

The Problem with Pain

A Brief Look at Job: Section 2

Introduction

Nobody would deny that friends and family members can be a real asset and comfort when we're going through tough times. It does happen, though, that well-intentioned people, even family members, can actually make matters worse and our suffering more pronounced. Can you think of some examples of when this might be true or some times you've found it to be true in your own life?

Read Job 2:11-13

1. Agree or Disagree? When someone we know and love is suffering, the best thing we can do is to just sit with them in silence.

Read Job 3:1-2, 11-26

2. You'll remember that last week Job impressed us with his beautiful confess of faith in the Lord, despite several crushing losses. Now Job is talking a little bit differently. Can you think of some possible reasons for that?

3. A/D: Christians long for death. Explain your answer.

Read Job 4:1-9

4. Eliphaz is the first friend to speak to Job. Summarize what he said.

5. Based upon the words, advice and viewpoint of Eliphaz....does he makes things better or worse? Would you consider him a good friend to have?

Read Job 6:1-4, 8-10, 24-30

6. What are some of the things that Job is asking for in these verses?

Read Job 8:1-7, 20-22

7. Bildad, another 'friend' of Job, begins his discourse and gives Job even worse advice. What are some things Bildad says which we would not want to repeat to our suffering friends?

Read Job 11:1-6, 13-20

8. After hearing from Job's three friends, we can probably boil down their advice and viewpoints to this: *God will bless you if you do good, but He will curse you if you do bad.*

Questions concerning this viewpoint, which is still very much alive today:

- a. What are some major problems with the friends' understanding of God?
- b. What are some possible reasons Job's three friends are arguing for their worldview so strongly?

Read the following sections from Job.

Job 10:8-12

⁸ "Your hands shaped me and made me.
Will you now turn and destroy me?
⁹ Remember that you molded me like clay.
Will you now turn me to dust again?
¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese,
¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh
and knit me together with bones and sinews?
¹² You gave me life and showed me kindness,
and in your providence watched over my spirit.

Job 12:13-16

¹³ "To God belong wisdom and power;
counsel and understanding are his.
¹⁴ What he tears down cannot be rebuilt;
those he imprisons cannot be released.
¹⁵ If he holds back the waters, there is drought;
if he lets them loose, they devastate the land.
¹⁶ To him belong strength and insight;
both deceived and deceiver are his.

Job 16:19-21

¹⁹ Even now my witness is in heaven;
my advocate is on high.
²⁰ My intercessor is my friend
as my eyes pour out tears to God;
²¹ on behalf of a man he pleads with God
as one pleads for a friend.

Job 19:25-27

²⁵ I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
²⁷ I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

9. Despite the poor advice from his friends, Job ultimately relied on what he knew about God. Can you pick out some truths from these verses which might be worth mentioning to a suffering Christian?

10. The next time one of my friends is suffering I'm going to _____.