

Introduction

- Nobody likes looking at somebody else's pain=
- **Question:** What should I do when someone in my life is suffering?

Job's Wife

Job 2 ⁷ So Satan left the Lord's presence and infected Job with terrible boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself while he sat among the ashes. ⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" ¹⁰ "You speak as a foolish woman speaks," he told her. "Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?" Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said.

Job's Friends

Job 2 ¹¹ Now when Job's three friends—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite—heard about all this adversity that had happened to him, each of them came from his home. [**several months, 7:3**] They met together to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. ¹² When they looked from a distance, they could barely recognize him. They wept aloud, and each man tore his robe and threw dust into the air and on his head. ¹³ Then they sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, but no one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very intense.

1. Eliphaz is the ringleader
2. Wisdom from the east

Excursus: The Silence of the Friends

Christopher Ash While their silence may initially have been appropriate, it seems unlikely that it continued so. To sit quietly with a sufferer, to hold his or her hand, to listen patiently as he or she pours out his or her grief is one thing. But this silence is "hugely extended." To refuse to speak a word to a sufferer for seven days and seven nights is eerie and not comforting...It is as if they call for the hearse and sit by Job with the coffin open and ready for him. There is no point talking to a corpse; one just weeps by it. To them Job is no longer a living person.

Job is Not Impressed

- **Job 16** ² "I have heard many things like these. You are all miserable comforters. ³ Is there no end to your empty [windy] words? What provokes you that you continue testifying? ⁴ If you were in my place I could also talk like you. I could string words together against you and shake my head at you. ⁵ Instead, I would encourage you with my mouth, and the consolation from my lips would bring relief."
- **Job 12** Then Job answered: ² "No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!"

- **Job 19** ² “How long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words? ³ These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me?”

What They Get Wrong

1. Job’s Wife | **Alleviation**
2. Job’s Friends | **Explanation**
3. **Tim Keller** Alvin Plantinga himself wrote: “I must say that most attempts to explain why God permits evil—theodicies, as we may call them—strike me as tepid, shallow and ultimately frivolous.” And we can add to these warnings the book of Job itself. Surely one of the messages, as we will see, is that it is both futile and inappropriate to assume that any human mind could comprehend all the reasons God might have for any instance of pain and sorrow, let alone for all evil. It may be that the Bible itself warns us not to try to construct these theories.

The Comfort of Christ

Isaiah 53 (NLT) ³ We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

1. Jesus did not run away from the pain
2. Jesus trusted his Father in the “why”

We Can Comfort Others

2 Corinthians 1 ⁴ He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

Practical Application | Do

1. Pray
2. Engage
3. Speak love
4. Offer help

Practical Application | Do Not

1. Solve
2. Offer false hope
3. Cliche
4. Encourage sin