

JOB—SONG OF SOLOMON

Morning
Conversations

on the Wisdom of the Ages

Days 437–679 of your
devotional journey through
the Old Testament with

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Dedication

This volume is dedicated to my lifelong friend, Chaplain Colonel Stan Campbell, whose love of both music and the mystery of the faith, has inspired me, challenged me, and taught me for the past 40 years. I am a better man because of his example and presence in my life.

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Preface

Welcome to Volume 3 of a 5-Volume collection of devotional thoughts drawn from each chapter of the Bible. *Morning Conversations on The Wisdom of the Ages* takes the reader through all five books of wisdom literature. Once again, I invite you to join with me in a fresh devotional read through the pages of the Old Testament text. My goal in writing is not to exhaustively interpret, translate, or provide full commentary on every chapter of the Old Testament, but to help you engage with the text and perhaps draw some meaningful application for each day. I have discovered a number of fascinating ways the truth of God's Word leaps off the page and into my heart. It is my hope that some of my reflections will help you with your discovery of scripture and the role of faith in your life. I use the word "Conversations" with great intentionality. I think Bible study should happen that way. God is revealed to us through stories of our faith, and then we reflect and offer back to God the thoughts of our hearts. It is a conversation... a back-and-forth dialogue. Conversations invite us to ponder, reflect, inquire, learn, and grow.

As you read through these volumes, my hope is that you will take the time, not to simply read what I have written, but to reflect with me on what the ancients have written. Let me challenge you each morning to take a moment to read the suggested focus chapter from a trusted translation before you dive into the words I have written. Read and reflect. As you make your way through this book, and the other volumes in the set, you will discover a lot of my life story written into these pages. But more importantly, I hope you will discover a lot about God's story... the one carefully crafted and preserved for you. For in hearing God's story, you will hear the echoing refrain of God's desire to know you, to love you, and to redeem you. Welcome to the conversation.

Morning Conversations Volumes 1-5

Morning Conversations on the Creation of a People and Place is the first volume of a set that follows the natural order of the Old Testament canon, and spans the Biblical narrative from the opening chapter of Genesis to the end of the book of Ruth.

Morning Conversations on the Rise and Fall of Kings and Kingdoms continues the orderly progression, spanning the books of 1 Samuel through Esther.

Morning Conversations on the Wisdom of the Ages covers all five books of wisdom literature from Job to the Song of Solomon.

Morning Conversations on the Prophetic Word wraps up the Old Testament with a look at the books of prophecy, covering both the Major and Minor prophets, Isaiah through Malachi.

Additionally, *Morning Conversations on the New Testament* is the final volume of this collection which offers perspective from each chapter of the New Testament.

“In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.” Job 1:22 (NLT)

Observation

Job lived in the land of Uz. He was described as blameless, a man of “complete integrity.” He feared God and stayed away from evil. His life was very blessed. He had seven sons and three daughters, as well as large numbers of sheep, camels, oxen, donkeys, and servants. His children customarily gathered to feast at the home of one of his sons. Focused on righteousness, Job would make a sacrifice the morning after such a celebration on behalf of his children, just in case they had sinned. This opening chapter describes a scene in heaven where the heavenly court gathers to meet with God. Satan joins the group and he and God discuss Job’s righteousness. Satan argues that it is only because of Job’s blessings that he loves God to the extent that he does. The lie goes like this, “Take away the blessings and he will curse you to your face.” God allows Job to be tested. In a single day, all that Job loves is lost. His servants are killed, his livestock are all destroyed or stolen, and worst of all, all his children die when a windstorm blows down the house in which they were gathered. And yet... Job refuses to curse God. The account records that on this terrible day he did two things. First, he grieved over his loss, and then he worshipped his God.

Application

We all have good days and bad days. How we respond to both are indicative of our faith. When we experience a day that brings untold blessings, answered prayers, safety, and security, surely as people of faith, we take moments to acknowledge the gracious God who has given us all things. Failure to praise God is an abuse of God’s grace. But what about the bad days? Hopefully, none of us will experience a day like the one that Job experienced. Hopefully, our valleys will not be as deep, nor our grief so devastatingly poignant. But difficult days will be a part of our life experience. None of us are immune. Dark days might include loss, but could also include the pain of brokenness, the anxiety of job loss, the fear of financial instability, or the onslaught of a medical problem. How we respond can be a test of our faith, and maybe even a testimony to the resiliency of our relationship with God. Look at Job’s example. He took the time to grieve. He acknowledged his loss, he felt the sting of the moment, he surely offered a gut-wrenching cry as he tore his clothes as a sign of mourning. But then he worshipped. He acknowledged that even in such darkness, that God was with him and worthy to be praised. I pray that you will know more joy than sorrow this day. Most of all, I hope you will know God.

Prayer

Father, may we feel your presence in both the good and difficult days of life. Amen.