

REDLINED • Week 4: Control

Daily Briefing • Day 3 of 5 • Info You Lack

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5–6

This is the third briefing of the week. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would help me to operate in humility and trust. I pray that I would accept and understand that there is so much I do not know about how You administer and organize this universe. I pray that I would also trust that You are loving and that You are good, and that I can trust You with the things I do not know. Help me with trust and humility. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Sunday asked four questions about the relationship between control and peace, and the second one was about resources (defined broadly). Does your peace depend on data, time, money, or power that you do not have? Today sits on the first word in that list: data. Most of what you are trying to control would require information you are never going to get, and there is no amount of effort that produces it.

You read a text message and decide what your sister meant by it. You watch your son make one decision and run the next ten years of his life in your head. You read the news and calculate what it does to your retirement. In every one of those you are working with a sliver of the information and reaching conclusions as though you had all of it. Then you make decisions, and push people, and lose sleep, by filling in data gaps with guesses.

Job is an Old Testament book about a man who loses nearly everything in a matter of days. His livestock are stolen, his servants are killed, his ten children die in a single accident, and his health goes shortly after. The book says up front that this is not punishment for anything. Job is introduced as a man who was “blameless and upright,” who feared God and turned away from evil.

Here is the part that matters for today. Chapters one and two let the reader watch a conversation about Job in the unseen spiritual realm, and Job is totally oblivious to it. Nobody ever tells him it happened. For the next thirty-five chapters he argues with his friends and demands that God explain Himself, and the whole time the reader knows something Job does not. He is reasoning about his own life with a piece missing, and he has no idea the piece is missing.

Most of us will never stand up and challenge God to His face the way Job did. We do something quieter. We decide we know enough to run the situation ourselves, we work the people around us toward the outcome we have picked, and then we get angry at God when it does not come together the way we envisioned. The difference between Job and us is that Job said it out loud, while we say it through silent actions.

After thirty-seven chapters of argument, God finally answers Job directly, which is where our two passages for the day pick up.

READ & MEDITATE

Job 38:1–4

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.”

Job 42:1–3

Then Job answered the LORD and said: ² “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”

Read both passages before answering anything. The second passage is Job’s response to God’s question in the first passage.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Job had spent most of the book demanding that God explain why the extraordinary loss happened to him.

Look at Job 38:1–4. What does God give Job instead of giving him an explanation?

God never tells Job why. He asks Job a question about Job’s limited understanding, which is a different thing altogether.

What do these verses tell you about the difference between God’s vantage point and dataset versus Job’s vantage point and dataset?

Fill in the blank from Job 42:3:

Therefore I have uttered what I did not _____, things too wonderful for me, which I did not _____.*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Day 1 had David saying nearly the same thing in Psalm 131, that he does not occupy himself with things too great and too marvelous for him. Two men, centuries apart, landing on the same admission.

Now put your own situation next to Job’s.

Name one thing you are trying to manage right now. What would you have to know in order to manage it (read: CONTROL IT) well, and what of that required information can you actually find out?

This week's memory verse says not to lean on your own understanding, and today is the reason why.

What would it look like this week to hand that situation to the One who has the information you are missing?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Name the thing you have been trying to figure out, and tell God plainly that you do not have what you would need to figure it out.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Proverbs 3:5–6 from memory:
