

Teaching Moments:
The Wonders of God's Animal Kingdom
Job 38:39 – 40:5

As long as you have a parent, their questions to you never cease, do they? Those relentless rhetorical questions keep coming back to haunt you. "Didn't I tell you?" "Don't you remember when I said?" Those rhetorical questions translate into a short declarative sentence. "I told you so." The "I told you so" is another teaching moment for your parents and another learning moment for you.

After returning to my parents' home one frigid winter with my wife and children, I went to start the car and load our luggage for our trip back to our home. There was only one problem. The car wouldn't turn over, wouldn't growl, wouldn't start. Coming into my dad's house, he asked me about the car. All the while he'd been watching from the front door, his usual perch. I explained that the car wouldn't start. Being a mechanic, he put his coat on and out the door we went.

"Pop the hood," he commanded. He didn't ask. "Turn it over," he firmly said. No sound, no click. Nothing. Getting out I went around to watch him peer under the hood. Battery connection looked good. He pattered here and there and then came to the radiator. Unscrewing the cap, he lifted it to reveal a frozen radiator. Immediately, I knew I was in for some fast and furious questions.

"When's the last time you checked this radiator? Didn't I tell you to keep an eye on the antifreeze? Now what are you going to do?" Then silence. Deep and heavy silence. Long silence. The kind of silence you cannot escape. Doom surrounded me.

I am so thankful for his quick thinking. We pulled the car into a friend's heated shop and left it there for a few days while the engine thawed. Thank the good Lord, nothing was damaged. Some would say that I was lucky. On the contrary, I was blessed.

Those nagging questions that come at you by someone that knows more than you are like bee stings. They hurt and the longer you think about the questions, the longer they continue to hurt. Your silence only shouts out "goof ball."

Not finished with Job, God stopped asking Job about the inanimate creation: the foundations of the earth, the sea, the rising of the sun, the underworld, light and darkness, storms, stars and clouds ([38:4-38](#)), and began to ask Job questions from other fields related to creation. It was time for a test delving into the fields of biology, zoology and ornithology. Job was about to receive a real education, an education that he did not expect. This was another teaching moment for God and a learning experience for Job.

The Animal Kingdom ([38:39 – 39:30](#))

God's relentless questions covered the

- Provisions for lions and ravens ([38:39-41](#)),

As iron sharpens iron,
so a person sharpens his friends,
-- Solomon

- Reproduction of mountain goats ([39:1-4](#)),
- Habitat of the wild donkey ([39:5-8](#)),
- Strength of the wild ox ([39:9-12](#)),
- Foolishness of the powerful ostrich ([39:13-18](#)),
- Power of the fearless warhorse ([39:19-25](#)), and
- Home, flight and feeding habits of the hawk and eagle ([39:26-30](#)).

In most of the seven illustrations God begins by questioning Job and then provides some commentary on the subject. Using a single question like a frame, God starts and ends his animal discussion by talking about providing food for the animals ([38:39](#); [39:30](#)). He begins and ends this section by saying to Job, “You have no idea.”

Did God randomly choose these animals? All the animals, except the warhorse, live wildly without any thought of living under man’s thumb. Even the warhorse, at the sound of the trumpet, is on the brink of frenzy. Hearing the trumpet, he is already charging for the battle line. “It paws the ground fiercely and rushes forward into battle when the ram’s horn blows. It snorts at the sound of the horn. It senses the battle in the distance. It quivers at the captain’s commands and the noise of battle” (Job 39:24-25 NLT).

Throughout this time of questioning, Job fell silent. He could not answer any of the questions. Having not even existed at the time God designed and created all these animals, Job did not have the slightest idea about an answer for any of the fifteen questions. This was not a multiple choice or true/false examine. He couldn’t randomly guess at the answers. This was an oral exam where the professor had his gradebook open and his pen poised to judge Job’s success or failure.

Job’s First Response (40:1-5)

Job remained silent until God asked the sixteenth question, the ultimate question, the question that touched the heart of all the questions before Job. “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?” (cf [27:2](#)). The Almighty meets Job’s demands by questioning Job as the Almighty. How many times had Job demanded to speak with the Almighty about his circumstances ([13:3](#))? After all, it was Job’s contention that the Almighty had brought all this calamity upon him while Job was innocent of any sin ([27:13](#)). If Job could meet the Almighty in a court of law then the two of them could come to an understanding ([31:35](#)). If only the Almighty would come down and speak to Job as a man spoke to a man, then Job would find relief. Neither of the two scenes would take place.

Who can summon the Almighty to a court? Who dares to speak to the Almighty as a man speaks to another man? Unexpectedly the Almighty appeared on the scene in [38:1](#) with more questions than Job could answer. While the Almighty spoke Job kept silent. What became of Job?

In an act of contrition, Job placed his hand over his mouth ([40:4](#)). Putting your hand over your mouth was like saying, “I was wrong.” “I’ve already said too much.” Could it be Job thought back to his earlier words when he spoke about the princes of his city. “The princes refrained from talking and laid their hand on their mouth” (29:9). Keeping the

earlier scene before his mind's eye, did he say, "I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further" (40:5)?

Are You Like the Warhorse?

Have you ever "run off at the mouth" in the presence of the Almighty? I must confess I have spoken without thinking in His presence. Pondering my shortfall, I have found I am not the only person who has done so.

Transformed on a high mountain in Galilee following His work with His disciples in the region of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus appears with Moses and Elijah in the presence of Peter, James and John. The three, overcome with heavy sleep, awake to see Jesus transfigured before their eyes ([Luke 9:32](#)). Peter should have followed Job's lead but did not. Instead, in amazement, he blurts out, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" ([Matthew 17:4](#)). Notice the next sentence ([17:5](#)). "He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.'" After declaring Christ to be His Son, God only makes one command. "Listen to Him."

Overcome with amazement or distress, sometimes our mouth overrides our brain. Without thinking before we speak, our tongue begins to move. We are like the warhorse. Upon hearing the trumpet sound, we rush into the battle with no thought as to what we are saying. Running wildly, our mouth says more than it ought to say.

As children, we sang a song in Sunday school, a song with many verses. One verse went like this. "Oh, be careful little mouth what you say. Oh, be careful little mouth what you say. For the Father up above is looking down in love. Oh, be careful little mouth what you say."

Rightly do the Scriptures teach us.

"When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent" (Proverbs 10:19).

"Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding" (17:27).

"Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble" (21:23).

"A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back" (29:11).

Yes dad. You did teach me to think before I speak. I remember. No need to ask another question.