

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 62 OF 104

The Lower Place

Week 62 of 104 • 60% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Job 31-37
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 71-72
Gospels	Luke 10
General New Testament	Philippians 2

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Greatness in the Bible almost always moves downward. This week an old man named Job holds up his whole life and asks God to weigh it, and the thing he is proudest of is that he never let a widow leave his gate empty. A young man named Elihu talks for six chapters about a God too great to argue with. One psalm belongs to a man with gray hair who has leaned on God since he was born, and the next asks God for a king who will break the oppressor and lift the poor out of the dust. Then a Samaritan climbs down into a ditch, a sister sits down at the Lord's feet, and Paul says the mind you need is the mind of the One who came all the way down to a cross.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT Job 31-37

Job's Last Word, Elihu's First

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Job closes his defense with a solemn oath, running through sin after sin he has not committed: lust, dishonesty, cruelty to servants, neglect of the poor, confidence in money, secret idolatry, satisfaction at an enemy's ruin. Then the text says simply that the words of Job are ended. A new voice breaks in. Elihu, young and angry at everyone, argues for six chapters that God is speaking through suffering itself, and closes with a storm building on the horizon.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Job 31 is a list of sins Job says he never committed. Read through it and describe the kind of man it portrays, then talk about which of those standards would be hardest to keep in your own week.
2. Elihu claims that God speaks to men in dreams, in pain, and through a messenger (Job 33:14-30). Where is his argument genuinely better than what the three friends said, and where does he still assume too much about Job?

3. Job ties his integrity to how he treated servants, widows, and the fatherless (31:13–23). If that were the measure applied to our congregation this year, how would we come out?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the pattern of “if I have done this, then let that happen to me” through Job 31 and list at least eight sins Job denies. What kind of righteousness is he describing, centuries before the Law of Moses was given?
2. Job 31:1 says he made a covenant with his eyes. Read Matthew 5:27–30, then write down what such a covenant would actually require of you on an ordinary Tuesday.
3. List the main claims Elihu makes about God in chapters 32 through 37. Mark the ones God Himself will take up out of the whirlwind in chapters 38 through 41.
4. Read Job 33:23–28 and note what Elihu says a mediator does for a man. Compare 1 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 7:25, and describe what Job was reaching for without knowing His name.
5. Job 31:16–22 measures a man by the widow and the orphan at his gate. Name one person at your gate, and do this week the specific thing you have been putting off.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 71–72

Gray Hairs and a Coming King

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Psalm 71 is the prayer of a man who has grown old. He has leaned on God since birth, and now that his strength is failing he asks not to be cast off, and he keeps promising to tell the next generation what God has done. Psalm 72 is a prayer for the king: that he judge the poor rightly, break the oppressor, and be remembered as long as the sun endures. The book closes with a note that the prayers of David are ended.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 71 keeps circling back to a lifetime of trust, from the womb to old age. What does a life like that do to a person, and what does our congregation lose when older members stop telling their stories?
2. Psalm 72 asks God for a king who defends the needy and crushes the oppressor. Hold our usual picture of greatness up against that standard and talk about the difference.

3. The old man in 71:18 will not let go until he has declared God's strength to the next generation. Who is your next generation, and what are they currently learning from watching you?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List every image Psalm 71 uses for God: rock, fortress, refuge, and the rest. Which of them fits where you are standing this month?
2. Psalm 71:9 and 71:18 both plead with God not to forsake a man in old age. Read Isaiah 46:4 alongside them and write down how God answers that fear.
3. Work slowly through Psalm 72 and write down everything the ideal king does for the poor, the needy, and the oppressed. Then read Luke 4:18–19 and compare the two lists.
4. Psalm 72:17 echoes the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 22:18. Trace how Solomon's prayer reaches past Solomon, and note where Galatians 3:16 and Acts 3:25–26 say that promise landed.
5. Psalm 71:14–16 shows a man who keeps talking about God while he still hurts. Pick one person this week and tell them one specific thing God has done for you.

GOSPELS Luke 10

Sent Out and Bent Down

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus appoints seventy others and sends them ahead of Him two by two, with instructions about houses, towns, and the towns that will not receive them. They come back thrilled that even the demons submit, and He tells them to rejoice about something else. Then a lawyer asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus answers with a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan on the Jericho road. The chapter ends in a house in Bethany, with one sister cooking and one sister listening.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The seventy come back excited about power over demons, and Jesus redirects their joy in 10:20. Why does that redirection matter so much, and where do we make the same mistake about what is worth celebrating?
2. The lawyer asks who his neighbor is, and Jesus ends by asking which man acted like a neighbor (10:29, 36). Talk about what that reversal does to the question, and what answering it cost the Samaritan.

3. Jesus says Mary has chosen the good part, and Martha is doing genuinely useful work. How does a busy Christian serve without becoming Martha, and what would “one thing is needed” look like in a week like yours?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the instructions Jesus gives the seventy in 10:1–12. Which belong to that limited mission, and which still describe how the gospel goes out today?
2. In 10:18 Jesus says He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Read the verse in the flow of the seventy’s report and explain what He is describing, without importing anything from elsewhere.
3. Count the separate actions the Samaritan takes in 10:33–35. How many are there, what does each cost him, and which one would you have skipped?
4. Compare the lawyer’s question in 10:25 with the question asked in Acts 2:37 and Peter’s answer in Acts 2:38. Why does Jesus answer this man the way He does instead of giving him terms of pardon?
5. Name the person whose need you have most successfully managed not to notice, and put the inconvenience on your calendar before Sunday.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT **Philippians 2**

The Mind That Came Down

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul asks the Philippians to complete his joy by being of one mind, doing nothing out of selfish ambition, each counting others better than himself. Then he gives the reason, in lines that may have been an early hymn: Christ, existing in the form of God, emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and obeyed all the way to death on a cross, and God highly exalted Him. The chapter closes with two living examples, Timothy who genuinely cares, and Epaphroditus who nearly died for the work.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Philippians 2:6–8 traces a descent and 2:9–11 an ascent. Walk through the steps out loud, then talk about why Paul offers all of this as an argument for how church members should treat each other.

2. Verse 12 tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and verse 13 says God is at work in us. How do those two sentences fit together without either one canceling the other?
3. Paul says Epaphroditus risked his life to supply what was lacking in their service (2:25–30). Who is doing that kind of quiet work among us, and what would it take for the rest of us to notice?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the four things Paul asks for in 2:1–4 and the steps of Christ’s humbling in 2:6–8, then show where the two lists line up.
2. Paul says Christ was in the form of God and took the form of a servant. Read John 1:1–14 and Colossians 2:9, then write down what He laid aside and what He could not lay aside.
3. Read Isaiah 45:22–23 alongside Philippians 2:10–11, and state plainly what Paul is claiming about Jesus by applying those words to Him.
4. Trace the word “mind” through 2:2, 2:5, and the description of Timothy in 2:20–21. Whose mind are we told to have, and what is the practical evidence that someone has it?
5. Name one person you have been quietly competing with, and do something this week that benefits only them and costs only you.

NEXT WEEK’S READING: Job 38–42 • Psalm 73 • Luke 11:1–32 • Philippians 3–4

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