that you can do all things” (42:2).

By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Reflect & Pray

Which is bigger, your worst problem or the God who made everything? How does your view of God affect the way in which you handle problems?

Dear God, I believe You can help me with the things I’m facing today. Help me to be open to Your power and goodness when I feel overwhelmed by trouble.

When We Don't Understand

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.--Job 2:10

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 2:7–10

“I don’t understand His plan. I turned my whole life over to Him. And this happens!” Such was the message of a son to his mother when his dream to succeed as a professional athlete was temporarily derailed. Who among us hasn’t had some kind of unexpected, disappointing experience that sends our minds into overdrive with exclamations and questions? A family member cuts off communication without explanation; health gains are reversed; a company relocates unexpectedly; a life-altering accident happens.

Job 1–2 records a series of tragedies and setbacks in Job’s life. Humanly speaking, if there was anyone who qualified for a life free from trouble, it was Job. “This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1). But life doesn’t always work out the way we’d like it to—it didn’t for Job, and it doesn’t for us. When his wife counseled him to “curse God and die!” (2:9), Job’s words to her were wise, instructive, and fitting for us as well when things happen—big or small—that we’d rather not face. “ ‘Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ In all this, Job did not sin in what he said” (v. 10).

By God's strength, may our trust in and reverence for Him remain, even when we can't understand how He's at work during life's difficult days.

By: Arthur Jackson

Reflect & Pray

When has your faith in God been tested? What has He used during tough circumstances to help your reverence for Him to remain intact?

Father, help me to trust You and honor You when I can't see Your hand or understand Your plan.

How Did I Get Here?

Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?--Job 2:10

Today's Scripture & Insight: Job 2:1–10

Tiffani awoke in the pitch-black darkness of an Air Canada jet. Still wearing her seat belt, she'd slept while the other passengers exited and the plane was parked. *Why didn't anyone wake her? How did she get here?* She shook the cobwebs from her brain and tried to remember.

Have you found yourself in a place you never expected? You're too young to have this disease, and there's no cure. Your last review was

excellent; why is your position being eliminated? You were enjoying the best years of your marriage. Now you're starting over, as a single parent with a part-time job.

How did I get here? Job may have wondered as “he sat among the ashes” (Job 2:8). He’d lost his children, his wealth, and his health, in no time flat. He couldn’t have guessed how he got here; he just knew he had to remember.

Job remembered his Creator and how good He’d been. He told his wife, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (v. 10). Job remembered he could count on this good God to be faithful. So he lamented. He screamed at the heavens. And he mourned in hope, “I know that my redeemer lives,” and that “in my flesh I will see God” (19:25–26). Job clung to hope as he remembered how the story began and how it ends.

By: Mike Wittmer

Reflect & Pray

What situation fills you with agony and dread? How might you regain your bearings and live with hope and joy?

Father, You're not surprised by what surprises me. You were good before, and You remain good now.

To learn more about the book of Job and its message, visit bit.ly/337DURd.

