

# When Everything is Hard

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as

STEP 1

**Lesson 9****Focus:**

Faith in God can get us through bad times.

**Lesson 9****Bible Basis:**

Job 40:1-8;  
42:1-6, 10, 12

**Lesson 9****Memory Verse:**

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted." —Job 42:2

**Students will be reminded that no matter what hard circumstances they may find themselves in, God is present with them.**

**Materials:**

None

In the past couple of years, it feels like bad things have been striking fast and furious. COVID-19 continues to affect people's lives, health, and finances. Many schools and churches still can't meet in person, leaving lots of people feeling isolated. Racial tension has shed light on hate, violence, and fear happening around the country. A contentious political climate often divides people, rather than uniting them.

Each one of these influences has affected people. They've caused illness, fear, unemployment, violence, and broken relationships. For many people, 2020 felt like the most difficult year yet. And 2021 hasn't seen much improvement.

➤ **What was the most difficult part of these years for you?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Encourage teens to be vulnerable without taking a political slant or blaming specific people for why their circumstances are hard.)

➤ **In the middle of hard situations, what's the biggest question you would have for God?** (Some of your teens may suggest questions that seem irreverent or angry, but that's okay—so did the psalmists.)

You've probably been affected in some way by the hard circumstances of 2020. There are times when all of us feel helpless and afraid. Maybe that's been true of your life recently—maybe even today. In terrible circumstances, we have big questions for God: "Why did you let this happen? And why did it happen to *me*? Why don't you stop evil things from striking Christians?"

The bad news is that there are no easy answers to those questions. The good news is that since people of faith have been asking them for thousands of years, we can learn from their experiences with the Lord. Let's return to Job's story in the Old Testament for some insights.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

# When Everything is Hard

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

**Lesson 9****Focus:**

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**Lesson 9****Bible Basis:**

Job 40:1-8;  
42:1-6, 10, 12

**Lesson 9****Memory Verse:**

I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. —Job 42:2

**Materials:**

- Index cards (1 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, have teens come to class with index cards and pens/pencils.

**All of us feel kind of like Job sometimes: We're in the middle of a hard time, helpless and afraid. We might be frustrated if God doesn't provide answers to our big questions. Instead, in those instances, He provides something better: Himself. We can trust God to be present in our hardship, working things out for an end result of good that we can't see right now.**

**If you're living through a hard time, I realize that sounds like a flimsy thing to hang your hope on. "I need answers and help," you say. "Empty words about how God is there for me don't mean a lot right now!"**

**But wait—are the words "God is present" empty? Or are they the most meaningful words ever spoken? If you withhold your faith until after you've seen a miracle or heard His answer, you will have a long wait. Belief in God is a risk. Faith comes first.**

➤ **Can anyone share a short story about a time when you worked to have faith that God was there in the middle of a hard time, and He came through for you in the end?** (Begin by sharing your own brief narrative. Be sure that students keep their stories short and on topic.)

Hand out index cards and pens/pencils to your teens. If your class is meeting online, invite teens to have their cards and pens/pencils ready.

**On your index card, write a hard thing that's happening in your life right now. Regardless of how big or small it may seem, it's real—and it matters to God. Now, draw a cross right next to the hard thing as a symbol that God is always present.**

Encourage your students to put their cards in their Bibles or somewhere they'll see it as a reminder that God is present with them, even in their hard times.

To close your time together, have students form small groups of two or three to pray for each other. They may share about what they wrote on their cards or may pray for each other's hard times in a more generic fashion to maintain privacy.

If your class is meeting online, you can use a breakout room feature on your video software.

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