

How Not To Comfort

Series, Job, #3
Job 2:10-11; chapters 4 – 37
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Theme: **A faulty focus leads to faulty counsel**

Off to a good start

1. Job's friends took the initiative to come. (2:11)

2. Job's friends initially sympathized with him and showed respect and restraint. (2:12-13)

All went downhill from there

1. The flow of chapters 4 – 37.

2. Some salient samples of the downward flow.
(4:3-11; 5:8-27; 8:2-7; 11:2-6, 14-20; 15:1-6; 18:2-4; 20:1-7, 26-29; 22:5-11, 21-27; 32:2-5; 33:3, 33; 34:7-12, 35-37; 35:16)

Why, how did this happen?

1. Job's friends lost sight of their mission to sympathize and comfort.
(for example, 4:5; 8:2-7; 11:2-6, etc.)

2. Job's friends were prisoners of their own false assumptions, their own erroneous theology. (4:8-9, 12-21; 8:8-10; 15:7-10, 17-18; 32:5)

3. Job's friends were caught up in self-righteous pride.
(for example, 4:8-10; 5:17-27; 8:3-7; 11:4-6, 13-15; 15:17; 20:2-3; 32:11, 17-22, etc.)

In My Life This Week

As you use this daily guide, write out your observations
and responses on a separate piece of paper and
save them with this sheet for reference.

Monday. Job's friends *did* get off to a good start. Read 2:11-13, and check any notes you made yesterday. Do you take the initiative to reach out to others who are in distress, lonely, ill, hurting? When you do reach out or respond, do you follow their initial example of sympathizing, showing restraint and respect … listening?

Tuesday. After a good start, it went downhill quickly for Job's friends as comforters. One of the reasons we cited on Sunday was that they lost sight of their mission to sympathize (check the references and any notes you made). It is easy to feel we have to say something, or that we have to fix the problem, come up with *the* answer, or point out problems. To comfort and encourage doesn't require those things.

Wednesday. A second problem for Job's friends was that they were prisoners of their own thinking—thinking that was mechanistic, legalistic and, above all, did not line up with God's truth. God's truth is not relative ("it is all up to you, what you think"), but recognize that none of us have a handle on all of it.

Thursday. The third tragic error of Job's friends was that they were caught up in self-righteous pride (see the outline). This fault is easier to see in others than ourselves. Self-righteous pride is a match penalty when it comes to being a comforter. Check Romans 12:3.

Friday – Saturday. On Sunday we plan to look at Job's response to his friends' counsel? How would you respond to counsel like this? Check a few of Job's responses as you prepare for Sunday.

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