

## Job Part 2 - Job's Friends or What Not to Do When someone is Suffering

Job 2:11-37:24

Reading: Job 16

### What to Say to Someone who is Suffering



*<sup>3:11</sup> When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. <sup>12</sup> When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. <sup>13</sup> Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.*

The answer to this question is nothing.

Or at least very little.

Just be with a person who is suffering.

Solidarity in suffering and yet there is an aloneness.

It is that Aloneness that you are helping them to fend off.

Job's friends were doing fine.



### What NOT to Say to Someone Who is Suffering



Job then begins to speak and what comes out of his mouth is plenty disturbing.

Read Job Chapter 3.

What he says makes his friends uncomfortable.

He basically wishes he never existed.

Shocking images of being stillborn and cursing.

He wants to die.

Borderline suicidal.

He has finally broken his silence.

How would we react?



People in Pain make us uncomfortable.

We try to solve their problem, ease their pain, but sometimes, there is nothing to do.

Job has lost not just his fortune but his children.

There is no way to fix this.

What do you say to someone in agony?

We do well to just be with them but sometimes people start saying disturbing things.

Mean things, angry things, weird things.

It makes us even more uncomfortable.

And so we start doing what Job's friends do.

They start correcting him.

This starts saying things that make themselves feel better.

This berating and lecturing of Job goes back and forth from chapters 3-37.

Spiritualizing, theologizing.

Your children must have done something wrong.

You must have done something wrong.

God only punishes the wicked.

God disciplines those whom he loves.

Even if it is true it doesn't help!

Do you really think God needs a defence?  
And do you really think Job doesn't know?

One of the saddest things I have ever seen:  
Someone blaming a relative with mental health issues for their own problems.

Saying that they were faking it.

Even that they deserved their suffering.

But then the reality was this.

The person who was angry was themselves suffering.

They did not know how to deal with the suffering of their relative.

They did not know how to deal with themselves.

So here are 3 ways we deal with suffering well.

Presence - yes.

What to say or not say.

Lament.

### **What Not to Say... Tips & What to Say or Do**

<http://www.lifehack.org/350702/10-things-you-should-not-say-grieving-person>



Group Activity

### **The Place of Lament**



The Book of Job creates a space for lament.

Lament is the ability and fortitude to survive, hope and thrive.

It is not about avoiding pain.

It is about being able to live within and through it.

“Cry if you Want To” by Casey Scott performed by The Holly Cole Trio  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwm-Evm-F7o>)

Lament is the ability to enter and converse about pain in beautiful ways.  
Many beautiful poems, books, stories, songs, movies are unflinching laments.  
Because pain is real in our lives.  
But so is hope.



If there is anyone who can handle our anger, frustration, sorrow, and pain,  
It is God.